



POLICY PLATFORM

2025

CONGRESS OF
ABORIGINAL PEOPLES



CONGRÈS DES
PEUPLES AUTOCHTONES

Congress of Aboriginal Peoples

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CELEBRATING 54 YEARS

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP) is one of five National Indigenous Representative Organizations recognized by the Government of Canada. Founded in 1971 as the Native Council of Canada (NCC), and renamed in 1993, CAP represents off-reserve Status and non-Status Indians, Métis and Southern Inuit Indigenous Peoples.

On December 5, 2018, the Government of Canada and CAP signed a renewed Political Accord. This Accord represents an agreement to work collaboratively and advance priority areas affecting CAP's constituents. The Accord affirms that CAP represents rights-holding Indigenous people in Canada.

CAP serves as the national voice for its eleven (11) provincial and territorial affiliate organizations (PTOs). Today, over 80% of Indigenous people in Canada live off-reserve in urban, rural, and remote areas.



THE “NON-STATUS” CONSTITUENCY

Nearly a quarter of Indigenous people are “non-Status Indians” - individuals of Indigenous ancestry who identify as Indigenous (Indian) but are not eligible for registration under the Indian Act. This category came out of policies by the government of Canada to reduce the population that were entitled to Treaty rights and to ultimately eliminate the category of “Indians” entirely.

Provisions in the “Indian Act” historically removed “Status” through marriage, education, military service, a desire to vote, or other reasons. This was compounded by measures such as residential schools, the 60s scoop, and other Policy intended to break apart families and make it difficult or impossible for descendants to determine or prove their eligibility.

Non-Status Indigenous people struggle to access the same programs, services and representation as those with “Status Rights”.

Constitution Act, 1982, Section 35 (2): In this Act, “aboriginal peoples of Canada” includes the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada.





THE NATIONAL VOICE FOR OFF-RESERVE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES SINCE 1971

CAP-DANIELS DECISION

On April 14, 2016, the Supreme Court of Canada unanimously ruled that the Federal Government has Constitutional responsibility for Métis and non-Status Indians, marking a historic victory for Indigenous peoples in Canada and ending a 17-year legal battle.

The supreme court acknowledged “Federal and provincial governments have, alternately, denied having legislative authority over non-Status

Indians and Métis. This results in these Indigenous communities being in a jurisdictional wasteland with significant and obvious disadvantaging consequences”

The CAP-Daniels ruling offers a path forward out of this “jurisdictional wasteland”, and to recognize the Indigenous rights of all non-Status and Métis people once and for all.



Recognizing our Rights

- **Implement CAP-Daniels recognition of non-Status and Métis as “Indigenous”.**
- **Implement UNDRIP recognition of the rights Indigenous people possess, applying equally to all Indigenous people regardless of distinction, residence or status.**
 - **The Constitution, Royal Proclamation of 1763, and case law further recognize the rights of Indigenous people in Canada.**
- **Work towards the settlement of community land and resource rights for CAP communities,**
- **Respect and act on 2018 CAP-Canada Political Accord**
- **Include off-reserve Status, non-Status, Métis and Southern Inuit in the implementation of calls to action in Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), and National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls & 2SLGBTQIA+.**

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

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 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.



Building Community Capacity: Self-Determination + Representation



- **Support self-determination with effective, fully-funded organizations to represent and provide services to communities by expanding Basic Organizational Capacity (BOC) funding for Indigenous representative organizations.**
- **Representation of youth, Elders, 2SLGBTQQIA+, and distinct identities among off-reserve Indigenous people must be adequately funded to ensure those perspectives are included.**
- **Support research and identification of off-reserve Indigenous communities across Canada, with registration and membership systems.**
- **Support the application of trusted research and data on urban Indigenous populations to acknowledge under-counting.**

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Article 4

Indigenous peoples, in exercising their right to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions.

Article 20

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and develop their political, economic and social systems or institutions, to be secure in the enjoyment of their own means of subsistence and development, and to engage freely in all their traditional and other economic activities.
2. Indigenous peoples deprived of their means of subsistence and development are entitled to just and fair redress.

