

NDP Response: First Nations Leadership Council

1. Reconciliation, Recognition and Affirmation:

If elected, will your government commit to bring in early legislation to implement the UN Declaration, the most comprehensive, universal international human rights instrument explicitly addressing the economic, social, cultural, political, spiritual and environmental rights of Indigenous Peoples? If elected, how will your government work to implement the above three articles, including working meaningfully and in partnership with Indigenous peoples?

New Democrats believe the federal government should not be able to pick and choose which Indigenous rights they will uphold and which ones they will ignore. A new framework for reconciliation must be grounded in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. We will continue the work of NDP MP Romeo Saganash and introduce legislation to harmonize Canada's laws with the UN Declaration.

New Democrats know that no law, especially those related to Indigenous peoples, can be passed without the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples. We will work closely and in partnership with Indigenous peoples to harmonize Canada's laws with the UN Declaration.

In light of Canada's adoption of the UN Declaration and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) 94 Calls to Action, if elected, how will your government work to transform the current relationship between First Nations and the Government of Canada in the implementation, negotiation and conclusion of Treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements, inside the current BC Treaty negotiations framework, as well as outside of that process?

New Democrats will work with Indigenous peoples to co-develop a National Action Plan on Reconciliation, drawing directly from the Calls to Action and the UN Declaration to ensure that Canada's laws, policies, and practices are consistent with Canada's human rights commitments – including cultural rights, land rights, and rights to self-determination and self-government.

Through legislation, we will establish a National Council for Reconciliation to provide oversight and accountability for this process, reporting regularly to Parliament and Canadians.

We will recognize and respect treaties, supporting Indigenous Nations who are building and re-building their governance structures.

2. Justice

If elected, how will your government challenge current approaches that contribute to the growing overrepresentation of Indigenous men and women in incarceration, and in particular, the alarming and drastic increase of Indigenous women being incarcerated as the fastest growing incarcerated population?

New Democrats believe government must work to end systemic discrimination against Indigenous peoples in the justice system. In accordance with the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action 30, 31, and 32, we will increase the discretionary power of judges during sentencing, ensure bail programs are culturally appropriate, bolster funding for community justice programs that focus on healing and restorative justice rather than incarceration, and uphold the use of Gladue principles in court proceedings.

We will work with Indigenous communities to enhance community safety and provide the necessary resources for Indigenous policing, while taking steps to end discriminatory policing practices like carding.

3. Children and Families

If elected, what will your government do to ensure that a funding regime based in the principles of substantive equality is developed and implemented immediately for First Nations child welfare? If elected, how will your government ensure that Jordan's Principle is immediately implemented and adopted, equally, in all Provinces and Territories?

In government, New Democrats will ensure that every child is provided a safe place to learn and an opportunity to succeed, whether on or off reserve. We will implement Shannen's Dream of equitable access to education, backed by federal investments and infrastructure, so no student will be forced to learn in dangerous environments.

A New Democrat government will also work with the provinces and territories to fully implement Jordan's principle, end the delays and ensure equitable access to health services and educational supports for Indigenous children from coast to coast to coast.

If elected, how will your government respond to this most recent CHRT decision and ensure that children and families are adequately compensated for this discrimination?

New Democrats are committed to ending discrimination against Indigenous children, young people, and families by fully implementing the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal orders. We would work with the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society to implement the Spirit Bear Plan.

New Democrats will take immediate action to respect, support and resource Indigenous jurisdiction over child-welfare systems, and will back this commitment with long-term, predictable funding guaranteed in legislation so that Indigenous peoples can exercise their jurisdiction and authority over matters involving their own children and families.

4. Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework

If elected, will your party follow through on the commitments along with a ten year investment of \$1.2 billion to work in partnership with First Nations to support ongoing implementation of the Framework which is intended to build capacity of First Nations to support children and families directed by First Nations authorities, values and practices?

New Democrats recognize that Indigenous children have the right to their own culture and language and to be raised in their own communities – all vital to overall well-being.

New Democrats will honour existing commitments to investments in the Indigenous Early Learning and Child-Care Framework so as not to reverse or stop the positive work and progress that has already been made.

A New Democrat government would work in partnership with First Nations and the BC Leadership Council on future funding commitments to support ongoing implementation of the framework to support children and families directed by First Nations authorities, values, and practices.

