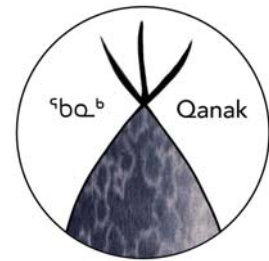
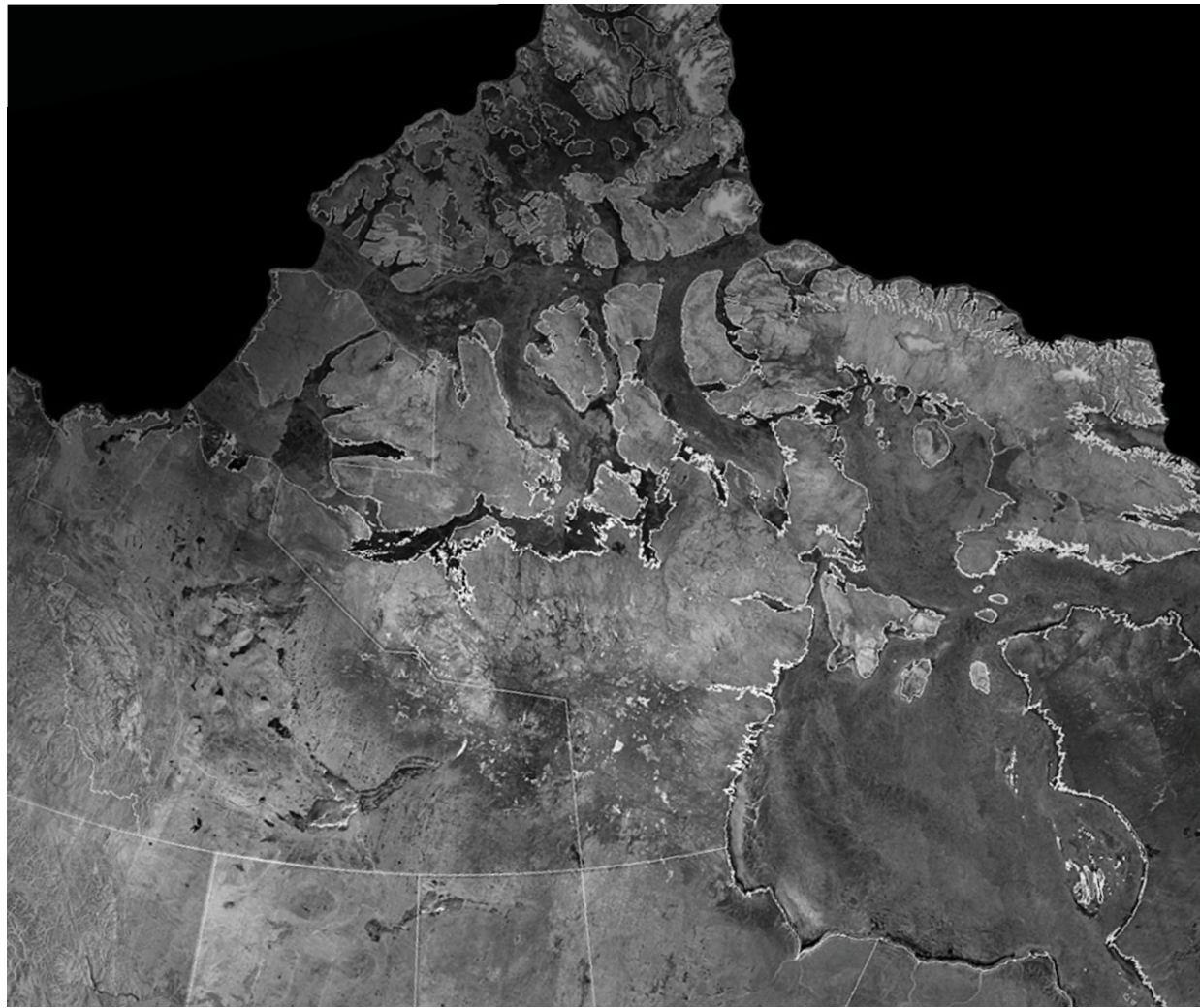




# We Are One Mind

PERSPECTIVES FROM EMERGING INDIGENOUS LEADERS

ON THE ARCTIC POLICY FRAMEWORK



This document is authored by the members of Dene Nahjo, Qanak, and Our Voices. We would like to thank the Gordon Foundation for the opportunity to gather and work together, and for the considerable financial and administrative support of the Gordon Foundation team. We would also like to thank Tony Penikett, Matt Wildcat, Eugene Boulanger, and Sara French for their assistance with the preparation of this report. The views are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Gordon Foundation.

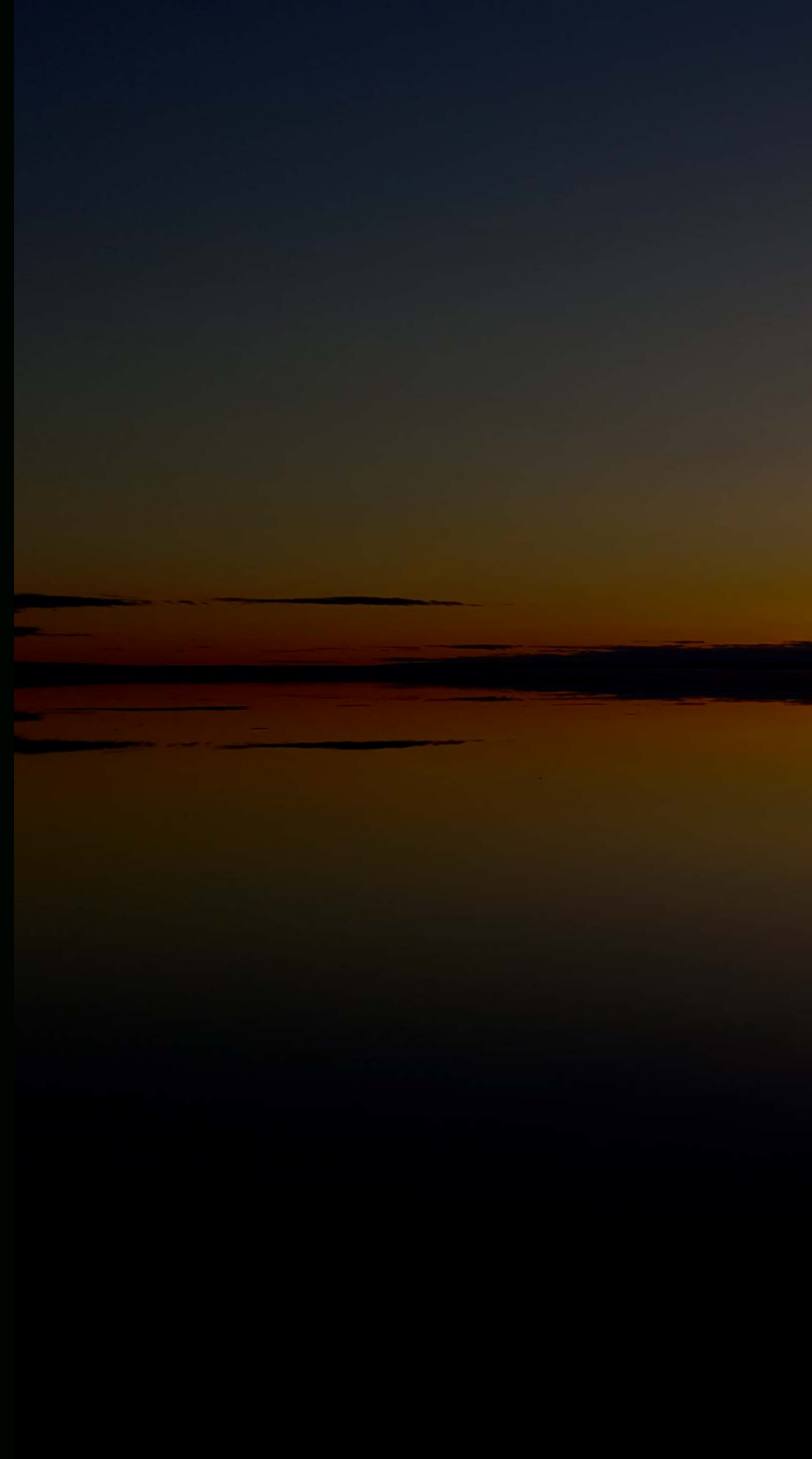
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we are one mind



