



Indian and Northern
Affairs Canada

Affaires indiennes
et du Nord Canada

Actions for Change

**Working with the Aboriginal Peoples
of Canada on an Agenda for Change**



Canada

Terminology — Aboriginal Peoples in Canada

Aboriginal* peoples — The Canadian Constitution (the *Constitution Act, 1982*) recognizes three groups of Aboriginal peoples — Indian, Métis and Inuit. These are three separate peoples with unique heritages, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs.

Indian — The term "Indian" collectively describes all the Aboriginal people in Canada who are not Inuit or Métis.

There are three categories of Indians in Canada:

- **Status Indians** — entitled to have their names included on the Indian Register, an official list maintained by the federal government. Certain criteria determine who can be registered as a Status Indian. Only Status Indians are recognized as Indians under the *Indian Act*, which defines an Indian as "a person who, pursuant to this Act, is registered as an Indian or is entitled to be registered as an Indian." Status Indians are entitled to certain rights and benefits under the law.
- **Non-Status Indians** — consider themselves Indians or members of a First Nation but whom the Government of Canada does not recognize as Indians under the *Indian Act*, either because they are unable to prove their status or have lost their status rights. Non-Status Indians are not entitled to the same rights and benefits available to Status Indians.

Changes to the *Indian Act* were made in 1985 (Bill C-31). Before these changes, various *Indian Act* rules on status and membership discriminated against women. One of the functions of the changes was to repeal those sections of the *Indian Act* that were inconsistent with the equality rights as stated in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (*Constitution, 1982*). With the 1985 changes, women who had previously lost their status as a result of marrying non-Indian men could apply to have their status reinstated.

- **Treaty Indian** — A Status Indian who belongs to a First Nation that signed a treaty with the Crown.

Inuit — the Aboriginal people of Arctic Canada. Inuit live primarily in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories and northern parts of Labrador and Quebec.

Métis — people with mixed First Nations and European ancestry who identify themselves as Métis, distinct from Indian, Inuit, or non-Aboriginal people.

Reserve — A reserve is tract of land, the legal title to which is held by the Crown, set apart for the use and benefit of an Indian band. Some bands have more than one reserve.

First Nation(s) — A term that came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the word "Indian," which some people found offensive. Although the term First Nation is widely used, no legal definition of it exists. Among its uses, the term "First Nations peoples" refers to the Indian peoples in Canada, both Status and Non-Status. Some Indian peoples have also adopted the term "First Nation" to replace the word "band" in the name of their community.

- "Aboriginal" in the Canadian context is the same as "Indigenous" in the international context.

Published under the authority of the
Minister of Indian Affairs and
Northern Development
Ottawa, 2003
www.ainc-inac.gc.ca
1-800-567-9604
TTY only 1-886-553-0554

QS-7050-000-EE-A1
Catalogue No. R2-272/2003E
ISBN 0-662-34963-6

© Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada
Services gouvernementaux Canada

Cette publication peut aussi être obtenue
en français sous le titre : *Des mesures porteuses de changements*

Introduction

This publication is intended to provide a contemporary perspective on Aboriginal affairs in Canada. It provides essential information for international and domestic readers to better understand current issues within the historical and unique Canadian context. It also highlights topics which fundamentally define the modern-day relationship between Canada and First Nations, Inuit and Northerners.

Aboriginal issues are complex and rooted in the past. As a consequence, finding long-term solutions and improvements through change has been an enormous challenge. As Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians seek to move forward together in a process of renewal, it is essential to address the legacies of the past. The purpose is not to rewrite history but, rather, to learn from the past and to find ways to deal with the negative impacts that certain historical decisions continue to have today.

In recent years, the federal government has set in motion a process of reconciliation with Aboriginal people. The government is committed to working together with Aboriginal peoples in a spirit of partnership to advance and improve the quality of life for all Aboriginal and Northern people in Canada. As a result, a prosperous and self-sufficient future for Aboriginal peoples and Northerners in Canada is emerging.







Table of Contents

Introduction	i
Historical Overview.....	2
An Evolving Relationship A Chronology of Important Events	4
Profile of Aboriginal Peoples Today.....	7
Government of Canada Approach	9
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.....	11
Social and Economic Development.....	13
First Nations Governance	21
Claims.....	23
International Activities	25
INAC's Co-delivery Partners	26

Historical Overview

Absoriginal peoples were the first inhabitants of Canada. They lived in Canada for thousands of years before European settlers began arriving less than 400 years ago. Highly diversified in their lifestyles, political structures, customs and beliefs, Aboriginal peoples, developed and maintained their own systems of government and sustainable economies, distinctive languages,

powerful spirituality, and diverse cultures.

The Royal Proclamation of 1763 prohibited the purchase of Aboriginal lands by any party other than the Crown, and set the stage for the negotiation of agreements with Aboriginal peoples on a wide variety of issues.

