



Minutes
AFNQL Regional Meeting on Housing (virtual meeting)
September 12, 2023

Facilitators: Patrick Robertson and Tanu Lusignan

1. Opening

The half-day meeting is held on the ZOOM platform. The facilitators welcome all participants. The meeting will be held in French and English, and the ZOOM translation application is explained.

Chief Lance Haymond of Kebaowek, portfolio holder for the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL), delivers the opening address.

« Welcome to the AFNQL Regional Housing Meeting. It is a good practice for us to hold such a regional meeting every year, and this for a long time. I am happy that we have resumed holding our face-to-face meetings. The next one will be held in November. I also appreciate the fact that we are now adding a virtual session to share even more information. This also frees up time for more interaction during the face-to-face meeting.

I am always pleased to note that our regional meeting on housing attracts a good number of people. I am not surprised at this interest because housing is a priority in our region. I acknowledge the presence of elected officials, housing, infrastructure and capital managers and employees.

The discussions we have together are important. For us as the Assembly of Chiefs, and for our federal partners as well, this is an opportunity to provide you with the most up-to-date housing information. For you, it's an opportunity to ask questions and share your challenges and best practices in the field. Feel free to participate in question and discussion periods throughout the meeting.

Issues persist around housing, and you are in a good position to know it. There is one that is relatively new and that greatly complicates the situation. I'm talking about inflation here. We have been witnessing a dramatic increase in construction costs in recent years. On one hand, it becomes very difficult to respect the budgets attached to our projects. On the other, people across the country cannot afford to buy; they therefore remain on the rental market longer. This is a reality that hinders the achievement of our objectives in terms of access to property. Private home ownership is certainly a way out of the housing crisis in our communities. The conditions must still be conducive to promoting it!

This is happening just as we are seeing a historic low in the achievements of CMHC's Section 95 program. Thirty housing units! That's all our communities will benefit from this year. This is 2 and even 3 times less than what we realized not so long ago. Inflation

explains part of this. But the fact remains that First Nations social housing is grossly underfunded.

We have been informed that the Government of Canada wants to reform infrastructure funding for First Nations. One of the means under study is monetization. We will have to be careful about this. Will there be more money in the system? This is a question we have asked, and which remains unanswered.

I never miss an opportunity to highlight the collaboration we have around the table of the Regional Tripartite Housing Committee. This committee sits down, around the same table, representatives from ISC, CMHC and AFNQL. We discuss housing issues that are of mutual interest, and we establish joint regional strategies. The Regional Committee is a good example of collaboration between First Nations and government.

Before giving the floor to our facilitator, I would like to thank the people at the AFNQL Secretariat and the members of the Operational Committee of the Tripartite Committee who worked hard over the last weeks to make sure that this regional meeting be a successful experience for those who attend. A very special mention to the School Council, which accepted the challenge of hosting this meeting. I would also like to thank Indigenous Services Canada who support this activity.

Have a good meeting. Meegwitch! ».

Chief Haymond hands over to Tanu Lusignan.

Tanu summarized Chief Haymond's remarks and Patrick took the floor.

Patrick introduced the first item on the agenda, the regional and national update, and invited Guy Latouche to do so.

2. National and Regional Update

AFNQL

Guy Latouche, Housing, and Infrastructure Advisor for the AFNQL

His presentation is in two parts: the regional update and recent work of the Regional Tripartite Committee on Housing and the Regional Strategy, as well as the national update on devolution and infrastructure reform.

At the regional level, the Tripartite Committee is made up of CMHC, AFNQL and ISC. This committee, which has been in existence since 1985, plays an advisory role. A two-year action plan guides the committee in its actions to improve community resilience and implement the Regional Housing and Infrastructure Strategy.

This strategy is based on three pillars: skills and capabilities, funding and financing, and governance and service delivery.

