



Secrétariat
de l'Assemblée des
Premières Nations
du Québec
et du Labrador

Secretariat of the
Assembly of the
First Nations
of Quebec
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AFNQL CHIEFS' ASSEMBLY

DECLARATION ON A FIRST NATIONS OF QUEBEC AND LABRADOR SOVEREIGNTY AFFIRMATION PROCESS

GUIDED by the principles of governmental relations based on the ancestral practices of our First Nations;

REAFFIRMING the 26 principles adopted by the AFNQL Chiefs' Assembly, on May 19, 1998;

BASED ON the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, on September 13, 2007;

AFFIRMING the nation-to-nation relationship based on equality and peaceful coexistence;

CONSIDERING THAT our nations possess rights, notably aboriginal title, ancestral rights and rights stemming from treaties, over our traditional territories which transcend all boundaries;

CONSIDERING THAT our peoples have never renounced their right to sovereignty over these territories and resources;

CONSIDERING THAT First Nations are peoples who possess the right to self-determination as recognized by International Law, particularly by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;

CONSIDERING THAT the governments of Quebec and Canada deny, through their actions and/or their inactions, the fundamental rights of First Nations;

CONSIDERING THAT a significant number of our populations lives off-reserve;

CONSIDERING THAT the economy of non-Aboriginal societies was established to the detriment of First Nations while denying their rights;

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CONSIDERING THAT the economic autonomy of First Nations is based on genuine sovereignty;

ACKNOWLEDGING the choice of First Nations to engage in nation-to-nation negotiations with federal and provincial governments and recognizing, in the same manner, the Aboriginal rights and territorial rights of First Nations that possess treaties that are solemnly signed with non-Aboriginal nations.

EMPHASIZING the unique contribution of the Elders, youth and women in the governance of our societies, as well as the relationship of equality between women and men within First Nations,

WE, THE CHIEFS OF FIRST NATIONS OF QUEBEC AND LABRADOR UNITED UNDER THE ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS OF QUEBEC AND LABRADOR, GATHERED IN ASSEMBLY, DECLARE THAT:

The time has come for First Nations of Quebec and Labrador to set in motion a process of unilateral affirmation of their sovereignty over the territory.

THEREFORE, WE ADOPT THE FOLLOWING PROCESS:

Within the three months following this Declaration, the Chiefs gathered in Assembly will adopt a sovereignty affirmation mechanism that will be based on legal orders specific to First Nations (customs, treaties, Aboriginal common law, etc.), as well as on the rights recognized in Canada and in the International Law.

The sovereignty affirmation mechanism will contain notably:

- Concrete implementation measures for the right of First Nations Peoples to self-determination;
- A strategic implementation plan for the inherent right to self-governance;
- A mission to re-establish our Nations which will promote the full participation of all members of our civil society, by recognizing a true First Nations citizenship;
- Policies and actions that will confirm management of ancestral lands and resources.

This process anticipates actions to be taken by First Nations Councils of Quebec and Labrador and their members that aim to strengthen their sovereignty.

ADOPTED IN QUEBEC CITY ON NOVEMBER 27, 2008