Historic Treaties (1701-1923)





Later on, to advance European settlement, treaties became the main mechanism for defining the relationship with First Nations. From 1763 to 1923, a number of historic treaties were signed with First Nations in many regions across the country.

The Constitution Act, 1867 created Canadian Confederation and gave the federal government legislative authority over "Indians and lands reserved for Indians." The *Indian Act*, adopted in 1876, provided the framework for administering this relationship, set out a number of federal government obligations, and regulated the management of Indian reserve lands. In many cases, the land set aside as reserve land was smaller than originally agreed to during the treaty process. Current interpretations and settlements of land claims issues originate from this historical context.

Successive governments introduced laws and policies intended to assimilate Aboriginal peoples into non-Aboriginal society. As a result, the authority and functions of traditional Aboriginal forms of government were eroded. Many Aboriginal children were sent to Indian residential schools, separated from their families and cultures to be educated in non-Aboriginal ways. The Indian residential school system left a tragic legacy. Dealing with this legacy is an important part of Canada's relationship with Aboriginal peoples today.

An Evolving Relationship

A Chronology of Important Events



In 1969, the Government of Canada released the *Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy*, known as the White Paper. It proposed eliminating the Department of Indian Affairs and the *Indian Act*, and transferring responsibility for Indian people to the provinces. Aboriginal leaders objected that this policy would ignore treaty and other rights. As a result of this opposition, the federal government withdrew the White Paper.

Highlights – Aboriginal Peoples and The Canadian Constitution

- Under the division of powers in the *Constitution Act, 1867*, Section 91(24) gave the Parliament of Canada jurisdiction over "Indians and lands reserved for the Indians."
- The *Indian Act* of 1876 provided the framework for administering the relationship.
- The *Constitution Act, 1982* states that existing Aboriginal and treaty rights are recognized and affirmed (Section 35[1]).
- The *Constitution Act, 1982* states that the Aboriginal peoples of Canada include the Indian, Inuit and Métis (Section 35[2]). In addition, Aboriginal and treaty rights and freedoms are not affected by the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.
- In 1983, Section 35 was amended. It provided for Constitutional recognition of rights acquired through both existing and future land claim agreements. Aboriginal and treaty rights were guaranteed equally to both females and males. As well, there was a commitment to consult Aboriginal peoples on any future constitutional changes affecting them.

This event, and the rise of national Aboriginal organizations, marked a turning point in relations between Aboriginal peoples and the Canadian government. It also initiated a more progressive era of reconciliation, negotiation and renewal.

In 1973, the Supreme Court of Canada decision in the *Calder* legal case, launched in 1969 by the Nisga'a Tribal Council in British Columbia, had a significant impact on moving federal policy towards the settlement of outstanding Aboriginal rights-related grievances. Following the *Calder* ruling, the Government of Canada began a process of negotiations with Aboriginal peoples to resolve land-related grievances. In 1973, the Office of Native Claims was created to manage the process of settling comprehensive land claims in areas not dealt with by historic treaties. A specific claims process was also developed to resolve disputes resulting from the non-fulfilment of treaty obligations. The first modern land claims treaty, the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, was signed in 1975.




In 1982, Canada repatriated its constitution. Aboriginal leaders played a vigorous role in negotiations leading to its passage. As a result, the *Constitution Act, 1982* has sections recognizing existing Aboriginal and treaty rights.

Another important step came in 1995 when the Government of Canada issued its inherent right policy called *The Government of Canada's Approach to the Implementation of the Inherent Right and the Negotiation of Aboriginal Self-Government*. This policy enables the negotiation of practical and workable self-government arrangements that may be protected under the Constitution.

In 1991, the Government of Canada set up the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP). The RCAP was mandated to examine the history of Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal relations in Canada and to make recommendations on improving the quality of life for Aboriginal peoples. In 1996, the RCAP published its final report. The report contained 440 recommendations addressing a wide range of Aboriginal issues. It proposed a 20-year agenda for change in order to develop a new relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people based on mutual recognition, respect, sharing, and responsibility.

In January 1998, in response to the RCAP report, the Government of Canada announced *Gathering Strength — Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan*. The action plan called for a renewed partnership with Aboriginal peoples based on recognizing past mistakes and injustices, the advancement of reconciliation, healing and renewal, and the building of a joint plan for the future.

In looking both to the past and to the future, the action plan began with a Statement of Reconciliation in which the Government of Canada acknowledged its role in the development and administration of residential schools. The government expressed to the victims who suffered physical and sexual abuse at these schools that it was "deeply sorry." The federal government also committed \$350 million to support a community-based healing strategy. The strategy was meant to address the healing needs of individuals, families and communities arising from the legacy of physical and sexual abuse at residential schools. This led to the creation of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation in May 1998.



