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## Assembly of First Nations

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## Assemblée des Premières Nations

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**SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY  
DECEMBER 8, 9, & 10, 2015; GATINEAU, QC**

**Resolution no. 70/2015**

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**TITLE:** Support for Housing, Water and Infrastructure

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**SUBJECT:** Housing and Infrastructure

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**MOVED BY:** Chief Elaine Johnston, Serpent River First Nation, ON

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**SECONDED BY:** Chief David McDougall, St. Theresa Point First Nation, MB

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**DECISION** Carried by Consensus

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**WHEREAS:**

A. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states:

- i. Article 21 (1): Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including, inter alia, in the areas of education, employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health and social security.
- ii. Article 21 (2): States shall take effective measures and, where appropriate, special measures to ensure continuing improvement of their economic and social conditions. Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities.
- iii. Article 23: Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development. In particular, indigenous peoples have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining health, housing and other economic and social programmes affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programmes through their own institutions.
- iv. Article 25: Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard.
- v. Article 32 (2): States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to

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**PERRY BELLEGARDE, NATIONAL CHIEF**

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the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources.

- B. First Nations housing, water, and infrastructure needs have been severely impacted by the effects of the two percent cap which has been in place for almost two decades.
- C. In a March 2012 report, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, now known as Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), estimates that between 2010-2031 there is a need for 130,197 new housing units to accommodate household and family growth, 11,855 replacement units to accommodate the deteriorated stock, and the major renovation of between 8,261 and 10,861 units.
- D. April 20, 2007, Canada's Government announced that it would create the \$300 million First Nations Market Housing Fund (Fund) and promised the construction of 25,000 homes in 10 years. So far only 150 loans have been realized including the renovation of existing units.
- E. The First Nations Market Housing Fund needs to be evaluated in terms of performance, to address Trustee vacancies, reallocation or profiling of the funds from the interest on the \$300 million, and begin the discussion of transferring the Fund to First Nations control as directed by Resolution 16/2013, *Transition of the First Nations Market Housing Fund to First Nations Control*.
- F. Government housing programs are not working as Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation (CMHC) Section 95 only provided 496 units in 2014 and 1,189 Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) units. INAC and RRAP subsidies are non-indexed and well short of reality in the context of a sharp increase in construction costs over the last 20 years.
- G. There are many other issues such as an inequitable application of the Shelter Allowance program and the effect of expiring operating agreements from Section 95 agreements.
- H. The Ministers of INAC, Health and CMHC have been given their mandate letters to renew the relationship between Canada and Indigenous Peoples.
- I. The new relationship must be a nation to nation relationship, based inter alia on recognition of challenges in housing and infrastructure, rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership.

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

1. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to work with the Government of Canada to establish the proper new escalator to replace the 2% cap and to identify the catch-up funding required to address the shortfalls created by the 2% cap.
2. Direct the AFN to begin the dialogue with the relevant Government of Canada departments to establish a new fiscal framework and identify funding and programs to close the gap in housing, water, and infrastructure.
3. Direct the AFN seek funding support to conduct research in collaboration with the First Nation regions on devolution of programs to First Nation control such as housing and water management.

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4. Direct the AFN to seek funding to support the facilitation of national dialogue sessions on housing, infrastructure and water, high-speed Internet connectivity, and housing for the specific purpose of ensuring the safety of our children and women.
5. Direct the AFN to report on progress of this resolution to the Chiefs-in-Assembly on an annual basis.
6. Direct the AFN to work with the Government of Canada to change income assistance policy which restricts shelter allowance to be applied to band-owned homes.

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