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*Ekwoð winìtè zò lanì [Tùçhò]* means that “**all caribou have one mind**”, and refers to the wisdom of caribou. The elders repeatedly emphasize that caribou are smart animals; that they know every detail of their land and their environment. The caribou can predict weather changes and know what will approach them on their migration route. The caribou have good memories of their land and of all their migration routes, and the animals know what happens on their land. Sometimes when a herd of caribou is travelling 50 km in front of another herd, the herd in the back will know when the first herd has changed direction to their migration route, although the herds are 50 kilometers apart. The concept also refers to the sensory capacity of caribou. The animals know how the weather will be and when the weather will change. The caribou know when the weather will become colder and warmer, and based on this knowledge they plan to travel south into the forest or stay on the Barrenlands.<sup>1</sup>

## Notes

<sup>15</sup>Canada, Budget 2017, p.18.

<sup>16</sup>Simon, p. 22.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p.11.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p.13.

<sup>22</sup>Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Honouring the Truth: Reconciling the Future. March 2014. [http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Honouring\\_the\\_Truth\\_Reconciling\\_for\\_the\\_Future\\_July\\_23\\_2015.pdf](http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Honouring_the_Truth_Reconciling_for_the_Future_July_23_2015.pdf) (Accessed: 6 May 2017).

<sup>23</sup>See Canada, Budget 2017, p. 132.

<sup>24</sup>Simon, p. 24.

# Notes

<sup>1</sup>Dedats'eetsaa: Th̄ch̄ Research and Training Institute. “Ekwò zò gha dzò nats'èdè — We Live Here For Caribou: Cumulative Impacts Study on the Bathurst Caribou”. 2016, [http://www.research.Th̄ch̄.ca/sites/default/files/ekwo\\_zo\\_gha\\_dzo\\_natsede\\_tk\\_study.pdf](http://www.research.Th̄ch̄.ca/sites/default/files/ekwo_zo_gha_dzo_natsede_tk_study.pdf) (Accessed: 4 May 2017).

<sup>2</sup>Government of Canada. Canada's Arctic Policy Framework: Our North, Our Heritage, Our Future. 2008, <http://www.northernstrategy.gc.ca/cns/cns-eng.asp>. (Accessed: 4 May 2017).

<sup>3</sup>Government of Canada. United States-Canada Joint Arctic Leaders Statement. 2016, <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2016/12/20/united-states-canada-joint-arctic-leaders-statement>. (Accessed: 4 May 2017).

<sup>4</sup>Edward Allen. “Reflections on the 40th Anniversary of the Calder Decision”. <http://www.northernpublicaffairs.ca/index/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Allen.pdf>. (Accessed: 19 June 2017).

<sup>5</sup>Government of Canada. Budget 2017: Building a Strong Middle Class. March 2017, <http://www.budget.gc.ca/2017/home-accueil-en.html>. (Accessed: 6 May 2017), p. 148.

<sup>6</sup>Canada. Budget 2017, p. 135.

<sup>7</sup>Mary Simon. A New Shared Arctic Leadership Model. March 2017, <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1492708558500/1492709024236>. (Accessed: 6 May 2017), p.4.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p.11.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p.13.

<sup>11</sup>For the commitment in the federal budget to Pathways for Education see Canada, Budget 2017, p. 61. For more information on this organization and their geographic scope see: <https://www.pathwaystoeducation.ca/pathways-communities>.

<sup>12</sup>For more information on the NWT On the Land Collaborative see: <http://www.nwtontheland.ca>.

<sup>13</sup>Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Honouring the Truth: Reconciling the Future. March 2014. [http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Honouring\\_the\\_Truth\\_Reconciling\\_for\\_the\\_Future\\_July\\_23\\_2015.pdf](http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Honouring_the_Truth_Reconciling_for_the_Future_July_23_2015.pdf) (Accessed: 6 May 2017).

<sup>14</sup>See Canada, Budget 2017, p. 132.

# Introduction

In October 2009, the Government of Canada released “Canada’s Arctic Policy Framework: Our North, Our Heritage, Our Future”, followed by the “Statement on Canada’s Arctic Foreign Policy: Exercising Sovereignty” and “Supporting the Northern Policy Abroad” in 2013. The Arctic Policy Framework was based on four overarching pillars:

1. Exercising our Arctic Sovereignty;
2. Promoting Social and Economic Development;
3. Protecting our Environmental Heritage; and
4. Improving and Devolving Northern Governance<sup>2</sup>.

The federal government presented this strategy with minimal involvement, consultation, or engagement with Northerners. We did not see ourselves or our priorities in the strategy that was supposed to be about our home.

On December 20, 2016, the U.S. President and Canadian Prime Minister released the “United States-Canada Joint Arctic Leaders’ Statement.” In it the Prime Minister announced that:

... Canada is committing to co-develop a new Arctic Policy Framework, with Northerners, Territorial and Provincial governments, and First Nations, Inuit, and Métis People that will replace Canada’s Arctic Policy Framework. The Framework will focus on priority areas identified by the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs’ Special Representative, including education, infrastructure, and economic development.<sup>3</sup>

As the Government of Canada seeks to co-develop this new framework with Northerners, we – Dene Nahjo, Our Voices, and Qanak – offer our thoughts and input into this important process.

