



BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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BCAFN ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

October 8, 9 & 10, 2024

Hybrid - In person & online via Zoom

Resolution 28/2024

SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR FIRST NATIONS PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND ECONOMIC SELF-DETERMINATION

Moved by: KUKPI7 ROSANNE CASIMIR, TK'EMLÚPS TE SECWÉPEMC

SECONDED BY: DEPUTY CHIEF HARLAN SCHILLING, DAYLU DENA COUNCIL

DECISION: CARRIED

WHEREAS:

- A. First Nations in British Columbia have inherent rights to engage in trade and commerce, including access to international markets, as recognized by First Nations laws and customs;
- B. Indigenous businesses have demonstrated remarkable growth potential. The Indigenous economy in Canada was valued at an estimated \$24 billion in 2016;
- C. Despite this potential, Indigenous small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are less likely to export (7% compared to 12% for non-Indigenous SMEs), primarily due to barriers such as limited access to capital, networks, and supply chains;
- D. The Indigenous Peoples Economic and Trade Cooperation Arrangement (IPETCA), endorsed by Canada, seeks to enhance Indigenous peoples' participation in international trade by promoting access to markets and capital, supporting capacity building, and ensuring Indigenous perspectives are incorporated into global trade policies;

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Terry Teegee, BC Regional Chief

- E. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration), which has been adopted without qualification by the Province of British Columbia (Bill 41) and the Government of Canada (Bill C-15), states:

Article 3: Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right, they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social, and cultural development;

Article 5: Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinct political, legal, economic, social, and cultural institutions, while retaining their right to participate fully in the political, economic, social, and cultural life of the State;

Article 36: Indigenous peoples, in particular those divided by international borders, have the right to maintain and develop contacts, relations, and cooperation, including activities for spiritual, cultural, political, economic, and social purposes, with their own members as well as other peoples across borders;

- F. The BC Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) Action Plan includes commitments to:

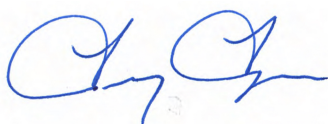
4.33: Advance the economic self-determination of Indigenous peoples, including supporting Indigenous businesses and entrepreneurs to access new markets domestically and internationally;

- G. The Federal United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan commits to:

72: Co-develop with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis right holders or their national designates distinctions-based, whole of government policy guidelines on fully and effectively engaging Indigenous peoples on international issues affecting them, with a commitment to explore the development of policy in specific areas where appropriate. This work will seek to enhance the participation of Indigenous peoples in decision-making on matters which would affect their rights and to advance Canada's contribution to the work of the entities of the UN system and other intergovernmental organizations in their implementation of article 41. (Global Affairs Canada)

- H. BCAFN Resolution 07(f)/2017: Right to Access International Markets & Trade mandated the Regional Chief to call on the federal and provincial governments to ensure that First Nations in BC are included in international trade discussions and are supported in developing their capacity to engage in international markets.

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- I. BCAFN Resolution 31/2021: A BC First Nations Centre of Excellence for Economic Development (FNCoE) mandated the Regional Chief and staff to develop and implement the concept of the FNCoE ensuring transparency and accountability to the Chiefs-in-Assembly.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly support First Nations' engagement in international trade and access to global markets as part of their inherent rights to self-determination and economic sovereignty;
2. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly call on the Provincial and Federal Governments to provide committed capacity funding to support First Nations in BC to build the necessary infrastructure, skills, and resources to engage effectively in international trade;
3. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the Regional Chief to advocate and call on the Government of British Columbia and the Government of Canada to ensure that First Nations in BC are included in existing and future trade discussions, free trade agreements, and international economic development initiatives;
4. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the Regional Chief to advocate for the co-development of international trade programs and policies with First Nations in BC, ensuring that any agreements or policies reflect, acknowledge and respect Indigenous rights, title, and interests; and
5. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the First Nations Centre of Excellence for Economic Development (FNCoE) to develop tailored, First Nations-led services aimed at enhancing the participation of First Nations businesses in British Columbia in international trade.

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Terry Teegee, BC Regional Chief