5. Education

If elected, how will your government continue to support the development and implementation and commitments made in Regional First Nation Education Agreements, like BCTEA, including filling outstanding funding gaps?

New Democrats believe that if funding is promised, it should be delivered.

New Democrats are committed to working on Regional First Nation Education Agreements, including the BCTEA, with the free, prior, and informed consent of First Nations across Canada.

We will implement Shannen's Dream of equitable access to education, backed by federal investments and infrastructure in ways that respect First Nations' language and culture.

If elected, what steps will your government take to end the backlog of First Nations students seeking funding to access and complete their post-secondary education?

Recognizing that barriers to post-secondary education and training continue, we will support Indigenous youth and help them bridge the gap to post-secondary education through expanded financial assistance and increased educational opportunities for children who grew up on care, and distance education for rural and remote students.

Our vision is for every Canadian to have access to quality post-secondary education. Over the long term, we would work with the provinces and territories to cap and reduce tuition fees, with an end goal of making post-secondary education part of our public education system.

We would also eliminate interest on federal student loans and stop the government from profiting from student debt. We'll move away from loans and significantly increase access to non-repayable Canada Student Grants.

6. Final Report and Recommendations of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

If elected, what actions will your government take to ensure all 231 Calls to Justice are implemented?

The National Inquiry must not sit on a shelf. New Democrats were among the first to agree with the conclusions of the report revealing the deliberate human and Indigenous rights violations against Indigenous women living in Canada.

New Democrats will work in partnership with Indigenous women, the families of the missing and murdered, and communities to implement the Inquiry's Calls for Justice and the calls to action brought forward by communities.

This includes establishing a comprehensive plan to address violence against Indigenous women, girls and LGBTQI2S+ - ensuring that all those fleeing violence have access to culturally appropriate programming, emergency shelters and transitional housing.

7. Fisheries

If elected, how will your government uphold the mandate letter to the current Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and the 10 Principles Respecting the Government of Canada's relationship with Indigenous Peoples, ensuring that the laws, policies, and practices relating to fisheries management are consistent with the UN Declaration and Canadian case law, and that the priority of access to fisheries resources be upheld and implemented for First Nations in BC to exercise their rights to fish for food, social and ceremonial purposes?

New Democrats recognize that direct engagement between the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and First Nations is required to improve the government's approach to fisheries and to recognize First Nations' Constitutional priority to fisheries.

New Democrats will uphold the 10 Principles Respecting the Government of Canada's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples while also recognizing that a new approach based on the recognition of the inherent rights of Indigenous peoples must be taken.

New Democrats will work with First Nations in BC and regional partners to support the exercise of rights to fish for food, social, and ceremonial purposes.

If elected, how will your government commit to re-working the Guardian Program to provide capacity and resources for First Nations to exercise their jurisdiction and authority of designated Indigenous fishery guardians to manage, conserve and protect the resources in their traditional territories?

In keeping with our commitment to reconciliation, our conservation goals will be advanced in full partnership with Indigenous peoples and with respect for Indigenous sovereignty. We will invest in and grow the Indigenous Guardians Program, invest in Indigenous-led science, and support the creation of Indigenous-managed protection areas to make sure that species recovery efforts uphold Indigenous rights and embrace traditional knowledge to increase biodiversity.

Consistent with Canada's commitment to new fiscal relationships, if elected, how will your government dedicate new long-term funding to support First Nations to design and implement new stock assessment and fish habitat monitoring programs and help Canada meet its commitments to the Wild Salmon Policy?

New Democrats recognize that many First Nations are ideally situated and interested in taking on fisheries responsibilities.

New Democrats will invest in habitat monitoring and restoration, as well as the rebuilding of fish stocks. We will work with First Nations, communities, and the province to determine best strategies for these investments that also recognize the significant opportunity, contributions, and commitments to First Nations.

If elected, how will your government ensure the Aboriginal right to fish affirms and enables Indigenous access to fishing for economic purposes?

New Democrats recognize Aboriginal rights to fishing.

A New Democrat government will make sure First Nations communities thrive by working in partnership with First Nations to expand economic opportunities and create good jobs in First Nations communities in British Columbia. New Democrats are committed to dedicated regional economic development support to help expand economic opportunities in a way that reflects a communities social and cultural values.

