

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES/BUILDING ON SUCCESS: THE FIRST NATIONS PLAN

FAILURE TO ACT

- Fastest growing population in Canada will lack opportunities to contribute to the cultural fabric and overall Canadian economy.
- First Nations will face a greater prevalence of chronic diseases, social and emotional problems, lower educational attainment and employment.
- Failure to act will result in greater burden on the Canadian health system, and overall productivity.
- Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples estimated that the annual cost of status quo was \$7.5 B in 1996, climbing to \$11B by 2016, due to net cost of foregone production and government revenues, and extra costs of remedial programs and financial assistance.
- Royal Bank of Canada concluded that costs of implementing RCAP are more affordable in the long-run than "*maintaining the status quo, the truly daunting cost of doing nothing*" (1997).

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

- Canada's dependency ratio is expected to increase from 46.5 to 58.0 by 2025, meaning that more citizens will be dependent upon than contributing to the tax base. Without continued high levels of immigration, Canada's population will begin to actually decline by 2026, as will labor force growth by 2011.
- The First Nations population living on reserve is growing at a rate of 2.3% per year; nearly three times the overall Canadian rate. Over 50% of the population is under 23 years old (the median age is 22 versus 36 for all Canadians).
- A decade of research undertaken by the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development has been unable to uncover a single case of sustained development that did not involve the recognition and effective exercise of tribal sovereignty: the practical assertion by tribes of their right and capacity to govern themselves.
- Over the past 6 years, University of British Columbia Professors Chandler and Lalonde have repeatedly demonstrated that the highly variable and lower rates of youth suicide in British Columbia's First Nations are related to "stronger "cultural continuity"—community level factors showing the stage at which communities preserve their cultural past and secure future control of their own civic lives.
- **Resources are not enough; real self-sufficiency by stable First Nations governments is critical.**

THE FIRST NATIONS PLAN

- Business is recognizing that stable First Nations governments enhance opportunities for private partnerships, such as the settlement of land claims advancing the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline.
- Demonstrated in the Supreme Court cases of *Haida*, *Taku*, and *Mikisew*, resource development projects require consultation and some form of accommodation with First Nations governments.
- Resource revenue sharing agreements and improved Impact Benefit Agreements provide a longer-term economic investment climate.



- The Conference Board of Canada's study of business has recommended:
 - Settling land claims and treaty negotiations;
 - Engaging First Nations-Crown approaches to economic development, capacity building, performance measurement and accountability;
 - Enhancing communication and collaboration between government, First Nations and private industry to match education and training to business needs; and,
 - Developing and implementing a process to meet the Crown's fiduciary duty to consult in the permit and approvals process.

THE FIRST NATIONS PLAN IS REASONABLE, ACHIEVABLE AND NECESSARY TO ENSURE A PRODUCTIVE AND COMPETITIVE CANADA FOR ALL CANADIANS.

1. **Creating opportunities and building on our successes** so that First Nations citizens contribute fully to Canada's economic competitiveness.
2. Achieving **sustainability** by ensuring that First Nations have adequate and equitable funding capacity to enable their citizens to reach their full potential;
3. Implementing **structural changes** that facilitate **First Nations control** over the content, design, delivery, and management of all our programs and services.

