

TOWARDS A NEW BEGINNING



A FOUNDATIONAL REPORT
FOR A STRATEGY TO REVITALIZE
FIRST NATION, INUIT AND MÉTIS
LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

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Report to the Minister of Canadian Heritage by
The Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures
June 2005

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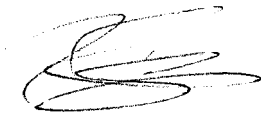
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To the Honourable Liza Frulla
Minister of Canadian Heritage

On behalf of the Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures, we are pleased to provide you with our report entitled, **Towards a New Beginning: A Foundational Report for a Strategy to Revitalize First Nation, Inuit and Métis Languages and Cultures.**

It is our sincere wish that this Report be regarded as a significant step in the journey towards building a new relationship with First Nation, Inuit and Métis people, and towards restoring our pride, our self-esteem and hope for our youth for generations to come.

Respectfully submitted,



Ron Ignace
Chair



Mary Jane Jim
Co-Chair

June 28, 2005
Winnipeg, Canada

Members of the Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures



Back row, left to right: Alexina Kublu, Rosemarie McPherson, Helen Klengenberg,
Linda Pelly-Landrie, Amos Key Jr.

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Towards a New Beginning: A Foundational Report for a Strategy to Revitalize First Nation, Inuit and Métis Languages and Cultures

Executive Summary

Our Guiding Principles

The Task Force's work was informed by values and principles taught by the Elders. It was inspired by a vision that sees First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages as gifts from the Creator carrying unique and irreplaceable values and spiritual beliefs that allow speakers to relate with their ancestors and to take part in sacred ceremonies. This vision sees the present generation recovering and strengthening the ability to speak these sacred, living languages and passing them on so that the seventh and future generations will be fluent in them. It sees these renewed languages as expressions of First Nation, Inuit and Métis nationhood in a country that has made itself whole by recognizing them in law as the original languages of Canada. This vision sees Canada providing enduring institutional support for First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages and Canadians of all origins, recognizing, sharing and supporting these principles and values.

Part I — Introduction to the Task Force Report

The Task Force acknowledges that this report is only a beginning, a foundation for the long-term, community-based work still to be done. Language and culture are the foundations of the nationhood of First Nation, Inuit and Métis people and the Task Force does not intend this report to detract from their Aboriginal and treaty rights under section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. The term "Aboriginal" is avoided as it may blur distinctions between First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples, as well as between their different past and present government-to-government relationships with each other and with Canada.

Part II — The Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures

Composition of the Task Force

In December 2002, the Minister of Canadian Heritage announced that Canada would create a centre with a budget of \$160 million over 10 years to help preserve, revitalize and promote Aboriginal languages and cultures.

To advise the Minister, 10 Task Force members — Bruce Flamont, Ron Ignace, Mary Jane Jim, Amos Key Jr., Helen Klengenberg, Alexina Kublu, Rosemarie McPherson, Ruth Norton, Frank Parnell and Linda Pelly-Landrie — were appointed in December 2003 by consensus among the partners: the Assembly of First Nations, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and the Métis National Council, working closely with the Government of Canada. A Circle of Experts, a group of knowledgeable and experienced language and cultural leaders, educators and community workers from across Canada, was also named to assist the Task Force.

Task Force Mandate and Terms of Reference

On appointment, the Task Force received a mandate to propose a national strategy to preserve, revitalize and promote First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages and cultures. Detailed terms of reference were provided later, calling for advice on the structure and functions of the proposed languages and cultures centre and requiring the Task Force to report back to the Minister.

How Our Elders Guided the Task Force Process

Drawn from First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities from across Canada, all Task Force members share the view that language and culture are maintained and transmitted at the family and community level, sanctified by spiritual practices and ceremonies, and symbolized by the inspiring presence of Elders. Before beginning their consultations, the Task Force held a meeting on May 14, 2004, with Elders, to seek their guidance and blessings. As a result, all Task Force processes were filled with respect for the serious and sacred nature of the work being undertaken.

Task Force Approach and Activities

For administrative and political reasons beyond the control of the Task Force, including the short timeframe, all elements of the terms of reference could not be fully addressed. However, the Task Force was able to meet with the Elders for guidance, conduct a research and literature review, carry out 16 cross-Canada community focus group consultations, consult with national First

Nation, Inuit and Métis organizations, prepare research guidelines and protocols, assess and analyze the consultation results and other data collected, and deliver this foundational report.