This was followed by a Statement of Renewal that expressed a vision of a shared future for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. It outlined four key objectives for immediate action:

- Renewing the Partnerships – bringing about meaningful and lasting change in the Government of Canada’s relationships with Aboriginal peoples.
- Strengthening Aboriginal Governance – supporting Aboriginal peoples in their efforts to create effective and accountable governments, affirming treaty relationships, and negotiating fair solutions to Aboriginal land claims.
- Developing a New Fiscal Relationship – arriving at financial arrangements with Aboriginal governments and organizations that are stable, predictable, accountable, and help foster self-reliance.
- Supporting Strong Communities, People and Economies – focusing on improving health and public safety, investing in people, and strengthening Aboriginal economic development.

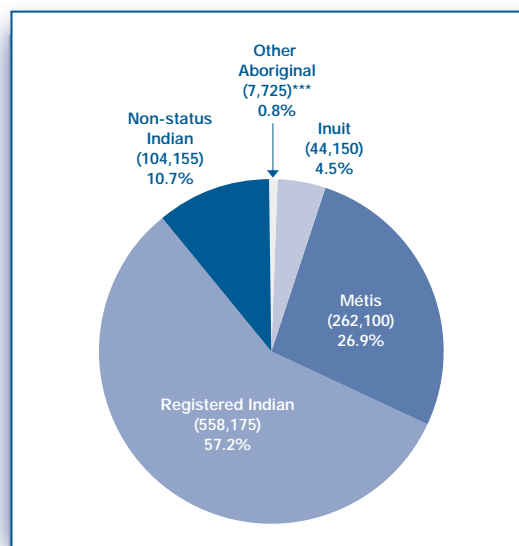
Along with evolving Government of Canada policy on Aboriginal issues, decisions by the Supreme Court of Canada continue to move towards a broader expression of Aboriginal rights. These decisions have brought greater clarification on the nature of Canada's relationship with Aboriginal peoples. Over the past three decades, the Supreme Court of Canada has made major precedent-setting decisions on Aboriginal cases. An important decision on Aboriginal title, *Delgamuukw*, was made in 1997. In this landmark case, the Court made several pronouncements on the scope and content of Aboriginal title.

Profile of Aboriginal Peoples Today

The *Constitution Act, 1982* recognizes three groups of Aboriginal peoples — Indians, Inuit, and Métis. The term "Indian" collectively describes all the Aboriginal peoples in Canada who are not Inuit or Métis. Métis people are of mixed First Nation and European ancestry. Inuit are the Aboriginal peoples of Arctic Canada who live mainly in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, and northern parts of Labrador and Quebec.

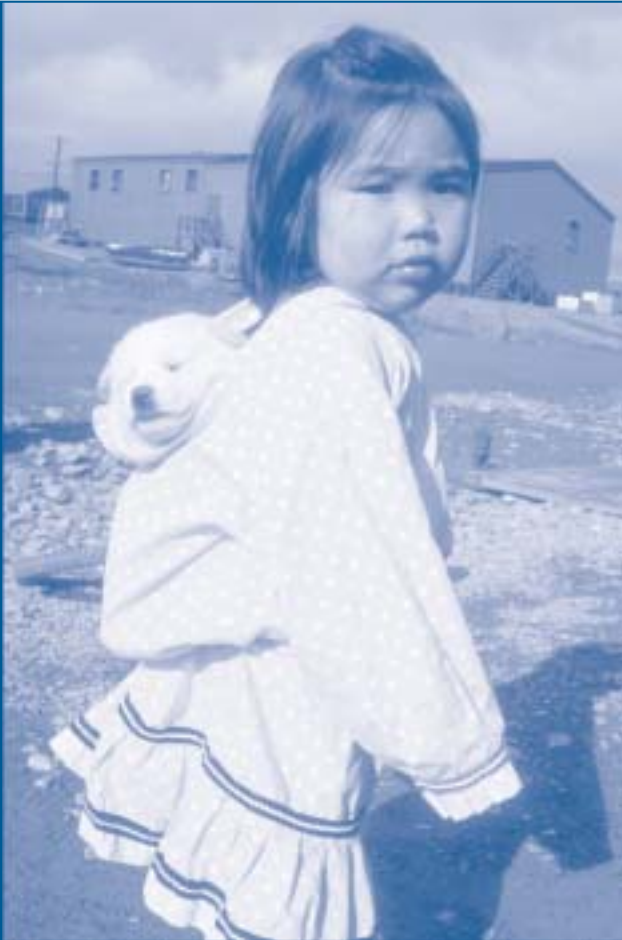
There are more than 600 First Nations in Canada — including 52 cultural groups and more than 50 Aboriginal languages — as well as Inuit communities in the North and Métis and non-Status groups in rural and urban settings. Within the Aboriginal population, there are diverse traditions, expectations, needs, opportunities, and community types (urban, rural, reserve and isolated communities).

