



ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS – CANADA MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON JOINT PRIORITIES

This Memorandum of Understanding is effective from the 12th day of June, 2017.

BETWEEN:

Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada
as represented by the Right Honourable Prime Minister (“Canada”)

- and -

The Assembly of First Nations
as represented by the National Chief (“AFN”)

(hereinafter collectively referred to as the “Parties”)

WHEREAS Canada wishes to work in partnership with First Nations to address harms that have resulted from colonization and the dispossession of their lands, territories and resources;

AND WHEREAS First Nations hold Treaty rights and inherent rights, title, and jurisdictions;

AND WHEREAS Canada has committed to renew the Nation-to-Nation relationship and its willingness to co-develop policies based on the recognition of rights, respect, cooperation and partnerships;

AND WHEREAS Canada and the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) wholly support the full and effective implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s 94 Calls to Action and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as an essential framework for renewing the Nation-to-Nation relationship and advancing reconciliation between Canada and First Nations;

AND WHEREAS in December 2016, the Prime Minister announced and proposed the establishment of new permanent bilateral mechanisms with the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and the Métis National Council to facilitate annual

meetings with the Prime Minister to discuss shared priorities and monitor progress;

AND WHEREAS the Prime Minister has committed to work in partnership with Indigenous peoples to carry out a review of relevant federal laws, policies and operational practices affecting Indigenous peoples to help ensure the Crown is meeting its constitutional, international human rights and other legal obligations with respect to Aboriginal and treaty rights;

AND WHEREAS First Nations hold inherent rights and Treaty rights, and the Crown has responsibilities to meet with First Nations regularly on First Nations land;

AND WHEREAS the AFN has a mandate to promote greater access to leaders of the Government of Canada and to advance the priorities of First Nations including the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and generally to facilitate relationship building;

AND WHEREAS under its Charter, the AFN has a role to serve First Nations rights holders, and to promote cooperation and dialogue among First Nations;

**NOW THEREFORE THE PARTIES
AGREE AS FOLLOWS:**

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this MOU is to establish a process:

- a) to discuss options to advance the priorities of First Nations;
- b) to promote opportunities for First Nations rights holders;
- c) to assess progress in rights implementation;
- d) to facilitate relationship building;
- e) to support the renewal of the Nation-to-Nation relationship between Canada and First Nations on the basis that the First Nations are holders of Treaty rights, inherent rights, title, jurisdictions and Aboriginal rights;
- f) to support the establishment of mechanisms and processes to ensure the full and meaningful enforcement and implementation of Aboriginal and Treaty rights and Aboriginal title;
- g) to support the full and meaningful implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action;
- h) to support the full and meaningful implementation of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*;
- i) to promote cooperation between Canada and First Nations including the review, reform and development of federal laws, regulations, procedures, policies and practices that respect First Nations rights;
- j) to jointly identify measures and priorities for closing the socio-economic gap between First Nations and other Canadians; and
- k) to establish transparent and accountable processes to jointly communicate activities and results.

II. JOINT COMMITMENTS

AND the Parties commit:

1. to the establishment of a permanent, ongoing Cabinet-level process for First Nations leadership and members of the federal Cabinet ("AFN-Canada Working Group") to review progress on jointly set priorities (Schedule A);
2. to hold at least three meetings of the AFN-Canada Working Group per year, with one of these meetings to be chaired by the Prime Minister;
3. to establish a steering committee of senior officials to identify and establish requirements to support the AFN-Canada Working Group (work plan development, human resources, fiscal support, process and machinery of government requirements);
4. to follow their respective internal processes for decision-making and reporting on progress; and
5. to review and update the attached Schedule A on an annual basis.

III. NON-BINDING

The Parties further agree that individual First Nations are not bound by any outcome or recommendation developed under this MOU. This MOU shall not prejudice regional and local agreements or negotiations processes.

IV. FISCAL RESOURCES

To achieve the purposes of this MOU, Canada will:

1. provide financial support to the AFN and to regional First Nation organizations to support full and meaningful engagement with First Nations, as rights holders, with respect to the objectives of this MOU; and
2. work with the AFN to examine additional needs to achieve full and meaningful engagement of First Nations, as rights holders.

Signed on the territory of the Algonquin Nation in the City of Ottawa, Ontario,
on the 12th day of June, 2017.

Original signed by

Original signed by

Perry Bellegarde
National Chief
Assembly of First Nations

The Right Honourable Justin P. J. Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada



SCHEDULE A

JOINT PRIORITIES

1. policing and community safety issues affecting First Nations;
2. co-development of an Indigenous Languages Act to support the preservation, revitalization and strengthening of Indigenous Languages;
3. work in partnership on measures to implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, including co-development of a national action plan and discussion of proposals for a federal legislative framework on implementation;
4. implementation of the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada;
5. ongoing work to develop options for consideration by Chiefs-in-Assembly and federal decision-makers for a new fiscal relationship to ensure sufficient, predictable and sustained funding for First Nations governments;
6. work jointly to decolonize and align federal laws and policies with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and First Nations' inherent and Treaty rights;
7. dialogue and planning to identify priorities and measure progress to close the socio-economic gap between First Nations and other Canadians; and
8. such other priorities as may be jointly agreed to.