We do so to ensure that the policies that influence our lives are reflective of our realities and supportive of our collective goals.

We hope to play a small role in reversing the negative effects that past policy has had on the North, and to foster mutually beneficial partnerships between Indigenous Peoples and Canada. In the following, we contextualize the northern political landscape and put forward policy recommendations that focus on the well-being and self-determination of Indigenous Peoples in Canada’s North.

# Who We Are

## WE ARE HUMAN.

We are Indigenous. We are Northerners. We are artists, entrepreneurs, hunters, public servants, lawyers, culture keepers, language specialists, academic researchers, policy writers, leaders, visionaries, taxpayers, advocates, parents, and engaged citizens.

We are Dene Nahjo, Our Voices, and Qanak; collectives of emerging leaders from the Northwest Territories, Yukon, and Nunavut, who seek to make positive contributions to our communities by providing opportunities for local engagement with the policies and governance structures that affect us. We do so by advancing social and environmental justice, as well as skill-building opportunities. Our collectives were created to address the problems we see around us and to maintain our cultures. We speak from a place that seeks to strengthen our peoples and nations outside of the institutional framework of government.

We are the fire-keepers of the decisions that came before us and we are the ones who will see through the decisions that are made today. We embrace our responsibility for passing a better Canada onto the next generation.

We do not speak for or on behalf of Indigenous governments, territorial governments, or all Indigenous Peoples of the North. We speak on behalf of our collectives and with the power of our lived experiences as Northerners; the stories passed onto us by our Elders; and through interacting with, working for, and studying government at all levels. Our cultures find their roots prior to history books and we draw on that history to inform our recommendations.



We arrived at our recommendations through a process of discussion, debate, and mutual understanding, based on the principle of consensus. For the purpose of our recommendations, “the North” means Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, as well as Nunavik and Nunatsiavut.

b. Continue progress toward becoming the first country in the world to have a legal mechanism to recognize Indigenous Protected Areas.

c. Work with Arctic governments and Indigenous organizations to conceive a new federal policy directive that sets out a process for the identification, funding, and management of IPAs.<sup>24</sup>

25. Adopt the Minister’s Special Representative’s recommendation to establish a business development fund for Indigenous-led renewable energy and efficiency projects, which could be financed from Carbon Pricing revenues.



# Summary of Recommendations

13. Take action to implement the Truth and Reconciliation recommendation, which “... call[s] upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Aboriginal families”<sup>22</sup> and include specific provisions related to the North in the forthcoming Indigenous Framework on Early Learning and Child Care.<sup>23</sup>

14. Ensure that the proposed \$7 billion investment in creating new child care spaces prioritizes communities where these services are not currently accessible at all.

15. Recognize and promote the cultural significance that arts and creative cultural practices have on northern wellness, identity, and the ongoing process of reconciliation.

16. Support the international promotion of northern creative industries (Indigenous arts, culture, film industry, entrepreneurs, innovation, traditional knowledge, etc.) by investing in developing markets for these products, and providing adequate creative spaces in communities by ensuring that any new federal infrastructure includes a space for community use and sharing of best practices.

17. Assist in repatriating items of cultural significance back to their communities and create the infrastructure necessary to support their ongoing preservation and display.

18. Maintain a clear and strong focus on addressing the causes of climate change in the Northern Strategy.

19. Work towards meeting Canada’s obligations under the Paris Agreement, as well as working with all Circumpolar partners to announce Arctic warming

concerns during international negotiations.

20. Instruct the Infrastructure Bank of Canada to undertake nation-building level investments in housing, ports, road, energy, and waste management to positively impact the cost of living in the North for all northerners, as well as add an additional category for broadband and renewable energies to be considered under the bank’s programming;

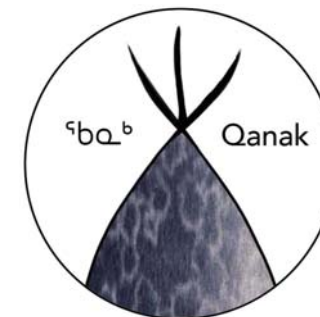
21. Mandate that all new federal infrastructure built in the North incorporate renewable technologies.

22. Adjust the Environmental Impact Assessment process to factor-in long-term impacts on both communities and health care systems related to changes in the environment and wildlife brought upon by resource development projects.

23. Instruct Statistics Canada to gather statistics related to the social return on investments and the economic impacts of conservation economies, including specifically trade in wild meats and seal products.

24. Accept the Minister’s Special Representatives’ recommendations on Indigenous Protected Areas, specifically the calls to:

- a. Work to formally recognize the existing land and marine conservation planning designations as the basis for setting and realizing a new ambitious conservation goal.



Dene Nahjo  
<http://denenahjo.com>

Dene Nahjo is a new generation of leaders working to advance social and environmental justice for Northern peoples and promote Indigenous leadership. By living, learning, and celebrating our culture on the land through the guidance of Elders, we strive to foster emerging leaders and create long-term, positive change under our vision ‘Land, Language, Culture. Forever’.

Our Voices  
<http://tidescanada.org/projects/our-voices/>

Our Voices is a collective of emerging Indigenous leaders from the Yukon and neighbouring First Nations. Our vision is inspired, engaged, and thriving Northern Indigenous youth uploading culture. We provide experiential learning, training, and development opportunities for emerging leaders and have held three large summer gatherings that focus on youth wellness.

Qanak  
<http://qanak.com>

Qanak was started to foster Inuit engagement with governance structures and to support leadership skills development in the next generation of Inuit leaders; leadership in the broad sense of the word. The tent pole ‘qanak’ represents the supporting structure of our society – not always visible, but critically important.

Dene Nahjo, Qanak, and Our Voices are part of the Tides Canada Shared Platform. For more information, see: <http://tidescanada.org/approach/shared-platform>

# Approaching the Arctic Policy Framework

WE HAVE NEVER EXTINGUISHED OUR RIGHTS.

The process to develop the Arctic Policy Framework is an opportunity for Northerners to enunciate what is important to us. While there are numerous competing priorities for federal funding and northern involvement, **we offer three specific themes to focus our collective attention:**

1. Northerners leading northern policy engagement;
2. Protecting future generations; and
3. Healthy lands, healthy economies.

Informing and guiding any approach to these three themes is how the Arctic Policy Framework – and, indeed, any federal policies touching the North – should be developed.

Northern peoples are too often subject to federal policies that are developed in Ottawa and applied to our communities and lands. Many reports and consultations exist that capture the policy priorities and ideas of northern peoples. We draw on these for inspiration and, where appropriate, reiterate essential calls to action. Notable among these are “A New Shared Arctic Leadership Model; Honouring the Truth, Reconciling the Future: Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission;” and “People to People, Nation to Nation: Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples Final Report.”