Economic Reconciliation

- **The Government of Canada must reach out to the private sector and other levels of government to ensure they are aware of their responsibilities in UNDRIP.**
- **The Government of Canada, in partnership with off-reserve and non-status Indigenous Organizations work to improve access to capital that would include;**
 - **A business equity fund to support business development for the off-reserve and non-status community and their representative organizations.**
 - **Make organizational capacity funding available to organizations working with Indigenous business'.**
 - **Create a partnership fund that would provide resources to the Indigenous business sector looking to partner with business' operating in their region.**

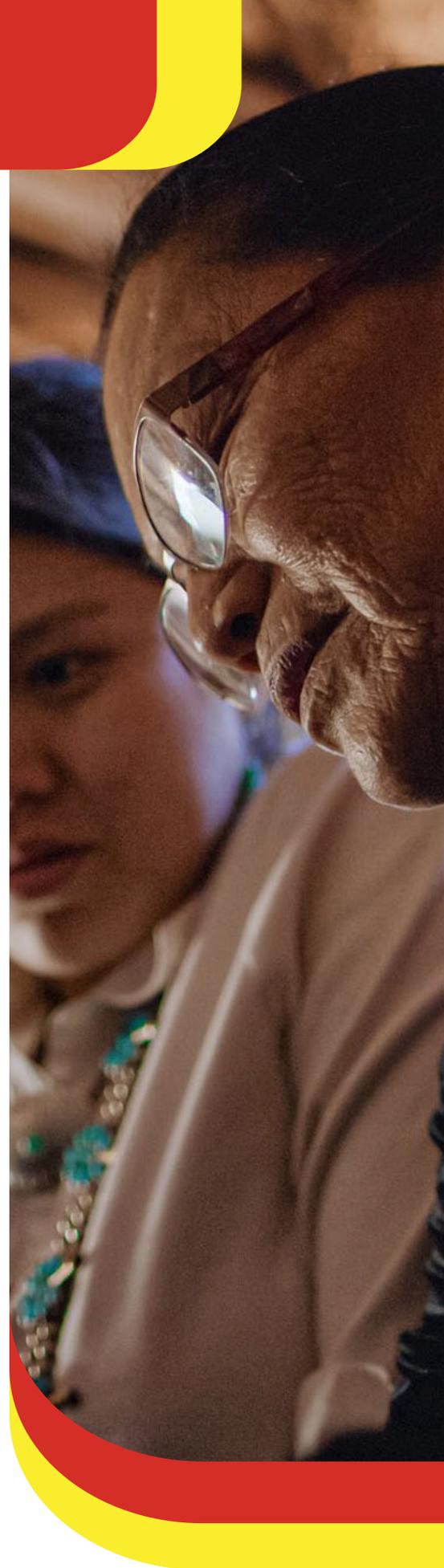
United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Article 20

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and develop their political, economic and social systems and institutions, to be secure in the enjoyment of their own means of subsistence and development, and to engage freely in all their traditional and other economic activities.

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.



Building and Renewing Safe and Healthy Housing

- **Establish an off-reserve housing strategy to allow community-run housing programs that closes the \$636 million annual gap in housing affordability for urban, rural and northern Indigenous peoples.**
- **Leverage federal lands and real property for transfer to off-reserve Indigenous organizations to create housing and economic development opportunities.**
- **Assist urban and rural Indigenous people in identifying emergency accommodations and affordable housing options for youth, Elders, 2SLGBTQQIA+, and vulnerable populations.**
- **Establish a “For Indigenous, By Indigenous” housing support program for all off-reserve and urban Indigenous communities, with CAP included as the National Indigenous Organization representing off-reserve Status and non-Status Indians, Métis and Southern Inuit Aboriginal Peoples.**

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Article 21

1. Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including, inter alia, in the areas of education, employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health and social security.

Supporting Strong Indigenous Families

- **Jordans' Principle**
 - **Ensure that Jordan's Principle applies equally to both on-reserve and off-reserve, Status and non-Status Indigenous peoples regardless of residence, membership, or any other factor.**
- **Early Learning and Child Care**
 - **Ensure access by including CAP's communities as equal partners in the design and delivery of culturally appropriate early learning and childcare programs for off-reserve Indigenous communities.**
- **Child Welfare**
 - **Implementation of TRC Calls to Action:**
 - #5 – Support parenting programs for Indigenous parents.**
 - #6 – Ban violence against children.**
 - **Recognize off-reserve and non-Status Indigenous communities as "Rights Holders" for child welfare legislation and support, with funding, their right to oversee those issues for members.**

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Article 7

1. Indigenous individuals have the rights to life, physical and mental integrity, liberty and security of person.
2. Indigenous peoples have the collective right to live in freedom, peace and security as distinct peoples and shall not be subjected to any act of genocide or any other act of violence, including forcibly removing children of the group to another group.



Preserving our Language and Culture

- **Equal access to funding for off-reserve communities.**
- **Ensure that language and cultural funding can be accessed directly by off-reserve communities.**
- **Create an agreement with CAP to oversee and administer language funding and programs for PTOs and off-reserve Indigenous communities.**

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Article 14

3. States shall, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, take effective measures, in order for indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language.