In the area of skills and capabilities, we would like to highlight several achievements, including the attestation of collegial studies (ACS) in housing management. This is a great achievement, and to date we have around 30 graduates, and counting. The community of practice, which supports community stakeholders, and the point of contact, which serves as a one-stop shop for information on all available training courses, are other fine achievements. We can also count on our technical housing resource groups, who are our

itinerant trainers. Nations hold collective and individual exchanges on best practices and issues through nation-specific information-sharing opportunities.

Regarding the second component (financing), we need to make a profound transformation. To achieve this, we need to set up a center of expertise in financial literacy and housing. A pilot project is currently underway with a First Nation. We'll provide you with more details at our November meeting. This is a major item on the agenda.

The third component, that of governance, provides for a transition over ten years, depending on the communities' level of preparedness. We need to close the housing gap. As competencies strengthen and the housing gap narrows, we may see a desire on the part of First Nations to take over more responsibility for housing.

At the national level, discussions are taking place with the AFN (Chiefs Committee on Housing and Infrastructure) and federal representatives regarding the transfer of responsibilities. In addition, we need to clarify the issue of financing, which is very unclear. We need more clarification on the funds that come with devolution.

What's more, infrastructure modernization goes hand in hand with a monetization approach. Will we have the financial tools and the funds to do more to close the huge gap? Our plea is to keep in mind the elimination of the gap accumulated to date by 2030, and to obtain additional funding.

Finally, a national action plan on homelessness is currently in preparation. It is constantly evolving. I'll be able to tell you more about it at the November meeting.

Patrick Robertson hands over to Bruce Labrador, Aboriginal Services Canada (ISC).

ISC

Bruce Labrador, Director of Infrastructure, Environment and Emergency Management, ISC

The presentation focused on the housing strategy and reform; a project begun in 2016. He thanks the partners, colleagues and community representatives working on the file. He is accompanied by Johanne Verville and Nathalie Spénard, both from ISC's Quebec City regional office. Housing is a huge project in Quebec.

Bruce looks back on the work undertaken between 2016 and 2022, with a budget of around \$18M per year. The 2022 budget was announced in a spirit of continuity, and we benefited from significant increases. For the 2022-2023 budget, we went from \$18M to \$37M. For the current year (2023-2024), we are at an additional \$49M. And until recently, we had no confirmation for future years, as 2022 was announced over 5 years. On the other hand, we have had some good news, and the confirmed budget is in the order of \$47M for 24-25, \$53.8M for 25-26 and \$61M for 26-27. So, from 2016 to 2022, we've raised \$108M in additional funds. For the next 5 years, we'll be at \$247M, more than double. That's a huge gap in terms of needs. On the other hand, these budget confirmations are good news that can help kick-start the transition.

We need to make this transition from a project-based to a plan-based approach to housing management. This will enable a planned, predictable, and sustained approach by 2024-2028. With this plan, we hope to lay the groundwork for eventual First Nations control.

To support this transition from 2024 onwards, the Housing Initiative will remain in place, with some components still open:

- Construction: expansion and downpayment
- Renovation
- Lot servicing
- Capacity building
- Innovation

These components will be open, and you'll be able to submit projects as you like, with no deadlines. In terms of transition, starting next year, we'll be able to start working on housing plans rather than projects. Bruce is proposing that community representatives think about what an ideal housing plan for their community might look like, what it should contain, how it can be a useful planning tool, and how it might relate to the catch-up work. These discussions could take place in November. With that, he concluded his presentation by inviting participants to begin this reflection. It's a reflection that will initiate everything else.

Patrick now introduces Pierre Bélanger from CMHC.

CMHC

Pierre Bélanger, Senior Manager, Aboriginal Housing Solutions - Quebec and Atlantic Regions

He acknowledges the contribution of his team members from the Quebec and Atlantic regions. His presentation will be divided into three parts: an overview of the general housing situation, the National Housing Strategy, and the Legacy programs, which have been delivered for almost 40 years now.

General housing situation

Inflation and rising interest rates are having a major impact on home ownership and construction costs. Soon, we should have a glimpse of the federal budget. What emerges is that housing is a priority for next year.

