SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
DECEMBER 14, 15 & 16, 2010, GATINEAU, QC

Resolution no. 74/2010

TITLE:	Welfare Policies
SUBJECT:	First Nation Governments
MOVED BY:	Chief Terrance Nelson, Roseau River Anishninabe First Nation, Manitoba
SECONDED BY:	Chief Frank Brown, Canupawakpa Dakota Nation, Manitoba
DECISION:	Carried by Consensus

WHEREAS:

A. By 2017, Aboriginal population in Canada will be 1.4 million people of which the average age will be 25 compared to 40 years for rest of Canada.

B. First Nation youth are the fastest growing population, the 15-29 age group is projected to grow by 37%, resulting in less than sixteen years from now (2026) more than 600,000 Aboriginal youth entering the labour market.

C. First Nations are increasingly reporting a human crisis as a growing dependency on Income Assistance in First Nations across Canada is high: 34% on reserve nationally in 2008-2009.

D. Five decades of welfare on reserve has (generally speaking) created a pattern of dependence that is increasingly detrimental to the resolve of youth entering the labour market.

E. The increase in beneficiaries and the increased benefit rates set by provinces has resulted in the Income Assistance Program budget growing from $599 million in 2001-2002 to $764 million in 2008-2009 – or approximately 28%.

F. This increasing dependency has also meant that Canadian First Nations have had to redirect much needed investment in areas such as capital to cover the growing budget of Income Assistance.

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G. The current Income Assistance Program as it exists now fosters dependency and sets up a failure to help our future population become successful.

H. First Nations, the Provinces and Territories, and the Federal Government must work together to support the transition from a passive approach to Income Assistance and dependency to an active approach to training and employment.

I. First Nations must act now to ensure that the future generation of First Nation youth do not rely on Income Assistance and *"retire at 18 years of age"*.

J. First Nations who recognize the looming crisis must act now.

K. Implementing dialogue on change to support Income Assistance recipients in the transition to training and employment will ensure that Canadian First Nation communities are positioned to take full advantage of the growing economy.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Chiefs-in-Assembly:

1. Direct our National Chief Shawn Atleo to make every effort to support and inform First Nations, and particularly youth, about needed changes to Income Assistance.

2. Authorize the Assembly of First Nations to engage with the Provinces and Territories and private and public industries to promote First Nation participation in the local economy.

3. Recognize the right of any First Nation to take direct action to improve labour force participation.

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