Aboriginal peoples in Canada are in a period of social, cultural, economic and political change. They are the youngest, fastest growing segment of the population. In 2001, there were 1.3 million people with Aboriginal ancestry in Canada according to Census Canada statistics. This represents



4.4 percent of the total population. The Aboriginal birth rate is nearly twice that of the non-Aboriginal population. From 1991 to 2016, the Aboriginal population is expected to grow by 52 percent compared to 22 percent for Canada's non-Aboriginal population.

In Canada's North, which occupies 40 percent of Canada's land mass, there are 3 territories. The territories consist of 96 organized communities, most of them home to small populations of First Nations, Métis or Inuit. Widespread distribution of the population increases the cost of providing services.



About 92,300 residents are scattered across this area. Nunavut's population is 26,700, while there are 37,100 people living in the Northwest Territories and 28,500 in the Yukon.

Aboriginal peoples are entering a new demographic cycle as a young population moves into the work force. By 2006, the Aboriginal working age population (15 to 54) is expected to grow by 67 percent. This has significant implications for workforce characteristics and competitiveness in several regional economies. For example, within the next 10 years, Aboriginal peoples are expected to form 30 percent of the Province of Saskatchewan's labour force.

These changing demographics will result in important economic and social assets for Canada while placing more demand on health and social systems.

Government of Canada Approach



In the past 10 years, there has been significant work done to address Aboriginal challenges and opportunities. Most recently, the level of commitment to these issues has been addressed in the Government of Canada's two Speeches from the Throne. The Speech from the Throne sets out the broad goals and directions of the federal government and its strategy to accomplish these goals. The 2001 and 2002 Speeches have solidified Canada's agenda on Aboriginal issues by focusing on improving the quality of life, life chances, and creating strong and healthy communities for all Aboriginal peoples. In response to these commitments, the federal government continues to work towards ensuring basic needs are met by:

- closing the gaps in health status and educational achievement on reserves
- developing First Nations communities
- promoting entrepreneurial skills and job creation

2001 Speech from the Throne

"Nowhere is the creation and sharing of opportunity more important than for Aboriginal people. Too many continue to live in poverty, without the tools they need to build for a better future for themselves and for their communities. As a country, we must be direct about the magnitude of the challenge and ambitious in our commitment to tackle the most pressing problems facing Aboriginal people. Reaching our objectives will take time, but we must not be deterred by the length of the journey or the obstacles that we may encounter along the way."

The federal budget for 2003 made strategic investments to strengthen Aboriginal communities and improve economic opportunities, including:

- \$1.3 billion over 5 years for health programs
- \$600 million over 5 years to upgrade, maintain and monitor water and wastewater systems on reserves
- \$72 million to improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal peoples

- \$172.5 million over 11 years to support the creation and operation of a new Aboriginal Languages and Cultures Centre under the stewardship of Aboriginal peoples
- \$20 million over the next 2 years for Aboriginal Business Canada

Government of Canada Programs

At present, 14 federal departments and agencies provide programs and services for Aboriginal peoples. Total expenditures on Aboriginal programming will amount to \$8.3 billion in fiscal year 2003-2004.

Programs administered by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada account for about \$5.5 billion of this total. These programs are focused primarily towards Status Indians living on reserves and those living in self-governing First Nations.

Healthy Communities

Announcements in the budget for 2003 highlight Canada's commitment to improving the health of Aboriginal peoples. Through Health Canada's First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, a variety of health services and programs are available to Aboriginal peoples in Canada. These services are delivered through a network of health facilities, many operated in and by First Nations communities. They include environmental health programs, health education, addiction and substance abuse prevention programs, nutrition services, community health services, diagnostic and treatment services in isolated areas, and non-insured health benefits, which serve to meet medical or dental needs not covered by provincial, territorial or third-party health insurance plans.

Canada and First Nations are working on programs to address priority service gaps in mental health, solvent abuse and home-care nursing.

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada



The administration of Aboriginal and Northern affairs was the responsibility of various government departments following Canadian Confederation in 1867. The current Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) department was created in 1966 by an Act of Parliament.


INAC – Mandate, Roles and Responsibilities

The key objective of INAC is to create a better quality of life for First Nations, Inuit and Northerners. This is consistent with the commitments made in recent Speeches from the Throne and with the Government of Canada's goal of improving the quality of life for all Canadians. In general, INAC has primary, but not exclusive responsibility for meeting the federal government's constitutional, treaty, political, and legal responsibilities to First Nations, Inuit and Northerners.