The Arctic Policy Framework and the subsequent regulations, legislation, and policies it informs must not repeat the mistakes of the past, but

rather be rooted in the principle that

**any decision being made that impacts Northerners or Indigenous Peoples must involve the active and meaningful engagement of Northern and Indigenous peoples, including the design of consultation processes specific to the North.**

Essential to the success of the Arctic Policy Framework is its ability to support “in the North, by the North” initiatives. This approach should be read into all that is proposed in this paper.

Indigenous Peoples of the North have never given up our power and authority over our territories and we will continue to be guardians of our lands and communities. Indigenous Peoples have always had rights, but what has been missing is the recognition of those rights by Canadian government and society. As a former Prime Minister aptly remarked in response to the Calder decision by the Supreme Court of Canada: “You have more rights than I thought you had.”<sup>4</sup>

The approach taken by government has historically been to compel Indigenous Peoples (often under conditions of duress) to cede, release, and surrender rights, title, and interests to lands and waters anywhere within Canada and offshore areas within the sovereignty or jurisdiction

WE HAVE NEVER EXTINGUISHED  
OUR RIGHTS

# Summary of Recommendations

**We call upon all federal and territorial partners to:**

1. Immediately recognize that Indigenous title has not and cannot be extinguished, as well as act in a timely manner to resolve existing unsettled land claims and self-government agreements.
2. Establish a Ministerial Working Group to review federal legislation to evaluate impacts on the provision of services in northern communities, and undertake the removal of legislative impediments that exclude Northerners from accessing federal programs or that impose inappropriate codes and regulations on northern people and communities.
3. Encourage Indigenous governments and peoples in the North to clarify how we consult our own peoples, and commit to updating the federal and territorial governments’ consultation framework to address gaps and redundancies to better ensure free, prior and informed consent.

**We recommend that the federal government:**

4. Establish a Northern Policy Institute that will aid governments in developing evidence-based policy that is reflective of northern realities and interests.
5. Commit to establishing Dene Nahjo’s proposed Social and Cultural Innovation Centre in the NWT.
6. Enact the Minister’s Special Representative’s following recommendations:
  - a. Create a University of the Arctic by striking a representative Arctic University Task Force to create a vision and business case for a university of the Canadian Arctic.<sup>19</sup>
  - b. Direct Polar Knowledge Canada to include the theme of improving the health and wellness of families (physical and mental health, housing, food, security,

etc.) in its research priorities; adding that language and culture must be included under this thematic area.<sup>20</sup>

c. Ensure appointments to the Polar Science Board are inclusive and representative of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples and that priority-setting exercises are informed by representative input from Arctic peoples, governments and Indigenous organizations.<sup>21</sup>

7. Instruct the newly appointed Chief Science Advisor’s mandate to include specific instruction that Indigenous traditional knowledge be considered alongside and equal to Western forms of knowing in both advising the Prime Minister and communicating science effectively across the federal government.

8. Increase specific supports to northern students to pursue post-secondary education; in particular, for part-time students and those with dependent children, as part of the national commitments in this area.

9. Commit to not enacting federal veto clauses over legislation passed by self-governing First Nations.

10. Increase the number of Indigenous Peoples appointed to the Senate, establish designated Senate seats for Indigenous representation, and increase the number of House of Commons ridings in the North.

11. Amend the Official Languages Act to explicitly include Indigenous languages and provide adequate funding parallel with other official languages, as well as access to federal services in the official languages.

12. Approach federal investments in health, social services, and education, on a multi-year basis and remove unnecessary restrictions that inhibit adaptation of programming to northern circumstances, as well as co-develop evaluation procedures that are in line with these circumstances.



# Conclusion

The Arctic Policy Framework is a tool to help guide and shape how the federal government's programs, policies, and regulations will be developed and evaluated. However, the effectiveness of any tool is determined by whether or not it is appropriate for the job and is placed in skilled hands. This tool will be no different.

There is much work to do to rebuild the relationship between Indigenous Northerners and the Government of Canada, but to rebuild, we must rebuild together; each working on the parts of the structure where we have the tools.

**We recognize that to be effective partners, we need to bring our own skill-builders and tools to the process and, despite the challenges and pains of the past, are willing to do so.**

Together, we can build a new and better structure built in the North by the North.



of Canada in exchange for the opportunity to participate in fragmented discussions and decision-making processes. Through these processes, the Crown was positioned as the rights-giver and highest power and authority.

Our shared history makes clear that the paternalistic relationship between the federal government and the North has not resulted in policies that meet the needs of our people. We are encouraged, therefore, by the recognition on behalf of the federal government that “[t]he barriers that make it difficult for Indigenous Peoples and their communities to reach their full potential have been in place for far too long. Resolving past injustices will take time, and can only be achieved with sustained support and collaboration.”<sup>5</sup>

With a renewed Arctic Policy Framework, Canada has the opportunity to evolve its relationship with the North and with the Indigenous Peoples of the North.

**In the spirit of reconciliation, our federal partners and fellow Canadians must re-enter our partnership with the recognition that Northerners are capable of shaping our own futures and that decision-making powers must be situated in our own hands. We need a spirit of trust.**

The North has a long history of developing innovative governance, regulations, and policies to reflect northern needs. Such innovations include:

- Wildlife co-management boards;
- Regional resource management bodies with distinct nation-to-nation co-management capabilities;
- Water stewardship strategies that directly incorporate Dene knowledge;
- Circle sentencing;
- Consensus legislatures;
- The blending of Indigenous and scientific ways of knowing to inform decision-making;
- Indigenous self-government;
- Land and culture-based education, as well as the first mandatory residential school curriculum in Canada, developed for students in NWT and Nunavut;
- Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve, established as a First Nation-Federal partnership that protects traditional rights while supporting a conservation economy;
- The inclusion of Indigenous languages under official language legislation and within the public school system; and
- Climate change advocacy and policies, such as the *Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants*.



Integral to a new Arctic Policy Framework is the underpinning assertion that commitments made previously by the federal government to Northerners must be upheld.

Litigation ties up valuable resources, and ineffective services have serious negative impacts on Northerners' lives. Commitments and legally binding agreements must be fully implemented. Dispute resolution processes must be employed and entered into in good faith by our federal partners. Too often, provisions of our agreements have not been implemented and it has seemed to Indigenous Peoples as if the Crown was unwilling to honour aspects of our constitutionally-protected right to self-government by transferring jurisdiction and utilizing mediation clauses. The perception of the "honour of the Crown" in the eyes of Northerners is at risk as a result of such actions.

As Northerners, we've received far fewer basic services and infrastructure investments than our southern counterparts. Trauma from colonization, compounded by chronic underfunding and inadequate services, has caused a great deal of unnecessary suffering in our communities. Canadians are increasingly becoming familiar with the legacy of residential schools.