Following the cabinet shuffle, Shawn Fraser has been named the new Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities. He is therefore the new Minister responsible for CMHC and Infrastructure Canada. We don't yet have any details on the link between CMHC and Infrastructure. We expect to hear more in the fall.

National Strategy

Regarding the National Strategy, certain initiatives remain ad hoc:

Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI): requests far exceeded the \$5B available budget. Of these, six communities and nine projects were supported on reserve. Two other off-reserve projects were also supported.

Housing Accelerator Fund (HCAF): 4 projects in Aboriginal communities are currently under analysis.

Renovation Co-investment Fund: We are awaiting news on phase two of this initiative. Quebec has obtained \$7.5M out of a \$60M envelope, which will support the renovation of 1,300 units.

As for the *Canada Greener Affordable Housing Program*, popularity was rather mixed on reserve. Only one application was submitted. Applications will be accepted from September 15 to December 15.

About the *Shelter and Transitional Housing Initiative*, 33 projects were approved nationwide.

About the traditional or *Legacy* programs, the Section 95 program has been impacted by rising interest rates and construction costs. Only 31 housing units will be delivered in the region this year. The deadline for applications is October 15.

With respect to regional allocation and reallocation, we are now entering the national reallocation phase. It is therefore possible to seek additional, unused funds from other regions.

A new component: the *regularization of files*. Following a backlog of files (Section 95 and renovation programs), CMHC is actively working to regularize these and deliver them within reasonable deadlines. Line Lapalme is actively working with communities to negotiate internally and ensure more rigorous follow-up.

As for the *Housing Internship* component, we have received requests totalling \$1.6M, while the available budget is less than \$250,000. ISC covered more than \$1M for 40 internships. CMHC also contributed up to its budget. Many thanks to ISC for its contribution.

Patrick resumes and summarizes the three presentations. He asks Tanu to provide an update on training.

Tanu mentions the School Council's involvement over the past seven years and says that in total, more than 30 students have successfully completed their studies. This year, five more students will graduate in November. We currently have a seventh cohort of six students who will graduate this winter. In collaboration with Cégep Garneau, we are currently working to revise and enhance the program. Over the past two years, we have explored certain components to include to the training. We want to add a component on mental health for our directors, we also want to add a component on radon, as well as a third component on asset management, as this is a priority identified by the AFN at the national level. During COVID-19, we held a short training session on this topic. We hope that these three new modules will be added to the program for the eighth cohort.

Patrick resumes and continues the ISC and CMHC summary presentations. He invites participants to ask questions.

Martine Bruneau, Abitibiwinni: My questions are for Bruce Labrador (ISC) and Pierre Bélanger (CMHC).

On a political level, I'd like to know what pressure tactics were used for housing. In addition, we submitted three applications to the RHI I'd like to know why our first two applications were turned down. Our third application was accepted, for 2 duplexes and 2 houses. I'd also like to know if RRAP funds will be increased. Because we're still capped at \$19,000, and right now I'm getting RRAP quotes of between \$26,000 and \$30,000. Customers are very unhappy. Also, CMHC recently gave us an extra duplex. We had to consult the Band Council to see if they would give us the missing money. We were asked for start and end dates. By the time CMHC approved the project, the start date had passed. As a result, we're

significantly behind schedule, with a financial penalty of \$10,000 and a proposal to extend our date. It's the same thing with RHI. We receive the answer three months after our realistic start date. Also, we can't build in December, January, and February. The deadline for us to pour foundations is October. Applications should be accepted in March and April so that we can start in May and June.

Pierre Bélanger, CHMC: As far as RRAP is concerned, we don't expect any increase. It will be the same budget.

As for the time taken to respond to financing requests, I agree. Requests are punctual and quick, despite our internal recommendations. The response times for Section 95 or RRAP do not hold water, I understand the contexts. You could discuss this with your specialist as part of the regularization process.

