



**Elders' Statement of the  
Advisory Committee on Climate Action and the Environment (ACCAE)**

We, as Indigenous knowledge holders, declare consistent with the AFN Charter, Mother Earth Accord, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples:

First Nations (Indigenous peoples) are in a unique position to be leaders in climate change initiatives because of our knowledge of the sacred teachings of the land, and must be situated as agents of change in climate action, rather than as passive recipients of climate change impacts;

The Creator gave us the responsibility to preserve and protect Mother Earth and laws that govern all our relationships for us to coexist interdependently with nature and humankind, defining our rights, responsibilities, and obligations to the land as men and women;

The Creator gave us our spiritual beliefs, languages, cultures, freedom, and a place on Mother Earth to provide us with all our needs;

Mother Earth is in a climate crisis. We therefore insist on an immediate end to the destruction and desecration of the sacred elements of life based on human obligation to care for the land and for future generations;

With our spiritual laws, practices, experiences and relationships with our lands and territories, First Nations (Indigenous peoples) have a vital role in defending and healing Mother Earth. This is our obligation;

The unbreakable and sacred connection of land, air, water, sun, plants, animals, and our human communities as the material and spiritual basis for our existence;

The impacts of climate change now transcend our lands and territories, requiring free, prior, and informed consent among First Nations (Indigenous peoples) to protect Turtle Island for future generations.

October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016  
Fort St John, British Columbia