



Kahnawà:ke Ratitsénhaiens

Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke

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Tsi Nahóten Karihwanákere No'nenk News Release

Iroquois Caucus, AFN sign Protocol Agreement

For immediate release

(Kahnawake – 5, Tsothóhrha/December 2012) The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke wishes to inform the community that the Iroquois Caucus and the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) have signed a Protocol Agreement that will foster a harmonious and cooperative relationship between the two organizations.

Chief Lloyd Phillips signed the Agreement on behalf of Kahnawà:ke at the AFN Special Assembly being held in Gatineau, Quebec. The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke is a founding member of the Iroquois Caucus.

National Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo signed on behalf of the AFN.

The protocol will establish information-sharing processes and develop collaborative strategies for advocacy approaches that address issues of mutual concern. It also establishes that meetings between the National Chief and the Iroquois Caucus will be held annually or semi-annually, as needed.

While each party will be responsible for their own costs, the AFN commits to continue providing the Caucus with access to AFN facilities and resource people.

“While it’s true that one of the main reasons the Iroquois Caucus was created was because we felt our concerns weren’t being addressed in the AFN, we have always said it is far better to work together,” said Chief Martin Leborgne, who has been with the Caucus since its inception. “This agreement is a great step forward. We look forward to promoting and encouraging nation rebuilding with other First Nations in Canada.”

An unofficial version of the document is attached for information purposes.

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Please contact:

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Draft Protocol Agreement
Between
Iroquois Caucus
and
the Assembly of First Nations
(Hereinafter referred to as “AFN”)

Preamble

Whereas, the AFN Charter affirms that the First Nations are the original peoples of this land and, as such they continue to exercise their rights and fulfill the responsibilities and obligations given to them by the Creator for the land upon which they were placed, that such rights and responsibilities cannot be altered or taken away by any other nation and that aboriginal title, aboriginal rights and international treaty rights exist and are recognized by international law; and

Whereas, the goals of the AFN, affirmed by its Charter, and shared by First Nations and Regional First Nation organizations across the country include protecting future generations from colonialism; establishing conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from our international treaties and from international law can be maintained, and promoting social progress and better standards of life among our peoples; and

Whereas, as referenced in the AFN Charter, all First Nation organizations are collectively called upon to respect diversity, to practise tolerance and work together as good neighbours, to unite our strength to maintain our security, and to employ national and international machinery for the promotion of the political, economic and social advancement of First Nation peoples; and

Whereas, the Iroquois People have consistently and historically declared exclusive jurisdiction over all matters in our territories and continue to exercise the right and responsibility to govern our affairs without interference using our own form of political legislative and administrative processes; and

Whereas, the duly elected Councils, of Akwesá:sne, Kahnawà:ke, Kanehsatá:ke, Oneida Nation of the Thames, Six Nations of the Grand River, Tyendinaga, and Wahta Mohawks, have come together to a forum known as the Iroquois Caucus where shared issues and concerns can be discussed; and

Whereas, the mission of the Iroquois Caucus is to present a unified voice for the Haudenosaunee communities on common issues to protect and enhance the rights, language, culture, lands, environment and resources for the benefit of our people; and

Whereas, the AFN is a national advocacy organization with a mandate to protect the rights, treaty obligations, language and cultures of First Nations in Canada; and

Whereas the AFN is a vehicle for presenting First Nation interests and priorities to the federal government, the provincial governments and other non-Indigenous organizations; and

Whereas, the AFN is not a rights holder, not a signatory to Treaty, and is not a consultative body for the purposes of discharging the Crown's duty to consult and accommodate First Nation; and

Whereas, the role of the AFN is to advocate and facilitate based on the direction and mandates provided by First Nations through the Chiefs-in-Assembly; and

Whereas, the role of the AFN is to create the space for First Nations to advance their strategies and their jurisdictions in accordance with their rights and their responsibilities; and

Whereas, in December 2005 at the AFN Special Chiefs Assembly, the Iroquois Caucus issued an Iroquois Statement of Solidarity which stated that we would represent ourselves at all regional, national and International levels and speak on our own behalf, and

Whereas, in March 2006 at the AFN Special General Assembly, the Iroquois Caucus made a declaration to support a renewed relationship with the AFN that could advocate and provide support to strengthen our own governance, as defined by the Iroquois Caucus, and

Whereas, in September 2012, the Iroquois Caucus met with the AFN National Chief, in Ottawa, to discuss issues of mutual concern and a renewed cooperative relationship between the Iroquois Caucus and the AFN and agreed to formalize this relationship through a Protocol Agreement.

Whereas, the AFN and Iroquois Caucus wish to increase communication in order to facilitate and strengthen ongoing cooperation, to maximize mutually supportive efforts, to advance strategic planning and strategic approaches on issues of mutual concern through this Protocol Agreement which shall guide the working relationship between the AFN and Iroquois Caucus.

THEREFORE IT IS AGREED THAT:

1.0 Objectives

The main objectives of this protocol are to:

- foster a harmonious and cooperative relationship between the Iroquois Caucus and the AFN that is based on mutual respect and sharing;
- enhance communications between the AFN and the Iroquois Caucus by establishing an information sharing process between the Iroquois Caucus and AFN, including all staff and members of Executive Committee;
- develop collaborative strategies for advocacy approaches that address issues of mutual concern, while respecting the unified voice of the Iroquois Caucus communities; and,
- promote and encourage the principles of nation re-building with other First Nations in Canada.

2.0 Meetings

Iroquois Caucus will participate in national meetings, national forums and Special Chiefs Assemblies.

Individual communities may represent themselves or address any issue depending on circumstances or impact.

Meetings between the National Chief and the Iroquois Caucus will be held annually or semi-annually, or as may be needed from time to time, to discuss issues and develop strategies for advocacy.

3.0 Agenda

Agenda items will be identified and mutually agreed upon by Iroquois Caucus and the AFN several weeks prior to the meeting date to allow for the distribution of appropriate background materials and information gathering at the community level.

4.0 Costs

Each Party will be responsible for their own costs to participate in the meetings outlined in this Protocol Agreement. Every effort will be made to set meeting dates and locations to minimize travel and accommodation costs for all Parties.

The AFN commits to continue providing the Iroquois Caucus with access to AFN facilities and resource people.

5.0 General

Discussions pursuant to this protocol agreement are intended to enhance and support communications and capacity-building processes and opportunities and are without prejudice to, and not intended to replace or supersede, any existing protocol agreements, nor restrict either party's ability to participate in similar activities with other organizations.

This protocol agreement is intended solely to provide a framework for implementing the relationship described herein and does not itself create legally enforceable obligations for either party or its members and is not a legally binding agreement.

The term of this protocol agreement shall commence on the date it is signed by all the Parties and shall continue in force for three years.

6.0 Amendments

This agreement may be amended in writing at any time during the term or any extensions upon mutual consent of both Parties.

SIGNED at _____ this ____ day of _____ 2013.

For Iroquois Caucus:

Kahnawà:ke

Kaneshatá:ke

Akwesásne

Tyendinaga

Six Nations of the Grand River

Wahta Mohawks

Oneida Nation of the Thames

Witness

For the Assembly of First Nations:

National Chief Shawn A-In-Chut Atleo

Witness