

News Release

For Immediate Release

Canada, British Columbia and the First Nations Summit welcome new BC-specific policy to support treaty negotiations in BC

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Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada
British Columbia Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
First Nations Summit

The Government of Canada, the Province of British Columbia, and the First Nations Summit have collaboratively developed a *Recognition and Reconciliation of Rights Policy for Treaty Negotiations in British Columbia*.

The Honourable Carolyn Bennett, federal Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, the Honourable Scott Fraser, British Columbia's Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, and First Nations Summit Political Executive leaders Cheryl Casimer and Robert Phillips jointly released a new policy approach for treaty negotiations in BC.

This BC-specific policy supports a recognition of rights-based approach to treaty negotiations that is suited to the unique context of treaty negotiations in British Columbia, and will help advance innovations in treaty-making. A central feature of the BC-specific policy is basing negotiations on the recognition and continuation of rights without those rights being modified, surrendered or extinguished when a treaty is signed. The policy, co-developed by the Principals to the BC treaty process — Canada, the First Nations Summit and British Columbia — also provides guidance for how treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements are to be negotiated in a manner consistent with the Constitution and provincial and federal commitments to implement the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* in BC as well as customary international law and Indigenous laws and legal orders.

The new policy will enable flexible, innovative and collaborative approaches that improve how treaties are reached in BC.

Under this new policy, treaty negotiations start from a place where the federal and provincial governments recognize the inherent right to self-determination and where negotiation mandates are co-developed. This sets a foundation for the federal, BC and Indigenous governments to work together to advance the reconciliation of Indigenous and Crown titles and jurisdictions required by section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.

Quotes

“The Recognition and Reconciliation of Rights Policy for Treaty Negotiations in British Columbia is an example of what is possible when partners work together to advance rights recognition in a spirit of respect and cooperation. I look forward to the next steps we take together for First Nations on their path to self-determination.”

*The Honourable Carolyn Bennett, M.D., P.C., M.P.
Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations*

“The Recognition and Reconciliation of Rights Policy for Treaty Negotiations in British Columbia provides for the recognition of Indigenous title and rights, including the inherent right of self-determination of Indigenous nations participating in the BC treaty negotiations framework. Full and final agreements are no longer required, and the policy importantly acknowledges that rights will evolve over time. These and other provisions will go a long way towards turning the page on the legacy of Crown denial to a new nation-to-nation relationship based on the recognition of rights, reconciliation and respect.”

*Cheryl Casimer
Political Executive, First Nations Summit*

“This new policy reflects significant work with our partners in the BC treaty process to renew treaty-making in BC, with a focus on lasting government-to-government relationships that recognize the inherent rights of Indigenous peoples and have the ability to grow and change over time. We want to give negotiating tables more flexibility to take new and innovative approaches that will lead to successful treaties, which are one of the important paths to advancing meaningful reconciliation together.”

*The Honourable Scott Fraser
British Columbia Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation*

“The new policy rejects formulaic and one size fits all approaches in favour of the co-development of mandates by federal, provincial and First Nation Chief Negotiators and the parties have committed to addressing longstanding issues. We look forward to the breakthroughs that should result from these long-awaited innovations.”

*Robert Phillips
Political Executive, First Nations Summit*

Quick Facts

- The BC-specific policy, which was collaboratively developed between the First Nations Summit, Canada and the Province of BC, provides greater flexibility to develop agreements in an incremental or staged way.
- The policy includes commitments to address shared or overlapping territories, and to respect the rights of Indigenous groups not participating in the BC treaty process.

- The new policy builds on the work the Multilateral Engagement report from 2016 and the December 2018 Principals Accord.
- In 1992, a made-in-BC treaty negotiations process was created to guide negotiations in British Columbia. Since then, 11 First Nations in BC have reached modern treaties with self-government and 28 First Nations groups are currently in the advanced stages of negotiation.

Related Products

- [*Recognition and Reconciliation of Rights Policy for Treaty Negotiations in British Columbia*](#)

Associated Links

- [Exploring New Ways of Working Together](#)
- [National Engagement on the Recognition of Indigenous Rights Principles Respecting the Government of Canada's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples](#)
- [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)

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