Learning about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action and what they mean for how we work together going forward is integral to understanding the context in which new policies and strategies are proposed.

While the North needs our fair share of infrastructure investment and government services, we also assert Arctic sovereignty, provide access to the vast resources that the North holds, and steward the environmental benefits that our lands produce for the benefit of the whole planet are maintained.

We appreciate that many of our challenges are shared by other Canadian jurisdictions. However, for the Arctic Policy Framework to be successful, it must be centered on the experiences and wellness of northern Indigenous Peoples.

We seek a healthy, productive, and mutually beneficial relationship with the federal government and our fellow Canadians who live outside of the North. As Northern peoples, we decide for ourselves the culture, language, and values in which we want to raise our children. That, to us, is self-determination.

We do not need a federal "father." We seek a true federal partner. Canada still has that opportunity.



## THEREFORE, WE RECOMMEND THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT:

1. Maintain a clear and strong focus on addressing the **causes of climate change** in the Northern Strategy.
2. Work towards meeting Canada's obligations under the **Paris Agreement**, as well as working with all Circumpolar partners to annunciate Arctic warming concerns during international negotiations.
3. Instruct the Infrastructure Bank of Canada to undertake **nation-building level investments** in housing, ports, road, energy, and waste management to positively impact the cost of living in the North for all northerners, as well as add an additional category for broadband and renewable energies to be considered under the bank's programming;
4. Mandate that all new federal infrastructure built in the North incorporate **renewable technologies**.
5. Adjust the **Environmental Impact Assessment process** to factor-in long-term impacts on both communities and health care systems related to changes in the environment and wildlife brought upon by resource development projects.
6. Instruct Statistics Canada to gather statistics related to the social return on investments and the **economic impacts of conservation economies**, including specifically trade in wild meats and seal products.
7. Accept the Minister's Special Representatives' recommendations on **Indigenous Protected Areas**, specifically the calls to:
  - a. Work to formally recognize the existing land and marine conservation planning designations as the basis for setting and realizing a new ambitious conservation goal.
  - b. Continue progress toward becoming the first country in the world to have a legal mechanism to recognize Indigenous Protected Areas.
  - c. Work with Arctic governments and indigenous organizations to conceive a new federal policy directive that sets out a process for the identification, funding, and management of IPAs<sup>18</sup>.
8. Adopt the Minister's Special Representative's recommendation to establish a **business development fund** for Indigenous-led renewable energy and efficiency projects, which could be financed from Carbon Pricing revenues.

## RENEWABLE ENERGY & CLIMATE CHANGE

The economic costs of a warming Arctic are stark. It is estimated that it could have a cumulative net cost of \$90 trillion dollars by the end of this century. Economic instruments are also being sought to help address the causes of climate change, such as the new Carbon Pricing Mechanism that will come into effect next year. Northerners face disproportionately high costs of living, a major cause of which is environmentally damaging diesel energy production.

Consequently, one economic tool that could have a positive impact on the northern environment would be to reinvest dollars gained through carbon pricing into sustainable energy production, as well as by ensuring that all new federal infrastructure investments incorporate sustainable energy and building practices. Northern infrastructure must last generations and that means this critical infrastructure needs to be able to function without energy sources that are not sustainable and which should be phased out within the life of new buildings.

The Minister's Special Representative has suggested establishing a business development fund for renewable energy, which could also be financed through Carbon Pricing revenues to ensure both environmental and economic benefits for the North.

Economic incentives alone cannot address the fact that the Arctic region is warming at more than twice the rate of the global average and that much - though not all - of the causes of warming are generated far from the North. Without sustained global action, it will be impossible to reverse or even slow this trend.

Canada must project a strong voice in international fora to encourage leading emitters to adhere to international climate instruments.

Canada must remain committed to the implementation of its obligations under these international climate mechanisms. Canada must be a strong ally and work collaboratively with our circumpolar neighbours to advance Arctic interests in climate change negotiations.

The impact of climate change for us is not simply a scientific pursuit or an economic opportunity. It is a real and persistent challenge for the adaptability of our ways of knowing and a strain on our relationship with the land and water.

It is therefore imperative that the Northern Strategy maintain a clear and strong focus on addressing the causes of climate change.

TO FORM THE NEW PARTNERSHIP UPON WHICH THE REVISED ARCTIC POLICY FRAMEWORK SHOULD BE BASED, WE THEREFORE CALL UPON ALL FEDERAL AND TERRITORIAL PARTNERS TO:

1. Immediately recognize that **Indigenous title** has not and cannot be extinguished, as well as act in a timely manner to resolve existing unsettled land claims and self-government agreements.
2. Establish a **Ministerial Working Group to review federal legislation** to evaluate impacts on the provision of services in northern communities, and undertake the removal of legislative impediments that exclude Northerners from accessing federal programs or that impose inappropriate codes and regulations on northern people and communities.
3. Encourage Indigenous governments and peoples in the North to clarify how we consult our own peoples, and commit to updating the federal and territorial governments' **consultation framework** to address gaps and redundancies to better ensure free, prior and informed consent.



# Northerners Leading Northern Policy Development

NOTHING FOR US, WITHOUT US.

It is crucial that our decision-makers have the best available information to decide our future, whether through mapping fresh water resources, land use planning, conducting archaeological assessments, or taking traditional knowledge inventories. In principle, we are willing to share our riches in good faith with our fellow Canadians, based on all of our needs. Yet without the baseline research surrounding fresh water, for example, we cannot make informed decisions about how to manage this resource, which is as integral for a healthy environment and people as it is for healthy Indigenous cultures. To address the challenges and prepare for the opportunities facing us, we need to access the best available information situated both within our own Indigenous ways of knowing and Western-based research.

While our refusal to base our decisions on short-term analysis is often misunderstood as unwillingness to contribute to our country through access to lands and extraction of resources, on the contrary, sharing is an extremely important principle we hold as Indigenous Peoples. However, we must first clearly identify available resources to holistically assess the cumulative impacts of resource extraction in order to mitigate the negative impacts, so that the land, water and animals can remain healthy for future generations.

Southern researchers and policy institutes currently maintain control over the evidence that informs decisions made about the North.

**The absence of Northerners within the research establishment means the effectiveness of our innovative governance structures is often challenged by a lack of data on issues within our own identified priority areas.**

It is, therefore, paramount that northern policy development and research be put in the hands of Northerners. This includes not only transforming the

mechanisms by which new policy is developed, but also, crucially, how research on the North is funded and what institutions are called upon to produce it. We note that Canada is, disappointingly, the only Arctic nation without an Arctic University.