Martine Bruneau, Abitibiwinni: It was our specialist who suggested that we make the decision, following an e-mail from CMHC, to extend our deadline. Can we get support to avoid a \$10,000 penalty?

Pierre Bélanger, CMHC: I'll take the necessary steps with our financial solutions team to avoid this kind of situation. You're not the only one in this situation. When files arrive and are complete, the decision-making process should be much faster.

In the case of RHI, people are pitted against each other. Even so, the Aboriginal community benefits from advantageous funding under this initiative, and there are many applications. Heartbreaking choices are made at times. Still, it's fortunate that your application has been approved for phase three. Whether there will be a phase four remains to be seen.

In Charlottetown, a federal meeting was held recently, and a lot of pressure was brought to bear by the regions, including Quebec. Pressure is coming from everywhere. The economy and housing are two of the federal government's top priorities right now. However, we don't know the funding levels for the next budget.

Bruce Labrador, ISC: Pierre has covered the issue well. On a regional scale, I wouldn't call it pressure, but rather representation. COVID has had an impact on housing overcrowding, that's for sure. The regional partnership is very strong and dates to the 80s and 85s. This contributes to our credibility on a national scale. On a regional scale, we have implemented innovative measures with our partners. What's more, towards the end of last year's fiscal year, we raised \$22M.

Guy Latouche, AFNQL: Let me give you an example. Several representations are made, thanks to your figures. At the Tripartite Committee, we often talk about construction issues. Last year, you received a letter to index your budgets to construction and renovation in the housing initiative. We agree that we need more housing units, but communities are having trouble with their down payments. These are the kinds of representations we make on an ongoing basis. We have very different agendas, and we agree on what's of interest to the region, so that programs and budgets are better adapted to reality.

Patrick thanks Martine and yields the floor to Marouane Abid, from Kahnawake.

Marouane Abid, Housing Program Manager, Kahnawake: My question is for Pierre Bélanger of CMHC. We're currently assessing the relevance of CMHC's co-investment program. We are in the process of developing a plan. I've been told that CMHC is currently providing \$25,000. However, information is circulating that this amount will be increased to \$70,000, which apparently took effect in August. I've had no further information on this subject. Could you tell us a little more about the CMHC contribution per unit?

Pierre Bélanger, CMHC: You're ahead of the news, which has not yet been confirmed. Contributions had been reduced to \$25,000. Currently in the co-investment fund, we are awaiting news of contributions reaching \$75,000 (reprofiling). This information has not yet been confirmed, and we will keep you informed. We didn't want to hide this sensitive information. With this level of project funding, I think we're still going to be short, but we'll still need the collaboration of a wide range of partners to fill the gaps.

Marouane Abid, Housing Program Manager, Kahnawake: I have a second question. We see a lot of federal programs at CMHC and ISC. As far as the provincial government is concerned, there may be some programs to which First Nations would be entitled, but we don't have any information in this regard. What is available from the provincial government, which also has a certain responsibility towards First Nations?

Pierre Bélanger, CMHC: As for the *Société d'habitation du Québec*, they work off-reserve in urban areas. They work with Native Friendship Centres and other off-reserve organizations. On-reserve housing is a federal responsibility. In addition, certain initiatives have taken place at the SAA level, but not regarding housing.

Patrick asks if there is a final question.

Areti Malliarou, Kahnawake: I'm also from Kahnawake. I'm Director of Housing. I have a specific question about funding for transitional housing. What are the timelines for presenting a proposal because we'd like to free up some housing units and do some evictions, and we'd like to offer a quick relocation solution for these people?

Pierre Bélanger, CMHC: Do you mean shelters for women and children who are victims of domestic violence, or shelters for the homeless?

Areti Malliarou, Kahnawake: These are shelters for people we don't want to see becoming homeless. They may be women and children, or other vulnerable people, or simply people who can't afford accommodation elsewhere.