Honouring the Legacies of MMIWG & 2SLGBTQQIA+ peoples

- **Ensure the full implementation of all National Inquiry into MMIWG Calls for Justice and National Action Plan with full inclusion of off-reserve Indigenous community representative organizations.**
- **Guarantee that barrier-free funding will be provided on an equitable, non-status basis.**
 - **Support immediate access to funding for emergency housing services from culturally safe Indigenous service providers**
 - **Support long-term income support, economic security, affordable housing and education and employment training**
 - **Expand support and safety programs for sex workers.**

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Article 22

1. Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities in the implementation of this Declaration.
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.



Renewing Justice in Communities



- **Ensure that off-reserve and non-Status Indigenous community justice programs are fully funded and capable of serving those in need.**
- **Ensure adequate and accessible community justice program funding**
- **Ensure adequate and accessible Gladue Principal funding.**
- **Ensure that Indigenous communities have a lead role in overseeing the work of police, directing family welfare organizations, and assuming responsibility for policing and community safety where possible.**

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

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, if they so choose, in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the State.

Support Off-Reserve Education



- **Expand access to higher education and community control over funding for non-Status and off-reserve Indigenous communities.**
- **Ensure access to University and Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) funding or equivalent is accessible to CAP communities at an equal level to other Indigenous peoples.**

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Article 14

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.
2. Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination.

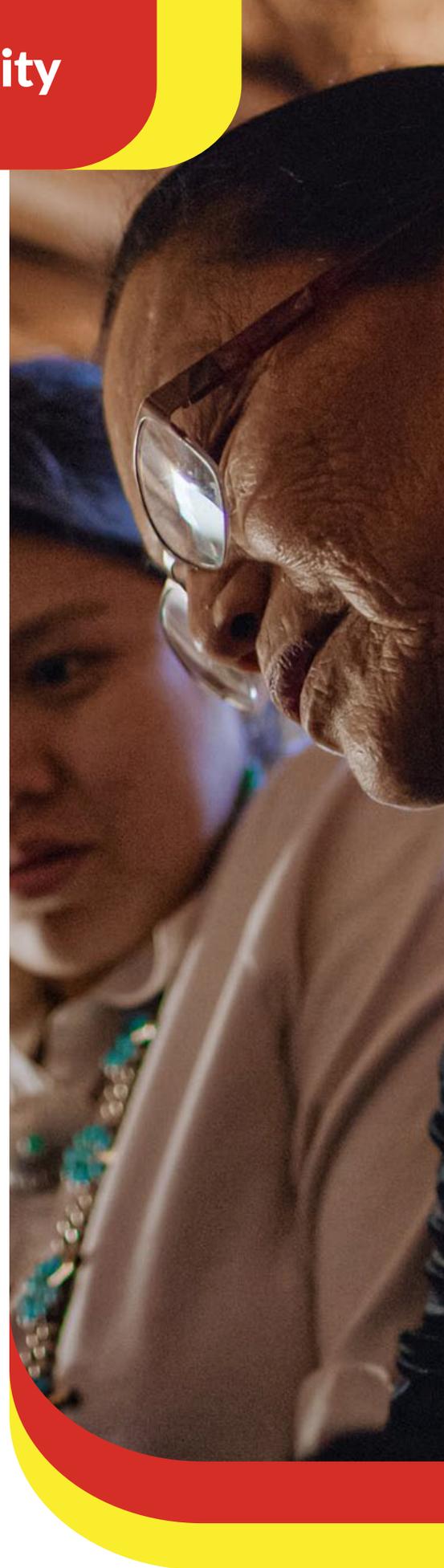
Preserving the Health of Community Members and Seniors

- **Expand access to non-insured health benefits (NIHB) to all Indigenous people, regardless of Status, residency, membership or any other factors.**
- **Ensure that compensation funds are made available to the spouses and families of all Aboriginal veterans.**
- **Allocate dedicated funding to support CAP communities providing culturally appropriate home and community care for seniors, ensuring that Elders remain connected to their communities and culture.**

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Article 24

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to their traditional medicines and to maintain their health practices, including the conservation of their vital medicinal plants, animals and minerals. Indigenous individuals also have the right to access, without any discrimination, to all social and health services.
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.



Promoting a Healthy Environment

- **Take immediate and effective action on Climate Change, emphasizing the protection of Indigenous rights both domestically and internationally.**
- **Preserve the right of all Indigenous communities regardless of Status, membership or residence to clean air, clean water, and access to natural spaces.**

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Article 29

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands or territories and resources. States shall establish and implement assistance programmes for indigenous peoples for such conservation and protection, without discrimination.
2. States shall take effective measures to ensure that no storage or disposal of hazardous materials shall take place in the lands or territories of indigenous peoples without their free, prior and informed consent.
3. States shall also take effective measures to ensure, as needed, that programmes for monitoring, maintaining and restoring the health of indigenous peoples, as developed and implemented by the peoples affected by such materials, are duly implemented.





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