Northerners need places to think, analyze, and develop the policies that our communities and governments require. That is why Dene Nahjo is working towards creating the Dene Cultural and Social Innovation Centre to provide support to Indigenous individuals, families, communities, thought-leaders, artists, and innovators. The Centre will serve as a focal point for grounding Dene social innovation, so that emerging leaders - in policy development, community programming, artistic, or entrepreneurial endeavours - are able to define a way forward that is rooted in decolonization and reconciliation. The Centre aims to provide both the tools (meeting space, technology, artists studios, children's spaces, and kitchen facilities) and the people (through networking, programming, and educational opportunities) to fulfill this vision.

We are proud of the land claim agreements made in the North that were the result of remarkable individual and collective leadership within our communities. Now it is time that we shift our resources from large political processes and refocus our priorities on developing specific policies and initiatives that can serve as tools to assist us in addressing the challenges we see around us. "The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples" (1996), the "Kelowna Accord" (2004), and the "Truth and Reconciliation Commission" (2014) have all pointed to a way forward and these efforts need not be repeated, but rather their recommendations acted upon, implemented, and supported with appropriate resources.

We also note that the jurisdictional boundaries that divide northern communities are, to Indigenous Peoples, artificial. Even as our nations cross territorial, provincial, and

## KNOWLEDGE & CONSERVATION ECONOMIES

The government has recognized that "An innovative Canada is a healthier, stronger, more prosperous Canada."<sup>15</sup> The North can be a world leader in innovation by transitioning from a non-renewable resource based economy to a sustainable system that values healthy land and healthy people, through building both conservation and knowledge-based economies.

The modern workplace is changing. Flexible work-from-home arrangements, telecommuting, and online collaboration mean that an increasing number of Canadians no longer have 9 to 5 lifestyles. This creates opportunities for Northerners to stay in their communities, while having access to a range of new avenues for employment. This cannot happen without high-speed, reliable, and affordable internet access.

**Investing in connectivity would bring immediate economic returns to the North, and significantly reduce operating costs at all levels of government, business, and service delivery.**

It would also help to ensure that Northerners have equal access to federal services as their fellow Canadians, as the federal government increasingly shifts towards online service delivery.

The Minister's Special Representative provides in "A Shared Arctic Leadership Model" a compelling vision for the creation of Indigenous Protected Areas, which are "... based on the idea of a protected area explicitly designed to accommodate and support an Indigenous vision of a working landscape"<sup>16</sup>. Her advice to do so draws on our shared belief that "... conservation is not sustainable if it competes with economic progress"<sup>17</sup>. We therefore, support and endorse her analysis, as well as her recommendations in this regard.



# Healthy Land, Healthy Economy

## POLITICAL EQUALITY CANNOT COME WITHOUT ECONOMIC EQUALITY

In 2017, Canadians from coast-to-coast-to-coast are marking 150 years since Canada became a country. Immediately upon confederation, Canada sought to build a railroad to connect the vast territories from east to west. The project came with immense financial and human cost, but was seen as an essential nation-building project.

**It is long past due that Canada undertake significant nation-building investments in infrastructure for roads and ports, energy generation, and housing in the North.**

Current federal policies for the North prioritize non-renewable resource development over economic diversification. Northerners, who have two centuries of experience with the boom and bust nature of the resource-driven economy and its impacts on our peoples, lands, health, and governments.

**We seek a complete dialogue about the benefits and costs that the industry brings to the North, rather than an unquestioning endorsement of extractive industries as the only choice.**

A major problem is that the financial viability of projects is currently calculated without northern Indigenous perspectives. Standard cost/benefit analysis does not take into account the cumulative impacts of numerous projects on wildlife like caribou, whose range is vast. The replacement value of local meat, plants, medicines, and water must be comprehensively studied and realized before approving projects.

Environmental impact reviews currently have short time spans while Indigenous perspectives require us to evaluate projects over multiple generations. That is why we consider the significant additional stress on government services and family structures when assessing a resource project. Current government evaluations do not take into consideration

many of the things that we see as vitally important: additional cost of medical care, the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, increased pressure on available child care spaces, etc. Without these factors included in resource project assessments, decisions are skewed towards extractive industries and a climate of distrust within communities is built around the process meant to gain their input. In addition to co-developing the methods of calculating the true value of a project, we must clearly break down how much of the costs and benefits are going to which parties.

The pervasive belief from outside the region is that if jobs and money are provided through non-renewable resource extraction, people will become physically and mentally healthier. We believe the opposite is true. We assert that we must focus on healthy communities first and that only healthy, culturally grounded, and knowledgeable people will be capable of evaluating and creating economic success.

**Only when our people and communities are healthy in body and mind can we truly capitalize on economic investments in our communities.**

**The capacity of Indigenous northerners** to participate in informed decision-making, and to collaborate on innovative solutions will be drastically enhanced with the establishment of **centres of higher learning that support language, culture, and research** in all 3 regions according to each region's goals and aspirations.

even international boundaries, we remain as one people. Consequently, the Arctic Policy Framework must recognize both the contemporary mobility of Indigenous Peoples and that traditional territories extend across jurisdictional boundaries. Policies and programs require flexibility to address this reality domestically, while internationally this means that Canada cannot remain silent when other states fail to recognize our Indigenous rights.

The Arctic Policy Framework must take a whole government approach to the North.

**Each and every federal department, agency, and Crown corporation needs to consider how any national policy they seek to develop fits the unique governance, environmental, economic, and demographic needs of the North.**

No longer should northern policies, programs, and projects be forced to contort themselves to meet national standards that do not take into consideration our realities. For example, the 2017 budget commits to providing \$300 million over the next 11 years to targeted support for northern housing that will, according to the federal government, help approximately 3,000 northern families find adequate, suitable, and affordable housing.<sup>6</sup> However, as long as these new housing units are built to standards made for southern environments, the transformative impact of this investment will not be realized, as pervasive problems in northern housing, such as mould, will continue to go unaddressed. Other federal policy development processes, such as "Generation Energy," the "Indigenous Framework on Early Learning and Child Care," the "Homelessness Partnering Strategy," and the "Working Group of Ministers on the Review of Laws and Policies related to Indigenous Peoples," similarly require specific northern components.

