

How Can I Participate?

There will be 60 community hearings held across the country. There will also be 4 national conferences of elders, women, youth and urban Indians. You do not have to be a Chief, councillor or lawyer to become involved. There is no need for a written statement, just come and speak your mind. The hearings and the conferences are open to everyone. If you cannot attend a hearing or conference, but want to participate, you can write or call toll-free to the First Nations Circle on the Constitution.



FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL TOLL-FREE :
1-800-263-5647

OR WRITE TO:

FIRST NATIONS CIRCLE ON THE CONSTITUTION
C/O ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS
SUITE 400
55 MURRAY STREET
OTTAWA, ONTARIO
K1N 9M5

**FIRST NATIONS
CIRCLE ON
THE CONSTITUTION**

**The hearing in your community
will be held at:**

PLACE:

TIME:

DATE:



FOR INFORMATION ON UPCOMING
HEARINGS IN YOUR TERRITORY
CALL 1-800-263-5647

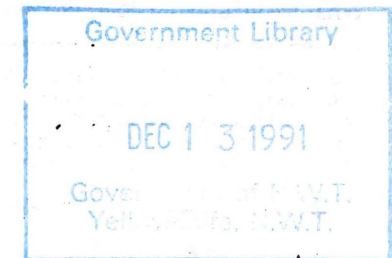
**YOUR PARTICIPATION
IS OUR STRENGTH**

**FIRST NATIONS
CIRCLE ON THE
CONSTITUTION**



**SPEAK NOW FOR OUR
FUTURE**

2-4766



What is the Constitution of Canada?

The constitution is the most important law in Canada. It is the blueprint which the federal and provincial governments must follow when dealing with the economy, environment, culture, health, education, justice and in matters affecting First Nations. Relationships between the federal and provincial governments and First Nations are laid out in the constitution. Because all laws in Canada must be based on the constitution, it provides protection for everyone.

Am I Affected by the Constitution?

Yes. All laws and relationships between governments in Canada are based on the Canadian Constitution. This includes laws and relationships that affect First Nations people, in our communities. For example: the way we are educated; when and where we hunt or fish; our right to decide how our communities should be governed or how we use our natural resources, can be protected in the constitution.

What is Happening Now with the Constitution?

There are many people in Canada who feel that the constitution, as it is, does not represent or protect their interests. So the federal government is trying to make changes. They have suggested a number of changes to the constitution and some of these directly affect First Nations.



What is the First Nations Circle on the Constitution?

The First Nations Circle is our people meeting to share ideas and discuss what the constitution should say about First Nations. Eight commissioners have been selected to travel to 60 communities across the country. If there is a hearing in your community, it will be organized with the help of Chief and Council. The commissioners will listen to people and gather their ideas for a report. The report will be presented to the government of Canada on behalf of all First Nations people. The First Nations Circle will do more than respond to the government's proposals. It will show clearly that all First Nations people know that we have rights as the original peoples of this land and that these rights must be protected and preserved.

The First Nations Circle is for First Nations People.

There are other events taking place at the same time as the First Nations Circle, some involve constitutional matters, some do not. These are the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples; the federal Special Joint Committee on a Renewed Canada or "Unity Committee"; the Constitutional Review Commission of the Native Council of Canada and constitutional committees for the Metis National Council and the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada. Each of these groups will be travelling and organizing meetings of their constituents across the country. You can participate in the other activities, if you have the opportunity. Other groups are welcome to participate in the First Nations Circle. As native people we are strengthened when we express our ideas together. But the First Nations Circle on the Constitution is different from the other activities because it is the forum created specifically for First Nations people to express their views on constitutional matters. The First Nations Circle is for First Nations people.

Why Should I Participate in the First Nations Circle?

Constitutional change will occur. There are groups in Canada, including the government, that would like to decide for us, our role and place in Canada. They are not the original occupants of this land; they have different beliefs and values; they are not living on reserves; their way of life and languages are not being threatened. They cannot and must not speak for us on a matter as important as the constitution. First Nations want to be part of a country that respects the rights that we had as self-governing nations, before the creation of Canada. Our rightful place in Canada must be based on our own ideas and experiences. The First Nations Circle on the Constitution is your time and place to share your ideas. Your participation is the strength of the First Nations Circle.

