



BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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BCAFN SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
March 4 & 5, 2026
In person & online via Zoom

Resolution 01/2026

SUBJECT: ENDORSEMENT OF THE BCAFN WOMEN AND 2SLGBTQQIA+ PEOPLE'S DIALOGUE SESSION 'WHAT WE HEARD REPORT' AND SUPPORT FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS 105 RECOMMENDATIONS

MOVED BY: KUKPI7 ROSANNE CASIMIR, TK'EMLUPS TE SECWÉPEMC

SECONDED BY: CHIEF JERRY JACK, MOWACHAHT/MUCHALAHT FIRST NATION

DECISION: CARRIED

WHEREAS:

- A. First Nation women have always been central to leadership, governance, and Nation-building. As knowledge holders, decision-makers, and advocates for future generations, their leadership — alongside that of 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives — strengthens Indigenous legal orders and community well-being. Excluding these voices from decisions is contrary to First Nation ways of being, governance and community structures. Exclusion not only perpetuates historic patterns of marginalization, but it also destabilizes the very governance systems that sustain Nations. The inclusion of First Nation women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people is foundational, not procedural, and the safety, authority, and leadership of First Nation women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people must remain central to BCAFN advocacy;

- B. when protections shift without meaningful participation, the consequences are immediate and deeply felt — particularly by First Nation women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, who already experience disproportionate levels of violence and systemic inequities. Uncertainty surrounding

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rights, title, and jurisdiction weakens accountability mechanisms and creates tangible risks to safety and community stability;

- C. the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) establishes minimum standards for the survival, dignity, and well-being of First Nations women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ Peoples, grounded in the principle of free, prior, and informed consent;
- D. the UN Declaration, which the government of Canada has adopted without qualification, and has, alongside the government of B.C., passed legislation committing to implement, affirms:
- 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 own distinct political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions, while retaining their right to participate fully, if they so choose, in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the State.
 - Article 22(2): States shall take measures, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, to ensure that indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination.
 - Article 24(2): Indigenous individuals have an equal right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. States shall take the necessary steps with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of this right;
- E. between 2017 and 2021, the BC Assembly of First Nations convened Women’s and 2SLGBTQQIA+ Dialogue Sessions that strengthened First Nation governance and affirmed the central role of First Nation women and gender-diverse people in community leadership across British Columbia. The initial 2017 sessions, held on the traditional territories of the Musqueam Indian Band and Sts’ailes, created a culturally grounded space for First Nation women leaders to address shared challenges and advance strategies to enhance community wellbeing. Resulting in the Women’s Declaration, which was endorsed by the Chiefs-in-Assembly, formalized collective political support and elevated women’s leadership within regional decision-making structures;
- F. in 2020 and 2021, the dialogue expanded to explicitly include 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, youth, and those facing systemic barriers, reflecting First Nation values of kinship, inclusion, and collective responsibility. The updated Declaration and the formal renaming of the Women’s Dialogue Session to the Women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People’s Dialogue Session, signaled clear commitment to gender inclusivity and to restoring traditional roles disrupted by colonial systems. Together, the dialogue session affirms that the strength, resilience, and self-determination of First Nations are deeply connected to the leadership, well-being, and full inclusion of women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people;

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- G. the reports and Declarations emerging from the 2017–2021 BCAFN Women’s and 2SLGBTQQIA+ Dialogue Sessions have been consolidated within the BCAFN First Nations Gender Equity Strategic Action Plan. The action plan translates the priorities, lived experiences, and recommendations identified through dialogue during the gathering into a coordinated framework for action;
- H. the BCAFN First Nations Gender Equity Strategic Action Plan outlines concrete next steps for advocacy with provincial and federal governments, establishes organizational commitments within BCAFN, and advances strategies to strengthen capacity and resources for First Nations across British Columbia;
- I. the intent of the Strategic Action Plan is to support BCAFN and like-minded organizations in implementing the Declaration, as well as the BCAFN What We Heard report on MMIWG2S+, alongside related foundational reports including Red Women Rising, the Highway of Tears Symposium Report, and Forsaken. Together, these works ground the Plan in community voice, survivor testimony, and longstanding calls for justice and systemic reform;
- J. building on this foundation, BCAFN hosted the First Nation Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People’s Dialogue Session in June 2025, with the discussion and recommendations captured in the associated 2025 Healing-in-Action What We Heard Report. This comprehensive Report and its 105 recommendations have been captured directly by BC First Nation community members, experts and leaders in attendance at the 2025 Dialogue Session; and
- K. BCAFN is now seeking support to implement these recommendations and to strengthen and expand the First Nations Gender Equity Strategic Action Plan, advancing sustained and accountable action that uplifts the leadership, safety, and well-being of First Nation women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, ensuring it remains responsive, community-driven, and reflective of evolving priorities.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly fully support and endorses the 2025 Healing-in-Action What We Heard Report from the First Nations Women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People’s Dialogue Session on June 2025, and call on the Regional Chief, BCAFN Women’s Representative and the BCAFN 2SLGBTQQIA+ Representative to advocate for long term sustainable funding to ensure the implementation of the 105 recommendations across all levels of government and other related sectors; and
2. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the BCAFN to incorporate the 2025 Healing-in-Action What We Heard Report’s recommendations into the Gender Equity Strategic Action Plan to ensure the plan remains responsive, community-driven and reflective of evolving priorities.

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