Part III — Our Languages and Cultures: Cornerstones for Our Philosophies

Our Languages: Our Social and Spiritual Values

A people's philosophy and culture are embedded in their language and given expression by it. Language and culture are key to the collective sense of identity and nationhood of the First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples. Their languages arose here and are structured differently than languages born elsewhere, because they are based on relationships.

Our Languages: Our Connection to the Land

The most important relationship embodied by First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages is with the land. "The land" is more than the physical landscape; it involves the creatures and plants, as well as the people's historical and spiritual relationship to their territories. First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages show that the people are not separate from the land. They have a responsibility to protect it and to preserve the sacred and traditional knowledge associated with it.

The Past: Different Cultures, Different Perspectives

Of the many differences in cultural perspective between First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples and other Canadians, the oral tradition is most important. It is the preserve of Elders and others whose sacred responsibility is to pass on the stories that reflect the relationship between the people and the places and events that define them. First Nation languages were the official languages of historical treaties, and the oral tradition is the basis for interpreting them now.

Our Languages and Cultures: Our Nationhood

First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples are nations in the original sense of being groups of people linked by common bonds of language, culture, ethnicity and a collective will to maintain their distinctiveness. Canada's departure from this understanding at Confederation and its subsequent policies of assimilation contributed to language loss. The practices, traditions and customs maintained by First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages are the basis of the Aboriginal and treaty rights enshrined in the Constitution.

Our Languages: Our Responsibility, Canada's Duty

While there are worldwide trends compounding this loss of language, Canada's past assimilative actions, particularly the residential school system, cannot be ignored. Canada's failure to protect First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages and cultures means it must now provide the resources necessary to restore them. All federal departments share this responsibility. However, First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples must also take their rightful place as the first and foremost teachers of their own languages and cultures.

Part IV — First Nation, Inuit and Métis Languages: Where We Are Now

Our Languages: Our Diversity as Peoples

A national linguistic and cultural revival strategy must reflect the diversity of First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples and the different conditions of their languages. The exact number of languages and dialects is unknown, but around 61 are spoken today. First Nations speak 59 languages. Inuit speak various dialects of Inuktitut and Métis speak Michif, as well as some First Nation languages.

The Status of First Nation, Inuit and Métis Languages

Given their preliminary and incomplete nature, existing community-based studies assessing language vitality in terms of numbers of fluent speakers and rates of intergenerational transmission were interpreted with caution by the Task Force. What these studies do show is the diversity of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages vitality, ranging from flourishing to critically endangered. Even languages with a large number of speakers may be flourishing in some regions or communities and be in a critical state in others.

Language Use in the Home

The Task Force cautiously assessed the data from other preliminary and incomplete sources, such as the Census, the Aboriginal Peoples Survey and a British Columbia First Nation language study. These sources provide information on mother tongue speakers, the ages of those who know the language and language use in the home. In terms of mother tongue, Cree, Ojibwe and Inuktitut are shown to be viable but losing ground. In British Columbia, First Nation intergenerational language transmission seems to be in serious decline.

First Nation, Inuit and Métis Languages in Urban Areas

Analysis of Census data shows that language strength among non-reserve First Nation people is declining and that Michif is in a critical state. The conclusion is that since First Nation, Inuit and Métis people living in cities tend not to use their languages at home, intergenerational transmission is exceedingly difficult.

Summary of Linguistic Conditions

The studies and surveys give a multidimensional picture of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages. Some are spoken by only a few Elders, others by tens of thousands. Large language groups like the Cree, Ojibwe and Inuktitut are viable, having at least 25,000 speakers, ranging from the young to the elderly. However, all languages, including those considered viable, are losing ground and are endangered.

Part V — Calls for Action

Calls by the Assembly of First Nations

First Nations have been lobbying since 1972 for federal support for their languages. In 1998, the Assembly of First Nations declared a state of language emergency, calling on Canada to recognize and financially support First Nation languages. In 2000, the Assembly of First Nations proposed a “First Nation Language Policy for Canada,” whereby Canada would recognize First Nation languages as Canada’s original languages and help First Nations protect, promote and use their languages, and deliver language programs and services under their own jurisdiction.

