

## BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS



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### **Moving Forward in a Good Way: Business and the Declaration**

February, 2020

Last week, BC Assembly of First Nations held another Business Forum in beautiful Lheidli T'enneh Territory (Prince George, BC). After a warm welcome to the territory, the forum began with a panel discussion on the certainty that the recently passed Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in BC Act offers to businesses in the province. This panel included Cheryl Casimer, First Nations Summit Political Executive who helped to bring the Declaration into law. While addressing articles such as Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), and questions from the crowd, it became clear from the panel, that the Declaration facilitates moving forward with non-Indigenous counterparts in a good way. As mentioned by Regional Chief Teegee, we are moving closer to an era of reconciliation and relationship building, and of recognition of Indigenous Rights and Title.

As acknowledged by various presentations, building relationships takes time, energy and the ability to sit in discomfort as connections grow and change over time. We heard from Tahltan Central Government about the beneficial socio-economic impacts that carefully established partnerships and agreements can generate in communities. Congruently, a representative from the groundbreaking [Indigenous Intern Leadership Program](#) established by the Champions Table highlighted the importance of connecting Indigenous students with high performance businesses in the province in order to grow the students' skillset, knowledge base and connections. Simultaneously, this program demonstrates to those businesses the capacity that exists within our young Indigenous professionals.

This month's forum also boasted a heavy youth focus. Often, at business conferences and forums, there is significant talk of the importance of involving youth in business and related events. BCAFN decided to bring Indigenous youth into this forum in a meaningful way- in the form of a panel of youth entrepreneurs, presentations from youth leadership and a young technology/communications specialist. The youth entrepreneurship panel acknowledged the vital importance of mentorship and the inclusion they experienced in their communities and from their leaders. It must be noted that this panel was the only presentation to receive a standing ovation from the crowd. Building on this momentum, we look continue with a strong youth presence at our subsequent events.

BCAFN looks forward to hosting our next Business Forum and we hope that all that are interested will choose to attend! Check our events calendar to stay apprised of the details as they become available, or join our mailing list by contacting [Samantha Seymour](#). You can also offer your input for consideration as we plan our upcoming Business Forum in our survey [here](#).

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