



Assembly of First Nations

Re-setting the Relationship: Full commemoration of role and contributions of First Nations

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Assemblée des Premières Nations

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Who we are

- AFN is the national, political representative of First Nation governments & their citizens
 - Facilitates national and regional discussions
 - Advocates as directed by First Nation on behalf of their interests
 - Acts in a harmonizing and coordinating role as directed by First Nations

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Context

- Seven generations since Confederation
- Different phases of the relationship
 - Economic
 - Military
 - Treaty
 - Assimilation
 - Recovery

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First Nations Reality

- Treaties set the fundamental principles of the Nation-to-Nation Relationship with the Crown
- Early Treaty making characterized by shared and clear objective to establish mutual protection and coordination

Central challenge in finding effective ways to engage in the new millennium is to find mechanisms that accurately reflect this starting point of interaction between peoples of the First Nations and the Government of Canada, and allow us to truly see each other as Nations.

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Current Relationship

- Characterized by long history of interference and mistrust
- Outdated legislative framework inhibits progress and growth – has been used to destabilize and challenge the strength cultural practices
- Education used as a tool of oppression – First Nation languages severely threatened

however ...

- 2008 Prime Minister's Apology for Indian Residential Schools signaled a new approach
- Canada's 2010 endorsement of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples sets the key parameters requiring mutual respect and partnership

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Re-setting the Relationship

- First Nations have an ambitious agenda for change, in active pursuit of self-determination
- Self-determination is firmly grounded in our languages, our cultures, traditional decision-making and laws

Supporting greater awareness and understanding of First Nations – broadly and among our own peoples – through storytelling, performance arts, language instruction and commemoration ultimately supports Nation re-building and a new relationship with Canada and Canadians

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Steps to Re-setting the Relationship

- Support for First Nation language instruction, particularly immersion centres
- Development of curriculum for ALL schools that provides full and clear histories of First Nations, including a strong focus on treaties, as well as current political and cultural priorities
- Sustained support for First Nation artists and performers
- Full Recognition & Commemoration of First Nations
 1. Indigenous Nations Embassy at Victoria Island – bringing life to the vision of Elder William Commanda
 2. Creation of a Hall of Leaders to recognize the contribution of First Nations
 3. Indigenous Peoples Library – (real and virtual) – to catalogue and consolidate historic and modern contributions of Indigenous Peoples in all spectrums of academia, philosophy, science, arts and culture

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Canada at 150 ...

- Opportunity to ensure the future fully honours First peoples, understands their histories and supports their future paths
- Through supporting sharing of First Nation history, perspectives, and aspirations, Canada can support the way forward and ensure the next seven generations fully redress the injustices of the past
- Together we can re-set the relationship and move towards a mutual sharing and understanding and true partnership between our Nations.

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