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples saw language revitalization as key to a renewed relationship between Canada and First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples and noted that the power to establish language priorities, policies and laws is a core Aboriginal self-government authority under the Constitution. Although the focus of language conservation and revitalization efforts must shift from formal institutions to communities, families and social networks, Canada was also urged to work with First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples to establish a national Aboriginal languages foundation to assist in this effort.

Recent Calls for Action by the National Political Organizations

The Task Force consulted directly with national First Nation, Inuit and Métis organizations. The Assembly of First Nations prefers a specific First Nation language foundation. The Métis National Council prefers that language funding come through the federal interlocutor’s office and go to its provincial affiliates. The Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami expresses no preference, but reserves the right to participate at a national level and prefers to spend its share of funding on explicitly Inuit priorities.

Part VI — What We Heard in the Consultations

What Our Elders Said

Where We Are Right Now

Many of those we heard in the consultations attributed the loss of their languages and cultures to the residential schools. They said that First Nation, Inuit and Métis people are at a crossroads on language and culture, where they must make choices, take action and involve the Elders. They focused on urban centres and youth, calling for funding and support mechanisms to help young people learn and take pride in their traditional languages and cultures.

Ethics and Concepts

Elders emphasized that language, culture, spiritual values and First Nation, Inuit and Métis sense of identity are inseparable concepts. Although writing and recording are useful supplemental resources, languages must be kept alive by daily use. Teaching the languages must be done with awareness of the important values these languages carry.

Personal Practices

Elders called on First Nation, Inuit and Métis people to do the following:

- Do not forget our languages.
- Speak and write our languages.
- Teach and learn our languages.
- Respect each other’s dialects and do not ridicule how others speak.
- Focus on young people.
- Start in the home to strengthen the will of the people to bring back our languages.
- Work together to build a foundation for our peoples.
- Speak with a united voice.

Institutional and Government Actions

Elders urged educational institutions to focus on:

- training programs, including immersion and bilingual schools, cultural camps and urban language programs;
- First Nation, Inuit and Métis control of language curricula to make language study mandatory, increase language teaching hours, and provide courses and programs, including degree programs, in First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages and cultures;
- development of educational resources including curricula, books, promotional and supplemental materials, technology, and research to address the needs of professions such as medicine, law and engineering;
- encouragement to youth to take leadership roles in language preservation; and
- development of other training resources, such as language mentoring programs, language teacher training programs and formal acknowledgment of Elders' ability to teach languages, including appropriate professional recognition.

Governments were urged to act:

- Recognize the value of traditional languages and cultures by entrenching them in the Constitution.
- Develop infrastructure to preserve and strengthen languages (e.g., a strategic plan, language and culture program standards, rules directing funding straight to communities, cultural awareness guidelines for researchers and program officers, protection of traditional knowledge, community-based language and culture centres governed by boards of Elders and community members, First Nation language laws requiring chiefs, council members and employees to know their traditional languages, and standardization of written languages).
- Support resource development, including lifestyles that foster language retention, by financially supporting:
 - development and distribution of teaching resources, technology and research materials;
 - research on traditional languages, cultures and knowledge; and
 - First Nation, Inuit and Métis people who choose to live a traditional lifestyle, as well as supporting initiatives to teach youth the skills to live traditionally or on the land.

What the People Said

The Role of First Nation, Inuit and Métis Languages

During 16 community consultations held across Canada in 2004, many stated that the ability to speak one's own language helps people to understand who they are in relation to themselves, their families and their communities, and to Creation itself. They spoke of the connection between one's own language and spirituality,

noting that focusing on language, spirituality and ceremonies can increase personal self-esteem, familiarize people with their culture and bring about community healing. They lamented language and culture loss, especially for the young people adrift between their cultures and that of mainstream Canadian society, and stressed that revitalizing language and culture is a way to heal and reconnect with the land. They attributed language loss to Canada's assimilation policies, particularly the residential school system, as well as to individual, institutional and government complacency.

Status of First Nation, Inuit and Métis Languages

Many proposals were made to revitalize language, including federal legislation giving First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages the same recognition and respect as the English and French languages. Financial support at the same level provided for English and French was also recommended, along with additional legislation to protect traditional knowledge so that First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples may direct the revitalization and use of their languages and cultures and benefit from them.

Need for a Community-Driven Revitalization Strategy

There was consensus on the need for a community-driven revitalization strategy, based on community commitment to identify priorities and develop and carry out plans that would involve all age groups. Action must be taken now to prevent further language loss. The strategy must be a 100-year project to overcome the legacy of the many decades of neglect, but with particular focus on critically endangered languages.