Pierre Bélanger, CMHC: We have no funding for this kind of initiative. On the other hand, if the shelters are in the city, the provincial government may fund operating costs. CMHC may also contribute under the co-investment component for construction. But you still must consider financing operating costs.

Bruce Labrador, ISC: It's under discussion right now. We should talk to each other to see what we can do and how we can get involved, especially if safety is involved. Otherwise, if it's a question of homelessness, we could talk. It's a case-by-case basis. We'll be happy to discuss it with you.

Areti Malliarou, Kahnawake: Is there some form of contract or agreement to sign to benefit from ISC funds?

Bruce Labrador, ISC: You must submit one application per project, but there is no agreement.

Areti Malliarou, Kahnawake: Last question. Is there a condition or prerequisite to participate in the training? Do you have to be Indigenous, or can any employee participate?

Guy Latouche, AFNQL: I think Tanu would be the best person to answer your question. Tanu?

Tanu Lusignan: Yes, anyone can take part in the training.

Patrick thanks the presenters and questions and introduces the next item on the agenda.

3. Local and regional housing issues

Patrick gives a summary of local and regional issues, as well as the history of the housing issue. He mentions that the issue will be discussed in greater depth in person at the November meeting. He invites Guy Latouche to do his presentation.

Guy Latouche, Housing and Infrastructure Advisor for the AFNQL

In September 2022, at the last regional meeting on housing, Regional Chief Ghislain Picard raised the following question: twenty years after the presentation of the AFNQL's report on housing needs, what is the state of housing in our communities? The report published in 2000 made it clear that there is a housing crisis in the communities. The needs were expressed by the detailed data collected from you, the stakeholders. The 2000 report is updated regularly. However, beyond the quantitative, which includes data on the staggering costs associated with inflation and the shortage of manpower, the figures do not reveal the non-quantifiable data that remain revealing of the housing situation (for example, what are the challenges, the improvements, the deteriorations?). You know the situation. We'd like you to start thinking about this, so that we can capture those qualitative issues we're facing now, but which aren't reflected by the figures. By doing so, we hope to provide input for program adaptation. We're asking you to get ready by November. I'd like us to go beyond statistics to make the case. Thank you all so much!

Patrick thanks Guy and entertains questions from the floor.

Jean-Noël Riverin, Housing Manager, Pessamit: Regarding the special needs of children, I would like to know if CMHC or ISC has any programs in this area. To date, I've heard nothing. Could this be a later initiative? Could Jordan's Principle be involved?

Guy Latouche, AFNQL: The issue is very topical because of decision number 41 of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal. There are some discussions at this level right now. For the "children's housing needs" component, in the 2022 budget, some announcements had been made, but the federal government had not yet defined what children's housing needs were. Perhaps Bruce can shed some light on this?

Jean-Noël Riverin, Housing Manager, Pessamit: Or perhaps a budget is available under Jordan's Principle? Can Jordan's Principle come into play?

Bruce Labrador, ISC: The answer is yes in both cases. There are funds in the "childhood-family" component. It hasn't been implemented yet. Next week, we have a national meeting and it's on the agenda. It's already been on the agenda for two years. As for Jordan's Principle, we have received several requests at this level, mainly for residential renovation. We'll have more information at that point. These are two avenues directly linked to children's housing needs.

Rosalie Sioui, FNQLHSSC: As far as financing is concerned, the ELCC (Early Learning and Child Care) offers considerable funding. It includes a construction and renovation component for children. Mr. Riverin can contact his community's health director. He is aware of this funding.

Jean-Noël Riverain, Housing Manager, Pessamit: Ms. Sioui, is there any documentation we could receive?

Rosalie Sioui, FNQLHSSC: Oui, des communications ont été acheminées aux Chefs et aux directions santé et services sociaux, mais je peux prendre vos coordonnées et vous acheminer l'information.

Patrick summarizes Guy's presentation and asks if there are any further questions or comments.

Guy Latouche, AFNQL: The Community of Practice concept fits in well with what we want to discuss in November. In small groups, people express themselves a lot, and I have a lot of positive expectations for this discussion.

