
Assembly of First Nations

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**ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY
JULY 7, 8 & 9, 2015, MONTRÉAL, QC**

Resolution no. 06/2015

TITLE: Revitalization of Indigenous Languages: Concrete Actions to Support Indigenous Language Teachers and Cultural Centres

SUBJECT: Indigenous Languages and Culture

MOVED BY: Chief Walter Naveau, Mattagami First Nation, ON

SECONDED BY: Chief Gilbert Ledoux, Muskeg Lake Cree First Nation, SK

DECISION Carried by Consensus

WHEREAS:

- A. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (the UN Declaration) states:
- i. Article 13, (1): Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.
 - ii. Article 14, (1): Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.
- B. The UN Declaration is a framework of reconciliation and restitution, including for the damages resulting from the colonial laws and policies that created the Indian Residential School system.
- C. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has stated that "Indigenous languages are most threatened in Canada".
- D. The 94 Calls to Action by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada include extensive work on Indigenous peoples' language revitalization.
- E. Community Language and Cultural Centres work diligently to revitalize Indigenous languages. They do not receive adequate recurring core funding to support their programs, which ensure healthy and vibrant language and cultural retention.

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- F. Funding is inadequate to support language advocates and teachers who require teams of traditional knowledge holders, fluent speakers, artists and technical support to create curriculum for the evolving teaching methods for children and youth.
- G. The urgency for adequate financial and human resource funding to community Language and Cultural Centres is reaching critical levels, in part due to the annual loss of our traditional knowledge holders and fluent speakers.
- H. Indigenous languages are often underfunded and under-supported in our communities.
- I. The recruitment of new speakers is imperative to the work of Indigenous languages revitalization and should begin with early childcare and continue in elementary schools and high schools. Language revitalization should be inclusive of all community members.
- J. Indigenous traditional knowledge is embedded within our ancient and precious languages and must be preserved for present and future generations to utilize and enjoy.
- K. The urgency of Indigenous languages revitalization should be a priority for all levels of Indigenous governance, activism, education, health and culture, as an integral part of our collective right to self-determination.

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

1. Mandate the National Chief to begin the process of negotiating with Federal, Provincial, and Territorial Governments to provide adequate financial resources, at a minimum equal to those provided for official languages, for the work of language revitalization. Policy and legislative changes at the Federal, Provincial and Territorial level should be created to appropriately support Indigenous language revitalization as part of the reconciliation process flowing from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Final Report and Calls to Action.
2. Direct that negotiations be undertaken to prompt concrete measures to change the education standards, policies and funding arrangements of community schools education system that reflects, promotes and revitalizes Indigenous peoples' identity, languages, and culture.
3. Call for a revitalization strategy that:
 - i. Builds on existing resolutions and reports, e.g., 2005 *Towards a New Beginning: A Foundational Report for a Strategy to Revitalize First Nation, Inuit and Métis Languages and Cultures*.

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- ii. Includes collaboration with the ongoing efforts of the regions, First Nations, Educators, and Indigenous Language experts.
- iii. Provides for the working groups and processes necessary to develop and implement the strategy.
- iv. Identifies priority areas for implementation such as, but not limited to, early childhood supports, immersions programs, lifelong learning approaches, archival efforts and rights-based advocacy.

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