New Democrats will make significant investments to create quality, local jobs and work with the provinces to provide training and re-training for emerging and growing job markets.

If elected, will your government commit to developing and implementing policies and regulations to transition all existing open net-pen finfish facilities along the Pacific Coast to land-based closed containment facilities?

In order to protect wild salmon on the Pacific coast, we will fully implement the recommendations of the Cohen Commission and work with the province of British Columbia and First Nations to support the transition to land-based closed-containment system.

If elected, how will your government empower BC First Nations to advance First Nations fisheries rights at the international scale, including protecting food security for BC First Nations at the Pacific Salmon Commission?

New Democrats recognize the right of First Nations self-government as part of Canada's evolving system of cooperative federalism.

A New Democrat government would work to include BC First Nations at the Pacific Salmon Commission to help advance Canada's interests in Pacific salmon management and bilateral negotiations.

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8. Environmental Stewardship

If elected, will your government work with First Nations to ensure the commitment of FPIC is incorporated in federal environmental assessments?

A New Democrat government will replace mere consultation with a standard of free, prior, and informed consent for First Nations communities affected by government policies – including for all decisions affecting constitutionally-protected land rights, like energy product reviews.

We are committed to good-faith, consent-based engagement and negotiations consistent with the Tsilhqot'in decision, an approach that honours Canada's legal and constitutional obligations.

If elected, will your government include First Nations in global outreach opportunities including implementing partnerships as suggested in BC First Nations action plans?

New Democrats recognize the importance of First Nations of free, prior, and informed consent in energy projects.

New Democrats would work in partnership with First Nations in British Columbia to develop a working relationship between the federal government and the BC First Nations Energy and Mining Council in global outreach opportunities.

9. Emergency Management

If elected, what initiatives will your government undertake to ensure comparable levels of servicing for addressing (ongoing and continuing) critical foundations of Emergency Management? What commitment can be adhered to for BC First Nations' direct inclusion (partnership) in all agreements related to the provisions of Emergency Management (preparedness and response) Services?

New Democrats know how important it is to address the service-gap in emergency management systems in First Nations communities. New Democrats will honour the MOU signed between Canada, British Columbia, and the First Nations Leadership Council.

New Democrats will also commit funding to help First Nations with on-reserve emergency management and prevention, including firefighting training and equipment.

10. Climate Emergency

If elected, how will your government safeguard the inherent, Treaty and constitutionally protected rights of First Nations, respect Indigenous knowledge, and uphold Treaties and other constructive arrangements between First Nations and the Crown, and take urgent and transformative climate action that meets the requirements outlined in the reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and Canada in a Changing Climate to reduce emissions in Canada by 60% below 2010 levels by 2030 and reach net-zero emissions by 2050?

The climate crisis is not just an environmental emergency. It also threatens traditional food sources and the very survival of many Indigenous communities.

New Democrats will put reconciliation at the core of this effort, upholding Indigenous knowledge and respecting inherent sovereignty. We recognize that as original peoples of this country, Indigenous peoples have intimate connections to their homelands, territories and resources, and have provided stewardship since time out of memory. Indigenous peoples are best placed to protect cultural and biological diversity through control over their territory – and so on the recognition of inherent rights, title and treaty rights will be at the heart of our approach to addressing climate change.

A New Democrat government will declare a climate emergency and put in place ambitious, science-based greenhouse gas reductions targets that will help stabilize the global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius. We'll put those targets in legislation and ensure accountability by creating an independent Climate Accountability Office to do regular audits of progress towards our climate goals.

New Democrats recognize that putting a price on carbon is an important tool to drive greenhouse gas reductions at the source. We will continue carbon pricing, including rebates to households that fall under the federal backstop plan, while making it fairer by rolling back the breaks given to big polluters.

The federal government can also model change by becoming a trail-blazer in energy efficiency, clean technologies, and renewable energy use. We will lead by example and procure from Canadian companies producing clean technology, ensuring that federal buildings use renewable energy, and moving the vehicle fleets of the federal government to electric by 2025.

