



# NWT Plain Facts

*On Land and  
Self-government*

## Deh Cho Process Negotiations

### What's it all about?

The Deh Cho Process is a negotiation on land, resources and governance between the Deh Cho First Nations, the Government of Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories.

### The region and the people

The Deh Cho region is in the Southwest corner of the Northwest Territories and covers roughly 210,000 km<sup>2</sup>. There are 10 communities involved in the Deh Cho negotiations. Eight communities have largely Aboriginal populations and two a mix of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal residents. The Deh Cho region is home to the largest Dene population of any region in the NWT. The Deh Cho First Nations (DCFN) membership includes 10 First Nations and three Métis locals, representing approximately 4,500 people.



### The goal of negotiations

The parties have agreed to four key goals for their negotiations:

- To put in place a Deh Cho public government that will be based on DCFN laws and customs, as well as other Canadian laws and customs
- To describe how the different levels of government will work together and how powers and responsibilities will be shared
- To make everyone's rights related to land, resources and governance in the Deh Cho territory certain and clear
- To describe how land, water and other resources like wildlife and fish in the Deh Cho territory will be used, managed and protected

### Progress so far

#### February 1998

Dr. Peter Russell is named **Ministerial Envoy to the Deh Cho** by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and the Grand Chief of the DCFN. He then travels to every community in the region, along with a team of Deh Cho leaders, former leaders, Elders and federal officials.

#### Fall 1998

Dr. Russell submits his report. He **proposes a two-staged approach to negotiations**: first negotiate a Framework Agreement and an Interim Measures Agreement; then move on to negotiate towards an Agreement-in-Principle and a Final Agreement.



1999

Formal Deh Cho Process **negotiations begin.**

**May 23, 2001**

The Deh Cho Process **Framework Agreement** and **Interim Measures Agreement** are signed.

**Framework Agreement** – Sets out the basis for negotiating a final agreement, including the objectives and principles that will guide the negotiators; the roles of the three Parties and an initial list of subjects for negotiations.

**Interim Measures Agreement (IMA)** – Clarifies the role of the DCFN in resource management decisions in the Deh Cho region while negotiations are going on and provides guidance to affected stakeholders like industry until a final agreement is in place. It includes provisions for Interim Land Withdrawals, an Interim Resource Development Agreement and a Land Use Planning Committee.

2001

The **Deh Cho Land Use Planning Committee** is established in Fort Providence. It will manage a land use planning process meant to ensure responsible and managed development in the Deh Cho territory over the long term.

**April 17, 2003**

The Deh Cho Process **Interim Resource Development Agreement (IRDA)** is signed. Through this agreement, the Government of Canada will share an amount equal to a percentage of resource royalties collected in the Mackenzie Valley with the DCFN. As part of the IRDA, Canada and the DCFN commit to initiate an oil and gas exploration licences issuance cycle within a year and every two years thereafter. A working group is struck to implement the IRDA commitment to an oil and gas issuance cycle.

**August 13, 2003**

The Deh Cho Process **Interim Land Withdrawals** come into effect, mapping out which areas of the Deh Cho territory are protected from new development. Other areas remain open for development and existing interests are not affected. The withdrawals involved consultations with Deh Cho community members and third parties, such as mining companies, environmental groups, prospectors and oil and gas companies. *(Effective until October 31, 2008)*

**What is being negotiated now**

Interim measures are temporary and will eventually be replaced by a final agreement. Now that these measures are in place, negotiations are focussing on getting to that final agreement. The Parties are taking a step-by-step approach to reaching an Agreement-in-Principle (AIP) within three to four years and, after that, a final agreement.

For more information on these negotiations, visit the Deh Cho Process website at [www.inac-ainc.gc.ca/DehCho](http://www.inac-ainc.gc.ca/DehCho)

## For more information:

For more Plain Facts on land and self-government in the NWT, visit the Plain Talk website at [www.inac-ainc.gc.ca/nt/pt](http://www.inac-ainc.gc.ca/nt/pt)

For general information on DIAND policies, programs and services, visit the NWT Region's website at [nwt-tno.inac-ainc.gc.ca](http://nwt-tno.inac-ainc.gc.ca)

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