

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

Secretariat of the
Assembly of the
First Nations
of Quebec
and Labrador

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ASSEMBLÉE DES CHEFS / ASSEMBLY OF CHIEFS

DECLARATION ON AN ASSERTION PROCESS ON FIRST NATIONS' SOVEREIGNTY

GUIDED by 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;

BUILDING UPON 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 inherent rights, notably aboriginal title, aboriginal rights and rights based on treaties, over our traditional territories which transcend all boundaries;

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

CONSIDERING THAT the First Nations are peoples who possess the right to self-determination as recognized by International Law and more specifically 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 inaction, the fundamental rights of First Nations;

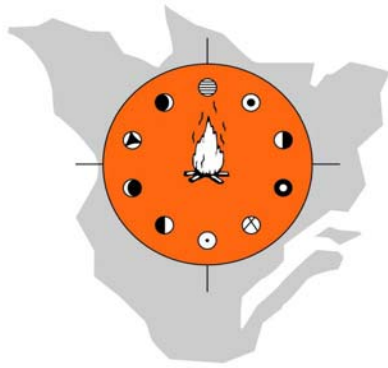
CONSIDERING THAT a significant number of our populations live off-reserve;

CONSIDERING THAT the non-First Nations economy is built on the denial of First Nations rights and to the detriment of First Nations;

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

RECOGNIZING the choice of First Nations to engage in nation-to-nation negotiations with federal and provincial governments, and **RECOGNIZING** on the same level the aboriginal rights and territorial rights of First Nations that possess treaties, solemnly signed with non-First Nation nations.

EMPHASIZING the unique contribution of the Elders, the Youth and the Women in the governance of our societies, as well as the equality relation between women and men amongst First Nations;



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

The time has come for First Nations to set in motion a process which will promote a 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 an assertion process on sovereignty, which 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 assertion process on sovereignty will contain notably:

- Concrete elements to implement the right of First Nation Peoples to self-determination;
- A strategic plan to implement the inherent right to self-governance ;
- A mission to rebuild our Nations which will promote the full participation of all our members of our civil society, by recognizing a true First Nation citizenship ;
- Policies and actions which will increase First Nations management of ancestral territories and resources;

This process will provide for actions to be taken by First Nation Councils and First Nation members to strengthen their sovereignty.

ADOPTED IN QUÉBEC ON NOVEMBER 27, 2008