A New Democrat government will modernize and expand public transit in communities across Canada. Our vision includes making it possible for Canadian auto-manufacturers to produce more zero-emission vehicles. We will create a centre of excellence for research and development of zero-emission vehicles, and support Canadian manufacturing of batteries, energy storage solutions, and alternative fuels like biofuels made from waste.

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We will also help Canadians make better choices by promoting active transportation like walking and cycling.

11. First Nations Jurisdiction over Cannabis

If elected, what legislative and regulatory changes will your government make to ensure that First Nations jurisdiction is respected in relation to cannabis?

New Democrats recognize that *The Cannabis Act* failed to consult meaningfully with First Nations and there are no provisions that address the unique needs of First Nations peoples, their communities, or their social and cultural needs.

New Democrats are committed to resolving ongoing jurisdictional, distribution, and retail issues related to the Cannabis Act and First Nations in Canada. We would work with First Nations leadership with their free, prior, and informed consent to do the right thing.

12. Indigenous Culture and Heritage

Given the urgent need to recognize and protect Indigenous heritage, if elected, how will your government ensure sustainable funding and support of an oversight Indigenous organization to carry out this important and complex work in Canada, the provinces and territories?

New Democrats recognize that Canada's relationship with Indigenous peoples has been based on colonization, and that much of existing heritage work is based on the built heritage of colonizers over the cultural heritage of Indigenous people.

A New Democrat government would work with the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples, heritage experts, and existing heritage infrastructure to recognize and protect Indigenous heritage in Canada.

If elected, how will your government commit to honour this work, implement meaningful financial reparations, and provide resources to Indigenous organization and communities to continue and increase our efforts to remedy the damage done to our societies?

New Democrats are committed to working with the free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous peoples to remedy the damage done to First Nations societies.

In partnership with Indigenous peoples, a New Democrat government will fully implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action. To do this, we would co-develop a National Action Plan for Reconciliation supported by a National Council for Reconciliation to provide oversight and accountability that reports regularly to Parliament.

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13. Indigenous Arts

If elected, what steps will your government take to ensure the vitality and sustainability of Indigenous arts and cultures in all of Canada's provinces and Territories?

New Democrats will protect our heritage and support a strong, independent Canadian and Indigenous arts and culture industry. New Democrats will make sure that Indigenous talent can thrive on both digital and traditional platforms – here at home and around the world. We think that artists should be able to earn a decent living from their art, and that government has an important role to play in making sure that a diversity of voices in Canada can tell their stories.

A New Democrat government will provide financial support for Indigenous theatre at the National Arts Centre as part of our larger efforts to honour and support Indigenous arts and culture.

Recognizing the special challenges faced by people who make a living in the arts and culture industry, we'll make life more affordable by putting in place income tax averaging for artists and cultural workers.

14. Indigenous Languages

If elected, will your government commit to providing adequate funding as mandated by Bill C-91?

New Democrats recognize that the *Act Respecting Indigenous Languages* falls well short of the funding needs identified by Elders, language speakers and educators, academics, and Indigenous advocates.

New Democrats are committed to the promotion and revitalization of Indigenous languages, recognizing that honouring Canada's linguistic heritage must include reconciliation.

If elected, will your government commit to developing a national language strategy as part of the implementation of Bill C-91?

Yes. New Democrats would honour the text of Bill C-91 and develop a national language strategy.

15. Closing Language and Technology Gaps

If elected, how will your government effectively invest and support the positive momentum for Indigenous communities to manage and revitalize their languages in Canada?

New Democrats recognize that language speakers are getting older and there are ongoing challenges that pose a threat to the positive progress being made for Indigenous languages.

Top-down approaches to language management and revitalization are not always effective, and many First Nations already have plans to effectively teach and spread the use of their languages. New Democrats are committed to supporting the work already being done by First Nations.

16. Access to Broadband and Mobile Connectivity

If elected, what will your government do to ensure all Indigenous peoples have equal and affordable access to internet and mobile connectivity, considering the majority of nations in BC are excluded from accessing the world's most powerful economic and social platform?

A New Democrat government will work with Indigenous communities to encourage economic development and create good jobs through infrastructure investments and expanded access to broadband internet and cell service, especially for rural and remote communities. We commit to working with Indigenous entrepreneurs and communities to find solutions for accessing capital and scale up, investing in Indigenous social enterprise projects and entrepreneurs.