INAC is responsible for the following two separate yet equally important mandates:

Indian and Inuit Affairs – the department's primary role is to support First Nations and Inuit in developing healthy, sustainable communities and in achieving their economic and social aspirations. INAC negotiates comprehensive and specific land claims and self-government agreements on behalf of the federal government. It also oversees implementation of settlements and promotes economic development. It is responsible for delivering services such as education, housing and community infrastructure to Status Indians on-reserve. It is also responsible for delivering social assistance and social support services to residents on-reserve.


Most of these programs and services are delivered in partnership with First Nations, who directly administer 85 percent of Indian and Inuit Affairs program funds. INAC is also responsible for ensuring the honourable fulfilment of the Crown's obligations in lands, revenues and trusts, as well as for matters relating to First Nations governance. The department provides training on the administration of land and resources. It also acts as a compliance body for a number of legislative systems, including the *Indian Act*.



Northern Affairs – INAC is the main federal department responsible for meeting the federal government’s constitutional, political, and legal responsibilities in the North. Its role in the North is extremely broad and includes settling and implementing land claims, negotiating self-government agreements, advancing political evolution, managing natural resources, protecting the environment, and fostering leadership in sustainable development, both domestically and among circumpolar nations.

In two of the three territories — Nunavut and the Northwest Territories — INAC is the custodian and resource manager with legislative and policy authority for an area occupying 34 percent of Canada’s land mass. In the Yukon, responsibilities for land and resource management were recently transferred to the territorial government on April 1, 2003. In the Northwest Territories, negotiations leading to similar devolution of federal authority are now under way. The department’s approach to managing its responsibilities is based on partnership and the principles of sustainable development.

Social and Economic Development

 Closing the socio-economic gap between First Nations and Inuit and other Canadians requires an integrated approach. This approach must address Aboriginal peoples' unique social, cultural, and economic circumstances and create opportunities for them to participate more fully in the economy. Basic needs for jobs, health, education, housing, and infrastructure must be met to lay the foundation for economic development. This means strengthening the federal government's relationship with Aboriginal peoples and working to facilitate effective partnerships with the private sector, provinces, and territories.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Housing

The Housing Program provides financial assistance to First Nations to support community-based housing policies, programs and plans that enables Status Indians on reserves to access safe, affordable housing. Currently, more than 500 First Nation communities operate under the federal on-reserve housing policy announced in July 1996. Under the policy, First Nations must prepare and

implement a comprehensive community-based housing strategy that includes a broad range of elements consistent with set policy goals.

Through this initiative, housing on reserves has improved. Between 1996 and 2002, the total number of houses on reserves has increased by more than 17 percent, from 78,187 to 91,736. During the same period, the number of houses considered to be in adequate condition has increased by more than 12,200, from 39,020 to 51,269. As a result of the flexibility provided under the 1996 policy, more First Nations are actively seeking a range of innovative solutions in all aspects of housing, from program design and construction techniques, to new management and governance models.



Community Infrastructure

The goals of the department's Infrastructure Program are to make investments that:

- maximize the life cycle of physical assets
- mitigate health and safety risks
- ensure assets meet applicable codes and standards
- ensure assets are managed in a cost-effective and efficient manner

To meet these goals, INAC helps First Nations acquire, build, operate and maintain basic community facilities, such as fire protection and electrification systems, water and sewage systems, roads, schools, and other community buildings.

Significant progress has been made to improve water quality in First Nations



communities over the past 10 years. By 2000, 94 percent of on-reserve houses had water and sewer services, up from fewer than 80 percent in 1991. In collaboration with other federal government departments and based on a national assessment, INAC introduced a seven-part First Nations Water Management Strategy to improve medium and high-risk systems in 2003. This strategy includes:

- continued efforts in the upgrading of water and wastewater facilities to meet federal guidelines
- the establishment of a comprehensive set of clearly defined standards, protocols, and procedures similar to those which exist within provincial/territorial regimes
- operator training and certification of all operators within three years
- development of public awareness materials aimed at First Nation communities and organizations

Education

Education, delivered within an effective governance framework, is one of the keys to strong communities, people, and economies. INAC, in partnership with First Nations, is addressing the following challenges:



- increasing student attendance and graduation rates
- meeting needs for special education
- maintaining the buying power of the post-secondary education program as the cost of tuition rises
- supporting parent and community involvement in education
- supporting initiatives for recruitment and retention of qualified teachers
- building the capacity of First Nations to deliver school board-type services
- modernizing education reporting and data information systems
- ensuring opportunities for lifelong learning

Education levels for First Nation children and youth are rising. Based on the 2001 Census, between 1996 and 2001, the number of First Nation people who

graduated from secondary school increased from 27 to 35 percent. In the 10-year period between 1988 and 1998, First Nation enrolment in post-secondary education has doubled.

