



BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

1004 Landooz Road
Prince George, BC V2K 5S3
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BCAFN ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
September 14, 15 & 16, 2021
Online via Zoom

Resolution 24/2021

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A BC FIRST NATIONS REGIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION**

MOVED BY: **CHIEF DONNA ALJAM, NICOMEN INDIAN BAND**

SECONDED BY: **CHIEF BYRON LOUIS, OKANAGAN INDIAN BAND**

DECISION: **ABSTENTION: KUKPI7 FRED ROBBINS, ESK'ETEMC**
CARRIED

WHEREAS:

- A. First Nations must be full and equal partners in all aspects of emergency management decision making, and all phases of emergency management implementation in their territories, as recommended in "Trial by Fire: Nadleh Whut'en and the Shovel Lake Fire Report", the Tsilhqot'in report "The Fires Awakened Us (Nagwedižk'an Gwaneš Gangu Chinidžed Ganexwilagh)" and the Abbott-Chapman report;
- B. The Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia have adopted the United Nations Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction as the guiding approach for disaster risk reduction. The *2015-2030 Sendai Framework for Disaster Reduction* states that natural disasters are exacerbated by climate change and are increasing in frequency and intensity. The Sendai Framework also outlines a set of practical recommendations to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels of government and across society. It calls for a people centered, preventative approach to disaster

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through multi hazard and multi sectoral practices that are inclusive and accessible. Through programming an education, the Sendai framework supports empowerment through nondiscriminatory participation, paying special attention to historically marginalized people who are often disproportionately affected by disasters;

- C. The *2015-2030 Sendai Framework for Disaster Reduction* further states that Indigenous peoples, through their experience and traditional knowledge, provide an important contribution to the development and implementation of plans and mechanisms, including for early warning;
- D. The *2015-2030 Sendai Framework for Disaster Reduction* calls for the creation of Regional Action Plans which is meant to serve as a foundational document, of a non-legally binding nature, that identifies practices and processes to advance implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 among the Americas;
- E. The *2015-2030 Sendai Framework for Disaster Reduction* has identified the four priority areas in the development of Regional Action Plans as understanding disaster risk, strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk, investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience and enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction;
- F. The Tripartite Emergency Management Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed in April of 2019 between the UBCIC, BC Assembly of First Nations and the First Nations Summit (working together as the First Nations Leadership Council (“FNLC”)), the Government of Canada (represented by Indigenous Services Canada), and the Government of British Columbia (represented by Emergency Management BC and BC Wildfire Service) outlining a relationship as full and equal partners to establish a collaborative and constructive working relationship through a joint high-level dialogue process that focuses on a mutually developed agenda and Tripartite Emergency Management Working Group;
- G. The FNLC and First Nations Emergency Services Society signed a *Declaration and Protocol of Recognition, Support, Cooperation and Coordination* with the First Nations Emergency Services Society of BC in 2009 with the purpose of affirming our intentions to work together in a cooperative manner, and to provide support for one another’s efforts, advance the recognition, respect, and accommodation of Aboriginal title and

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rights, and treaty rights, to improve the lives of First Nations people in British Columbia, and to support First Nations in their efforts;

- H. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which the government of Canada has adopted without qualifications, and has, alongside the government of BC committed to implement, affirms:

Article 18: Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision-making institutions.

Article 19: States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior, and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them.

Article 23: Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development. Indigenous peoples have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining health, housing and other economic and social programs affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programs through their own institutions.

Article 26(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories, and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.

(2): Indigenous peoples have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories, and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired.

(3): States shall give legal recognition and protection to these lands, territories, and resources. Such recognition shall be conducted with due respect to the customs, traditions and land tenure systems of the indigenous peoples concerned.

Article 27: States shall establish and implement, in conjunction with indigenous peoples concerned, a fair, independent, impartial, open, and transparent process, giving due recognition to indigenous peoples' laws, traditions, customs and land tenure systems, to recognize and adjudicate the rights of indigenous peoples pertaining to their lands, territories and resources, including those which were traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used. Indigenous peoples shall have the right to participate in this process.

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Terry Teegee', is positioned above a horizontal line.

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Article 32(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources; and

- I. A BC First Nations Regional Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction would provide the opportunity to understand disaster risk, strengthen disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk, invest in disaster risk reduction for resilience and enhance disaster preparedness for effective response and to “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction, including the incorporation of traditional knowledge, inherent rights, jurisdiction and the right to self-determination.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly demand that any Regional Action Plan developed by British Columbia must be done in conjunction with Indigenous peoples and must recognize and uphold our inherent and constitutionally protected Indigenous Title and Rights, and Treaty Rights and be consistent with the historic Supreme Court of Canada’s Tsilhqot’in Nation judgment and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*;
2. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the BCAFN Regional Chief and staff, working with the First Nations Summit and Union of BC Indian Chiefs Executive, working as the First Nations Leadership Council, develop a BC First Nations Regional Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction that will provide opportunity to understand disaster risk, strengthen disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk, invest in disaster risk reduction for resilience and enhance disaster preparedness for effective response and to “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction;
3. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly support the development and implementation of a BC First Nations led regional action planning session for disaster risk reduction that will strengthen and facilitate First Nation led implementation of the Tripartite Emergency Management MOU;
4. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the BCAFN Regional Chief and staff, working with the First Nations Summit and Union of BC Indian Chiefs Executive, working as the First Nations Leadership Council, The Tripartite Emergency Management Working Group and the First Nations Emergency Services Society to prepare a draft BC First Nations Regional Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction for review by First Nations in BC that upholds the

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principles of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, implements the recommendations of the “Trial by Fire: Nadleh Whut’en and the Shovel Lake Fire Report”, the Tsilhqot’in report “The Fires Awakened Us (Nagwedîžk’an Gwaneš Gangu Chinidžed Ganexwilagh)” and the Abbott-Chapman report, and is in alignment with the *2015-2030 Sendai Framework for Disaster Reduction*.

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