As integral as how the federal government engages

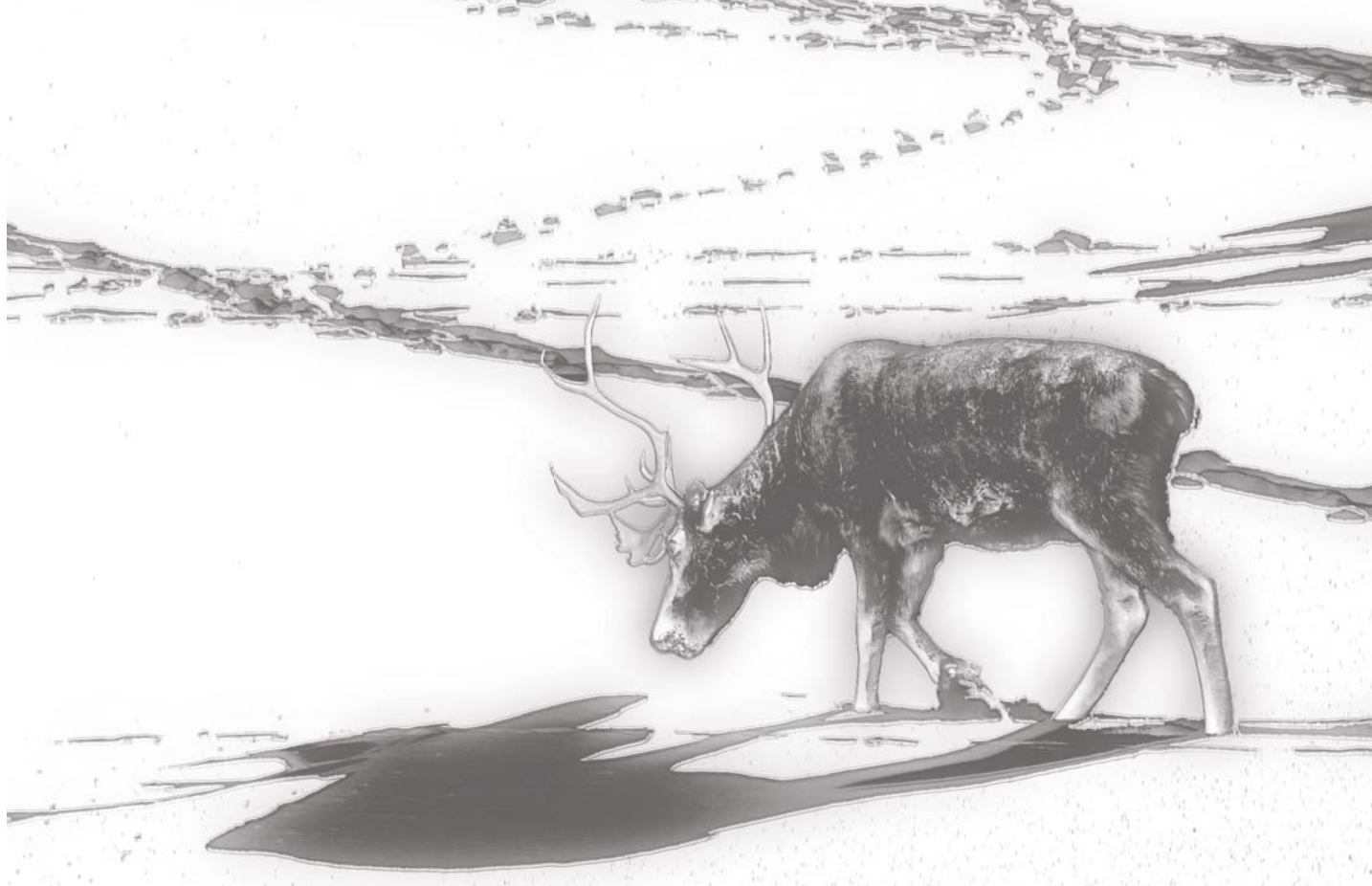
in decision-making alongside Indigenous peoples is, who it engages. The organizations that the federal government engages through its official consultation channels must be the legitimate representatives of northern Indigenous Peoples.

**Shifting governance models influenced by modern treaties and self-government agreements mean that some of the representative bodies recognized by the federal government as legitimate for Indigenous consultation no longer have the active endorsement of the people that they are meant to represent.**

Several northern First Nations have withdrawn from participation in regional organizations, preferring rather to seek nation-to-nation partnerships with the federal government rooted in their existing land claims and self-government agreements.

Communities are also experiencing consultation fatigue from numerous and inefficiently coordinated engagement processes. Many northerners feel the results of these consultations often do not adequately accommodate the concerns of Northern peoples or meet the criteria of free, prior, and informed consent as laid out within the "United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples." Recognizing that modifications are required to the current consultation framework, we support the Minister's Special Representative's assertion that:

The confusing and somewhat confounding mix of jurisdictional responsibilities, legal mandates derived from land claims agreements and constitutional reform, self-government agreements and evolution, must be harmonized under a vision for recognizing and supporting the authorities of Arctic governments and Indigenous organizations<sup>7</sup>.



This is why we have encouraged Indigenous Peoples and governments to identify how Indigenous Peoples are represented within federal consultation frameworks to facilitate Canada's engagement with northern partners in the co-development of northern policy. Measures can also be taken to strengthen the Northern voice in Ottawa. There are 338 seats in the House of Commons; yet Northerners, even with Nunavik and Nunatsiavut included, hold just five. Increasing the number of ridings in the North would help to ensure that the northern voice is heard in Ottawa. Similarly,

designating seats in the Senate for representatives of Indigenous Peoples would recognize both the trans-boundary nature of our nations and provide the opportunity for sober second thought grounded in an Indigenous worldview.

Such a commitment to co-development has the power to create a mutually beneficial relationship between the North and the rest of Canada; a relationship that will be strengthened when there is support for Northern-led research and policy development, and a removal of barriers to open dialogue and discussion.

## THEREFORE, WE RECOMMEND THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT:

1. Amend the **Official Languages Act** to explicitly include Indigenous languages and provide adequate funding parallel with other official languages, as well as access to federal services in the official languages.
2. Approach federal investments in **health, social services, and education**, on a multi-year basis and remove unnecessary restrictions that inhibit adaptation of programming to northern circumstances, as well as co-develop evaluation procedures that are in line with these circumstances.
3. Take action to implement the Truth and Reconciliation recommendation, which "... call[s] upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop **culturally appropriate early childhood education programs** for Aboriginal families"<sup>13</sup> and include specific provisions related to the North in the forthcoming Indigenous Framework on Early Learning and Child Care.<sup>14</sup>
4. Ensure that the proposed \$7 billion investment in creating **new child care spaces** prioritizes communities where these services are not currently accessible at all.
5. Recognize and promote the cultural significance that **arts and creative cultural practices** have on northern wellness, identity, and the ongoing process of reconciliation.
6. Support the **international promotion of northern creative industries** (Indigenous arts, culture, film industry, entrepreneurs, innovation, traditional knowledge, etc.) by investing in developing markets for these products, and providing adequate creative spaces in communities by ensuring that any new federal infrastructure includes a space for community use and sharing of best practices.
7. Assist in **repatriating items of cultural significance** back to their communities and create the infrastructure necessary to support their ongoing preservation and display.