Patrick invites communities to contact Guy Latouche to discuss their situation.

Tanu mentions that relevant information was shared in the chat. Nathalie Spénard (ISC) talked about the possibility of twinning CMHC and ISC in terms of financial arrangements. He mentions that today's PowerPoint presentations are available for download. He pointed out that questions concerning the salaries of housing and housing-related employees could be discussed further in November.

In the wake of the pandemic, many training programs have been modified, and this is certainly the case with construction. It is now possible to do an internship with community contractors. These CMHC internships are well invested, and the need is great. Thanks to ISC for providing the additional funding required so that we can offer these internships. CMHC funding is intended for young people or those 50 and over. But the need for those 30 and over is great. Many of our students are over 30, and we face several challenges in finding internships.

Patrick also talks about the issue of mental health for housing workers. What do people need to be better equipped to deal with mental health issues? We want to discuss this further in November, so that we can put these things in place. It's sometimes difficult to manage these issues, in addition to dealing with funding.

4. Announcements

Tanu presents a summary of activities taking place at the national level. He emphasizes the role of the School Council and the Community of Practice in Housing in improving training, networking, and workshops, while supporting graduates. The pandemic has greatly affected networking, and webinars and other sessions have replaced face-to-face meetings for some time.

This year, it was possible to send three students to an AFN national housing meeting in Toronto with members of the community of practice. Another event will be held next week in Edmonton, Alberta, organized by the First Nations Housing Professional Association, which was represented last year at our annual AFNQL meeting. Their representative gave us a very interesting presentation on their programs. We intend to continue promoting this event to our past and present students. We currently have four students who will be attending this event in Edmonton next week. We also plan to promote the First Nations Housing Conference in Thunder Bay this October. We want to offer students the opportunity to represent our region at this event, as we did last year.

In addition, we plan to launch a new program, the Inspector Program, for the Winter of 2024. More information will be available on November 21 and 22. At last fall's meeting, we shared information about the mobile unit. The reps from Oshki-Wenjack came to present their business model for the deployment of the mobile unit to the 40-plus communities in Northern Ontario. In our business plan, we've included programs in your communities for the benefit of your members. We'll be bringing you an update in November, including news on the collaboration of partners to fund the mobile unit. For Workplace and the Community of Practice, we plan to develop an agenda with topics prioritized by you, for a fruitful working

session in November. And if you have any questions about the Edmonton and Thunder Bay conferences, please don't hesitate to contact us. We'll see to the logistics so that you can attend.

Patrick reiterates the announcement of the AFNQL and that of the Community of Practice, on November 21 and 22, at the Hôtel Le Bonne Entente in Quebec City. A registration form will be sent to you. For further information, please refer to the Community of Practice and Workplace platforms. We also have a website at www.coph.ca. Concerning the Point of Contact in Housing, please do not hesitate to contact Ramelia for any support or adaptation regarding the training. There are also opportunities with ISC for skills development. We look forward to your participation.

Tanu takes the floor again to mention that there will be several partner booths at the November meeting, including Cégep Garneau, and we'll be taking the opportunity to launch the eighth cohort. We'll also have the chance to attend the graduation of the latest cohort of students. There's a lot to look forward to with the Community of Practice too.

The Point of Contact in Housing is also active for support for communities with the funding application, as mentioned by Nathalie Spénard. Tanu thus sums up the various funding initiatives with Indigenous Services Canada. If you click on the links, this will bring you back to the Community of Practice in Housing. This is another initiative that helps strengthen skills, to meet your training needs. We are currently supporting some projects, including the recognition of skills acquired with the Listuguj community, and perhaps a Regional School Board. We are also looking to develop a CCQ assessment with the Kitcisakik community by completing ISC funding, to allow their carpenters to seek their CCQ competence card. We will also launch the Inspectors' Program, supported by ISC. This is a program that will benefit all communities to develop skills in the field of inspection, thanks to the assistance of the Grand Council of the Waban-Aki Nation which supports this initiative. We also support Long Point and Winneway carpentry programs. We are also trying to bring a heavy equipment operator course to Lake Barrière. These are types of initiatives that can be carried out through the point of contact in housing with the assistance of the school board, the community of practice and ISC. Send us an email, contact us and we will see you relying on your initiatives.