First Nations SchoolNet Program

Launched in 1996, the First Nations SchoolNet Program aims to connect all First Nations schools under federal jurisdiction to the Internet. Currently, First Nations SchoolNet has connected 80 percent of all First Nations schools across Canada to the Internet.



Connection to the Internet and e-learning allows First Nations students to obtain skills, training and, in the future, to complete high school without leaving their communities. It also permits communities to link to each other to share best practices for the preservation of their heritage and languages, and for social and economic development.

For more information, visit
www.schoolnet.ca/aboriginal

In 2003-2004, the Government of Canada will spend \$1.1 billion to provide elementary and secondary education services for about 120,000 First Nation children living on reserves and \$298 million for post-secondary education programs for about 26,000 First Nation and Inuit students across Canada.

Final Report – INAC Minister's National Working Group on Education

In December 2002, the Minister's National Working Group on Education submitted a report called "Our Children - Keepers of the Sacred Knowledge." The focus of the report is on-reserve education. However, with a high percentage of First Nation students attending provincial schools, the report also addresses the needs of First Nation students in provincial schools off-reserve.

The report makes recommendations consistent with the holistic First Nation philosophy of lifelong learning, spanning from early childhood to post-secondary education. The report recommends the establishment of a high-quality First Nation education system grounded in indigenous knowledge and characterized by high levels of academic achievement and developing students who possess the knowledge and skills to participate fully in their own First Nation community and in Canadian society. INAC is currently working in partnership with First Nations to address the key issues in the report, such as teacher recruitment and retention and parental/community involvement, in order to narrow the gap in educational attainment between First Nations and other Canadians.

The full report can be accessed at: www.ainc-inac.gc.ca

Social Assistance

INAC is engaged in on-reserve social assistance activities to help individuals and families meet their basic needs for food, clothing and shelter. INAC also funds special needs allowances for goods

and services essential to the physical or social well-being of eligible recipients. These other needs may include furniture or the cost of a doctor-recommended diet. The department's current involvement in social assistance activities is mainly to provide funding to First Nations who, in turn, deliver programs and services to community members.

National Child Benefit

Introduced in 1998, the National Child Benefit (NCB) aims to help prevent and reduce child poverty; to promote attachment to the workforce; and to harmonize program objectives and benefits. Under the NCB, provinces, territories, and First Nations adjust social assistance for recipients with children by an amount equal to the federal contribution. This adjustment allows for re-investment into community-based programs for low-income families.



INAC is responsible for coordinating, in partnership with First Nations, the re-investment component for First Nations who deliver social assistance. First Nations determine their own re-investment initiatives to meet the local needs and priorities of their communities. This is done by introducing new programs and services for low-income families with children or enhancing the current range of community-based employment support programs. For example, programs might include child care, child nutrition, parenting, family services, recreation, youth development, clothing, employment and skills development, and cultural and traditional teachings.

First Nations Child and Family Services Program

The main objective of the First Nations Child and Family Services Program is to assist First Nations in providing access to culturally sensitive child and family services in their communities.

The program seeks to ensure that the services provided to First Nations children and their families on reserves are comparable to services available to other provincial residents in similar

circumstances. First Nations Child and Family Services agencies are mandated by the province or territory and must follow provincial or territorial legislation and standards.

Assisted Living

The department's Assisted Living (Adult Care) Program is a complementary initiative to Health Canada's Home and Community Care Program. It assists First Nations people with functional limitations (due to age, health problems or disability) to maintain their independence, to maximize their level of functioning, and to live in conditions of health and safety. The program includes funding for in-home supportive care, adult foster care, and certain types of institutional care. The program is administered by First Nations officers who assess the financial and social needs of the client.

Family Violence Prevention Program

The Family Violence Prevention Program (FVPP) provides operational funding to 34 First Nation shelters across Canada as well as 355 community-based family violence prevention projects.

The immediate goal of the FVPP is to provide on-reserve families and individuals with culturally appropriate family violence protection and prevention services. The long-term goal of the program is to reduce incidents of family violence that occur in First Nation communities.

Aboriginal Women's Issues

Aboriginal women make valuable contributions to their culture and society and it is important that their voices be heard. In 1998, INAC established a Women's Issues and Gender Equality Directorate, and implemented a Gender Equality Analysis (GEA) policy. This policy requires that GEA be undertaken in all of the department's legislative, policy and program processes. Where gender equality issues arise, appropriate solutions and policy options are developed and implemented to prevent and remedy any inequality.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

When First Nations and Inuit communities thrive, all Canadians benefit. Aboriginal peoples and communities are poised to become major players in a number of sectors, from forestry and oil and gas to tourism and the high-technology industry. To ensure that First Nations people and Inuit participate fully, INAC has significantly increased support for economic development in their communities.