## THEREFORE, WE RECOMMEND THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT:

1. Establish a **Northern Policy Institute** that will aid governments in developing evidence-based policy that is reflective of northern realities and interests.
2. Commit to establishing Dene Nahjo's proposed **Cultural and Social Innovation Centre** in the NWT.
3. Enact the Minister's Special Representative's following recommendations:
  - I. Create a **University of the Arctic** by striking a representative Arctic University Task Force to create a vision and business case for a university of the Canadian Arctic<sup>8</sup>
  - II. Direct Polar Knowledge Canada to include the theme of improving the **health and wellness** of families (physical and mental health, housing, food, security, etc.) in its research priorities; adding that language and culture must be included under this thematic area.<sup>9</sup>
  - III. Ensure appointments to the **Polar Science Board are inclusive and representative** of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples and that priority-setting exercises are informed by representative input from Arctic peoples, governments and Indigenous organizations.<sup>10</sup>
4. Instruct the newly appointed Chief Science Advisor's mandate to include specific instruction that **Indigenous traditional knowledge** be considered alongside and equal to Western forms of knowing in both advising the Prime Minister and communicating science effectively across the federal government.
5. Increase specific supports to northern students to pursue **post-secondary education**; in particular, for part-time students and those with dependent children, as part of the national commitments in this area.
6. Commit to **not enacting federal veto** clauses over legislation passed by self-governing First Nations.
7. Increase the number of Indigenous Peoples appointed to the Senate, establish **designated Senate seats** for Indigenous representation, and **increase the number of House of Commons ridings** in the North.

# Investing in Future Generations

LAND, LANGUAGE, CULTURE. FOREVER.

Creativity and imagination are survival skills for Indigenous Peoples, who have been taught over generations that our ability to innovate is essential to our success. Cultivating this spirit of ingenuity and vision in our future generations is our responsibility as parents and community members. As such, creating a society that supports and encourages the boundless potential of our youth is a responsibility shared by all levels of government. Federal policies and investments are required that support Indigenous Peoples to enact our own visions of our collective and individual futures, and not just the ability to avail ourselves of the predetermined and finite opportunities created by distant policy-makers.

**The core objective of the Arctic Policy Framework must be to support flourishing Indigenous nations and identities.**

For too long, federal discourse about the North has focused on what is perceived to be lacking within Northern communities, rather than the richness of the region's peoples and environment. To create a better North for our children, the focus needs to be on what forms of knowledge and skills exist within our communities and how the federal government can assist in building upon and supporting these strengths. This means focusing on what we have versus focusing on what we lack, and valuing our existing capacity over voices that tell us we are not capable.

To properly invest in the future of the North, Canada needs to make it a priority to create opportunities for northern Indigenous Peoples to develop their own systems that ensure safe and healthy futures for the children of the North. Northern peoples need to be able to decide on key matters of food security, safe housing, and how to nourish the minds of their young people through land-based, language, and cultural learning, education, and early childhood development.

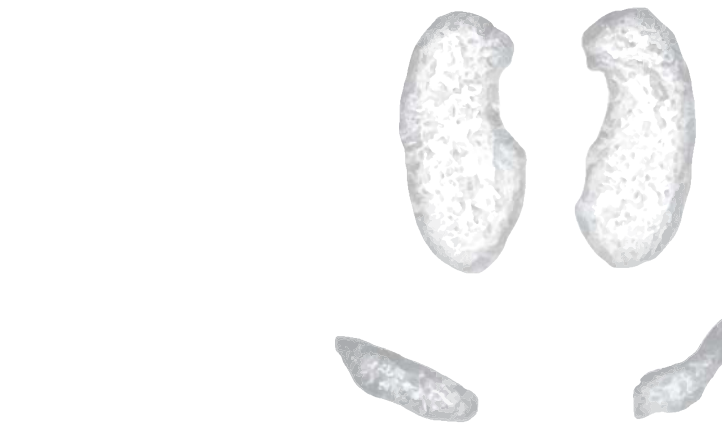
A cornerstone of this movement is creating systems of education that root our children in their languages and Indigenous identities, and at the same time prepare them to participate in modern society.

**Tłıçq̓ Elder Elizabeth Mackenzie brilliantly characterized this goal as supporting our children to be “strong like two people”.**

All levels of government need to be committed to developing wise practices around daycare, early childhood education, the creation of Aboriginal Head Start programs, and strong elementary programs that contribute to success in future schooling. Currently, small communities have incredibly high teacher turnover, while the knowledge holders in our communities remain. Northern schools and communities have demonstrated success in utilizing local people and knowledge holders within the education system, providing stability within the school and strengthening both the delivery of mainstream curriculum and the passing on of local skills and knowledge. Such approaches also help to create supportive environments for teachers coming to small communities, as they have more resources to draw on. The broader implementation of this approach has been hindered by a lack of communication between jurisdictions, and a lack of understanding or validation of traditional knowledge and alternative pedagogies within the education system, nationally.

**The North needs all levels of government to foster a movement that retreats from conventional curriculum delivery and creates schools that build on the existing knowledge within Indigenous communities and are highly adaptable to local circumstances.**

Federal investment in expanding and testing land and culture based approaches to education would support research and validation that



will be of benefit to all Canadians.

The federal government recognizes that “each year, too many young Canadians drop out of high school—often because they don’t have access to the basic supports needed to succeed in school”. Yet, the mechanism to address this problem chosen by the federal government - investing \$38 million over four years to a charitable organization with no presence in the North - will not have an impact on our high school students<sup>11</sup>. While we applaud the federal government’s investment in youth, this is another example of where Northern children are being left behind by programs that do not have reach into their communities. A similar investment should be made to support on-the-land programming through such mechanisms as the NWT On the Land Collaborative Fund<sup>12</sup>.

Healthy children and families start at home. Inadequate housing and community infrastructure are key among the negative social determinants that impact healthy human development and the ability of Northerners to reach their full potential. Significant investment is needed to address these disparities, but to realize meaningful change we also require a great deal of innovation around

building practices in the North. Our current situation is characterized by applying southern practices, standards, and codes to building in the North. Practices that utilize local materials when possible and building codes that are suited to the unique climate in the North are required.

**Our children cannot learn when they are hungry. The problems with Nutrition North are well documented and require immediate remedy.**

Our children also need access to the country foods that not only nourish their bodies, but their identities. There are opportunities to produce food locally that should be seized upon through innovative programs like the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in Teaching and Working Farm.

Our children also need to be able to live and grow in their Indigenous languages. Communicating in our languages grounds us in who we are. Indigenous Peoples are determined to rebuild our linguistic communities and are using innovative means to do so, through social media campaigns like #speaktlichotome and #speakwichintome; language labs; immersion camps; and other revitalization programs.

**While these programs are integral to rebuilding our languages, our languages cannot be put aside and reserved for special times and places; they need to be an integral part of our daily lives.**

The federal government should provide federal services in the North in all official languages in the North, along with national official languages.

Similarly, learning to express themselves in the arts helps our children to understand and communicate who they are. Our artists need to be supported to share their craft, not only with our communities, but with the world.