In closing, Patrick invites the stakeholders to learn. Then, he introduces the Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy.

In the federal budget of 2022, an amount of \$300M was planned for joint development and the launch of a strategy on the housing of Aboriginal people in urban, rural, and Northern areas. For the year 2023, an amount of \$4B was announced for the implementation of this strategy. To learn more about this strategy, we invited Mr. Marcel Vautour of CMHC, to talk about the topic and what was presented at the Montreal session, last March. The presentation will be followed by a question period.

5. Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy

Marcel Vautour, Director of Policies and Housing, CMHC

As mentioned, the 2022 budget was in the order of \$300M for an Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy. All this funding came from the CMHC. Subsequently, most of this funding was transferred to ISC, while recognizing the pressing needs of the communities in this file. In addition, the CMHC has retained an amount to hold engagement events. Several have been held with the Indigenous community. We held a consultation in

Montreal last March. I am happy to share with you the results and what we have heard, as we start the development of what the strategy could look like

We have created links with certain partners. As mentioned, an additional amount of \$4B in seven years was announced as part of this year's budget. CMHC is trying to develop an Indigenous strategy from an Indigenous perspective. CMHC also tries to see how it could support said strategy. The overall strategy of \$4B is apart, but still linked to the funding of immediate ISC needs. If you have any questions on this, I will try to answer them as best I can, if an ISC representative is not present today.

This rural and urban initiative is to establish a distinction because it aims to meet the needs of people who are not covered by existing initiatives, including those for First Nations, and it is intended to support Indigenous people in rural and urban areas. That said, we recognize that reserve needs are very large and that funds for housing and reserve housing are insufficient. We know that the AFN did a lot of work to document the gaps on reserve, and I learned of the latest figures of \$135B, but the present initiative is really for Indigenous people outside reserve.

Regarding the urban strategy, and with regards to the 2022 budget, the latter provided for a commitment of \$300M over five years. In June 2023, ISC announced that NICHI would be the organization responsible for the allocation of funds for 2023-2024 and 2024-2025. The 2023 budget proposes to commit an amount of \$4B over seven years, starting in 2024-2025.

The joint development and the progress to date regarding calls for ideas and mobilization have been presented. A PowerPoint presentation is available for more details. It reports on several mobilization events that have been held in the provinces, the territories, the North and the coalition of partners. The themes selected are governance, funding and allocation of funds, joint development, and common priorities.

Regarding the Montreal consultation session held on March 14, 2023, the central point which emerged is support for vulnerable people (itinerant, students, elderly, women fleeing violence, transition housing and various family needs). In addition, funding, partnerships, crossroads (links to navigate for Indigenous communities), as well as the concept of housing continuum emerged.

Finally, a draft work framework arising from consultations is presented, and Mr. Vautour welcomes questions.

Chief Lance Haymond, Kebaowek: NICHI was created quickly to manage these millions for off-reserve housing, without consulting us. We believe that we are also responsible for our off-reserve members. Has the government confirmed that NICHI will also manage the \$4B for initiatives?

Marcel Vautour, CMHC: No, we are still in the co-development phase. No decision has been made regarding this subject.

Chief Lance Haymond, Kebaowek: We have adopted a motion in Halifax concerning what we would like to see happening at this level. We have excellent stakeholders, and we hope they will not pay the bill. We believe that funding must reach our stakeholders. That to which we aspire does not necessarily represent the vision of NICHI. Our stakeholders must face major challenges to ensure their funding.

Marcel Vautour, CMHC: I welcome your comments, and rest assured that we will continue to work with the AFN. Thank you for your comments.