INAC is committed to providing the financial, structural, and technical strategies and tools required to ensure a quality of life in First Nations and Inuit communities that is comparable to that of neighbouring communities. INAC is also committed to increasing the self-sufficiency of First Nations and Inuit and to enabling their greater participation in

the economy. Partnerships between First Nations and Inuit and the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and other levels of government are essential to achieving these goals.



Support for strategic investments in First Nations and Inuit economic development will reduce health and other social costs, enhance the well-being of on-reserve populations, strengthen the broader Canadian economy, benefit neighbouring communities, and increase regional economic stability and growth. Institutional development encourages the self-reliance of First Nations and Inuit communities, as well as enhancing good governance and accountability.

Economic Development Success Stories

Diamonds in the North

Diamonds International Canada (DICAN) Limited is a Yellowknife-based company that is 51 percent owned by Aboriginal Diamonds Group (ADG) and 49 percent owned by WWW International Diamond Consultants Limited.



ADG is an Aboriginal-owned corporation that is an equal partnership between corporations representing the business interests of the Dogrib Nation, the Yellowknife Dene First Nations, and the Kitikmeot Inuit Association.


WWW is a privately-owned British corporation composed of a team of rough diamond valuers and rough diamond industry consultants and specialists. It provides technical expertise and management experience to DICAN on an exclusive basis. DICAN arranges for a transfer of technical knowledge and abilities to Canadians in general and members of ADG in particular.

Awarded the contract in both 1998 and 2003 following international tender processes, DICAN is the Government of Canada's diamond valuator. It is responsible for ascertaining the gross value of diamonds produced by the Ekati mine as well as conducting other diamond consulting services on behalf of INAC for royalty assessment purposes.

For more First Nations success stories, visit

www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/nr/ecd/srch_e.html

First Nations Governance



A key part of INAC's mandate is to work in partnership with First Nations to bring about socio-economic progress and self-sufficiency in their local communities. An integrated suite of legislative initiatives has been introduced to support this mandate. The cornerstone of this legislative program is the First Nations Governance Act.

The proposed legislation would provide First Nations with the modern tools of governance they require to improve the quality of life in their communities. It would shift the current primary relationship between the Government of Canada and First Nations Chiefs and Band Councils, to one between First Nations governments and First Nation citizens — putting the power back where it always should have been — in the hands of First Nations people.

This fundamental change would better support First Nations operating under the *Indian Act*, create long-term stability, foster social and economic prosperity in their communities, and bring about governance structures designed by and for First Nations citizens.

The First Nations Governance Act is proposed legislation that would enable First Nations to design and adopt codes for leadership selection, financial management and accountability and the administration of government according to the needs of each community. Its aim is to empower people to hold their governments accountable to the community and to provide First Nations governments with more effective and modern tools of governance.

The First Nations Fiscal and Statistical Management Act is the result of a First Nations led initiative which will establish, through legislation, national institutions that will improve the ability of First Nations governments to address the social and economic well-being of their communities. The proposed legislation is designed to allow First Nations to participate more fully in the Canadian economy and to foster business-friendly environments while meeting local needs. It will provide participating First Nations with tools that other governments take for granted.

The Specific Claims Resolution Act would create the Canadian Centre for the Independent Resolution of First Nations Specific Claims to facilitate the settlement of specific claims across the country. The proposed legislation would revitalize the current specific claims process by making it more transparent, efficient and fair.

The First Nations Land Management Act expansion allows more First Nations the opportunity to establish their own systems for managing their lands and resources. This allows for more decision making at the local level.

The Indian Oil and Gas Act will provide an efficient and effective regulatory system for petroleum resources and commercial and industrial activity on reserve lands that will enable First Nations to participate in economic development opportunities. This will contribute to self-sufficiency and an improved quality of life within First Nations communities.

The First Nations Oil and Gas and Moneys Management Initiative will provide statutory authority for First Nations to assume control over oil and gas resources and resulting revenues and/or the management of Indian moneys in the Government of Canada's Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF). It is based on the principle that First Nations should have the option to manage the exploration and exploitation of oil and gas on reserves and receive Indian moneys held by Canada in the CRF to control and manage for their own use and benefit.



The tools proposed under these legislative initiatives are intended to decrease the Government of Canada's involvement in the day-to-day operations of First Nation communities and to put the power to run their own communities back in the hands of First Nations people. They also seek to help build the capacity and self-sufficiency of First Nations during the transition to self-government, and to assist in the development of a First Nations public service.

On a complementary and parallel track, streamlined negotiations processes for land claims and self-government will be increasingly effective in building the capacity of First Nations and Inuit to achieve the inherent right to self-government.

Claims



The Government of Canada negotiates different types of claims:

Comprehensive land claims are based on the concept of continuing Aboriginal rights and title which have not been dealt with by treaty or other legal means.

Specific claims arise from alleged non-fulfilment of treaties and other lawful obligations or from the alleged improper administration of lands and other assets under the *Indian Act*.

Other claims are claims that do not meet the strict acceptance criteria of comprehensive or specific claims, but which have merit. A number of these claims have been accepted by the Government of Canada as requiring resolution through negotiation.

INAC, on behalf of the Government of Canada, manages the negotiations, settlement and implementation of comprehensive and specific claims agreements, as well as other claims settlements and self-government arrangements. Negotiations are between Aboriginal groups, the Government of Canada and, in areas affecting its jurisdiction and interests, the relevant



province or territory. In these negotiations, Canada ensures that the interests of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples are respected and dealt with fairly. Claims settlements and self-government arrangements bring opportunities for economic growth and a more promising future for Aboriginal peoples and for all Canadians.

Nunavut: The Birth of a New Territory

The map of Canada changed on April 1, 1999, with the creation of the new territory of Nunavut in the Eastern Arctic. Nunavut was the result of a negotiated land claim. Inuit, who make up 85 percent of the population, opted for a public government in the new territory.



SELF-GOVERNMENT

Self-government agreements set out practical and workable arrangements for Aboriginal peoples to implement their inherent right of self-government. Self-government agreements also enable Aboriginal peoples to assume responsibility and control over matters internal to their communities and integral to their unique cultures, identities, traditions, languages and institutions.


Implementation of the Nisga'a Final Agreement

One demonstration of Canada's commitment to renewing its relationship with Aboriginal peoples was the ratification of the Nisga'a treaty in early 2000. This historic agreement granted the Nisga'a people 2000 square kilometres of land and \$225 million over 15 years. It also allowed for the establishment of a system of self-government. Implementation of the Nisga'a Treaty has facilitated the building of economic capacity and infrastructure, the growth of opportunities and partnerships, and investment in sustainability for future generations. The Nisga'a Nation is working to support traditional culture, to cultivate new ways of economic and entrepreneurial thinking, and to establish the basis for a diversified and sustainable economy.

Through self-government negotiations, Aboriginal groups can discuss arrangements that reflect and protect their needs, cultures and values. This could include matters relating to health care, child welfare, education, and housing.

Under the Government of Canada's Inherent Right Policy, self-government arrangements may be negotiated at the same time as comprehensive land claim agreements.

International Activities

 Canada is a member of the United Nations and the Organization of American States, both which have systems in place to address the rights of Indigenous peoples. Canada is also a signatory to and bound by a number of international treaties. These treaties set standards for domestic policies and programs. They also require Canada to report periodically to various international bodies which monitor compliance. These various processes have direct relevance to Canada's national policy-making in such areas as self-government, land claims, language, culture and human rights.

At the United Nations, Canada has been very supportive of the establishment of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and its role in building partnerships among Indigenous peoples, member states, and the United Nations. Canada is also supportive of the forum's role in coordinating the integration of Indigenous issues in the work of the United Nations system itself.

Canada has supported a number of partnerships and special activities highlighting the objectives of the United Nations' International Decade of the World's Indigenous People. For example, the annual National Aboriginal



Achievement Awards honour Aboriginal men and women in Canada for outstanding achievements in fields including sports, arts, law, medicine, and justice. National Aboriginal Day is celebrated every June 21 to help increase public awareness of the diverse cultures and valuable contributions Aboriginal peoples make to Canadian society.

The promotion of circumpolar co-operation among Arctic countries is also an important priority for Canada. This includes international work and participation in the Arctic Council — a high-level intergovernmental forum with permanent participation from Aboriginal groups. The Arctic Council provides a mechanism to address the common concerns and challenges faced by Arctic governments and the peoples of the Arctic.

For more information on Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, visit

www.a inc-inac.gc.ca

INAC's Co-delivery Partners — Federal Department or Agency

Aboriginal Canada Portal

www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca

Health Canada — First Nations and Inuit
Health Branch

www.hc-sc.gc.ca

Human Resources Development Canada

www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca

Canada Mortgage and Housing
Corporation

www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca

Solicitor General of Canada —
Aboriginal Policing Directorate

www.sgc.gc.ca

Canadian Heritage — Aboriginal Affairs
Branch

www.pch.gc.ca

Industry Canada — Aboriginal Business
Canada

www.abc-eac.ic.gc.ca

Fisheries and Oceans Canada

www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Natural Resources Canada

www.NRCan-RNCan.gc.ca

Justice Canada — Aboriginal Justice
Directorate

www.canada.justice.gc.ca

Privy Council Office

www.pco.gc.ca

National Defence

www.dnd.ca

Correctional Service of Canada

www.csc-scc.gc.ca

Indian Residential Schools Resolution
Canada

www.irsr-rqpi.gc.ca