Guy Latouche, AFNQL: My question is linked to that of Chief Haymond. Regarding distinctions, 58% of Indigenous who live off-reserve are First Nations members. The rationale requests that the overall funding of this initiative be allocated in this respect.

In addition, during your consultation last March, the off-reserve housing unit providers were invited and some participated. We did not invite them this morning, but I wonder if you will continue discussions with them.

Marcel Vautour, CMHC: It will be the ministers who will rule on the approach. The AFN is preparing on this end. This is part of the narrative.

Regarding your second point, we continue to collect comments and do not close the door to service providers. We are comfortable working with you to leave no one aside. Our options and advice put forward in the office will reflect the will of our partners.

In view of our approach, there are more reconciliation between groups and service providers. There is a good bond on a regional scale. The goal is to help people in need. We are comfortable bringing together service providers.

Guy Latouche, AFNQL: Thank you. I invite all the participants this morning to contact you if they wish to continue this discussion.

Marcel Vautour, CMHC: Yes, exactly. Soon we will be ready to publish and share our report. Communication lines remain open.

If we go back to the presentation, we have tried to bring together the common elements as best we could. We realize that an amount of \$4B over seven years seems a lot, but it is not so much when we consider the needs. In terms of vision following the comments from the community, the urban Indigenous people would have accommodation adapted to their needs and their reality (safe, stable, affordable housing in urban areas). We also consider housing conducted jointly and which meet the imperative needs in terms of housing for urban populations whose needs are most dire.

Regarding priorities, it is a question of providing support to priority populations, i.e. youth, students, the elderly, homeless people, families, women and children fleeing violence, and the disabled, to name only a few.

For September 2023, the next steps consist in validating the options and results related to the strategy, the development of options and advice on policies, and see the creation of a national housing center for Indigenous people. And by the end of this year, we plan to produce an official report. Do you have any questions?

Chief Lance Haymond, Kebaowek: Regarding the role of the national center, can you further explain its role, as well as the necessary resources needed to support it? Will the funds come from the national initiative? Will this impact our funding? We have a very articulated approach, and we believe that we are talking on behalf of our region. We have also informed the AFN. Consequently, we do not see the need for this national center. Can you give us more information? Also, why do business with a national organization when our regions know our needs well and do a good job in this respect?

Marcel Vautour, CMHC: This national center is a commitment from our previous minister. We have no details on what it will look like. There are certain distinctions regarding housing strategies, which is why this center has been considered.

Regarding fund allocation, nothing has yet been determined. There could be regional "hubs", not necessarily a national center. Your comments are welcome. The government has not yet made formal commitments, except for the creation of a center. If you have ideas for regional models, we invite you to let us know. This amount of \$4B will be used to his end.

Chief Lance Haymond, Kebaowek: Thank you!

Marcel Vautour, CMHC: Are there any other questions? Do we have ISC representatives this morning? In view of ISC, these people work with NICHI on the allocation of funds.

Patrick Robertson asks if there are other questions.

Marcel Vautour, CMHC: I thank everyone for the invitation. We remain available for any feedback. Do not hesitate to contact us, if necessary. We are ready to present options on what it could look like.

Patrick Robertson thanks Marcel Vautour and makes a summary on his presentation.

6. End of the conference

Patrick thanks the presenters and the speakers for this morning's meeting. He invites participants to initiate a reflection on the points offered for the meeting next November.

Tanu mentions that this morning PowerPoint presentations are available and can be downloaded from the chat. He talks about the upcoming steps, with a view to the November meeting.

Patrick mentions that minutes of the meeting will be distributed. The Community of Practice is always active, and Patrick invites participants to initiate a reflection on the qualitative aspects of housing (current situation and challenges), challenges regarding mental health, and other important topics.

Tanu mentions that more information will follow concerning the November meeting, including the graduation of the present cohort and kiosks.

The meeting ends at 11:51 a.m.

Appendix A

REGISTRATION FOR THE MEETING - HOUSING (on-line)

September 12, 2023

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