Roles and Priorities of a National Language Organization

Participants recommended that key roles of a national language organization include:

- coordinating the research and planning for a long-term language strategy;
- increasing awareness of the importance of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages;
- partnering with industry, governments and Indigenous peoples internationally; and
- directing funds to communities.

There was consensus that the organization should be streamlined, with minimal infrastructure, that decision making should be delegated to the regional level, that immediate funding should be provided to communities with few remaining fluent speakers, and that communities should get funding for community-based research and long-term language planning. All agreed that language and cultural education should be a main program focus, with many also recommending that it coordinate a clearing house or clearing houses to allow sharing of resources and research on best practices.

Part VII — Protecting and Promoting Our Languages

Protecting and Promoting Languages at the National Level

Most of the world's Indigenous languages are in danger of extinction, including those in Canada. Regardless of the number of speakers, all First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages are equal. There are many reasons why every effort should be made to save them.

First, they are the original languages of Canada, spoken here millennia before French and English. They ground First Nation, Inuit and Métis nationhood, are recognized in treaties and are entrenched in section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. There is an intimate connection between those who speak them and this land, and the Task Force recommends that the physical connection between First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples and the land be restored and strengthened through government-to-government agreements on co-management or similar regimes (Recommendation 1).

Further, First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages contain a wealth of traditional knowledge of benefit to Canada and the world. As a signatory to the international *Convention on Biological Diversity*, Canada is obligated to preserve traditional knowledge. The evolving domestic and international law on traditional knowledge supports the Task Force recommendation that Canada work collaboratively with First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples to develop better traditional knowledge protection and benefit-sharing measures (Recommendation 2).

Canada's ongoing nation-building is another reason to make efforts to save these languages. Canada has acknowledged its unfinished constitutional business with First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples and has formally acknowledged its past actions of suppressing their languages and cultures. In this context, the disparity between the national funding provided for French and English and that provided for First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages is highlighted.

Status Planning for First Nation, Inuit and Métis Languages

International experience shows that successful language revitalization requires a partnership between government and the communities whose languages are at risk. It also requires government action — for example, giving a minority language official language status — to reverse the perception that lesser-spoken languages are inferior.

Aboriginal Languages as Official Languages

Legislation giving official language status to several Aboriginal languages in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut is examined and assessed. The Task Force concluded that official language status without funding sufficient to support an adequate level of programming and services does little to sustain an endangered language and highlighted the disparity between the funding offered for the French language in these territories and that provided for the First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages.

International Language Planning

Experience in Ireland and New Zealand shows that official language status without popular support does little for language revitalization. The support and commitment of the linguistic community itself is required, as are appropriate infrastructure and adequate funding. The Task Force recommends federal legislative recognition to promote and protect First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages (Recommendation 3) and supportive federal funding at least equal to that provided for the English and French languages (Recommendations 4 and 5).

Language Status and the Individual

International experience confirms that the status of a language influences whether it will be used and supported. Past policies intended to remove language and identity from the thousands of children who were placed in residential schools caused many to lose their connection to their people and to view their languages as inferior.

A review of the recent Assembly of First Nations criticism of the federal Department of Indian Residential Schools Resolution highlights the psychological harms suffered by residential school survivors, which impeded them from passing on their languages and cultures. Those harms cannot be compensated under the current federal out-of-court resolution process, even though they resulted from actions tantamount to a breach of federal fiduciary obligation. The Task Force adopts and strengthens the Assembly of First Nations recommendation calling for compensation to any individual who attended these schools as a step towards recognizing the value of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages to these individuals (Recommendation 6).

Language Planning in First Nation, Inuit and Métis Communities

Calls for funding for community priorities established in the consultations, coupled with international data showing grassroots participation to be key to language

revival, prompted the Task Force to recommend a long-term national language strategy, based on “bottom-up” community-driven language planning, with support from regional and national First Nation, Inuit and Métis organizations (Recommendation 7).

The need for accurate and up-to-date data to ground a national long-term strategy led the Task Force to recommend that the national language organization coordinate a community-driven baseline study of language conditions for which Canada should provide funds beyond its present linguistic and cultural funding commitment (Recommendation 8).

Successful international experience in reviving critically endangered and extinct languages led the Task Force to recommend that Canada provide additional funding support for critically endangered First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages (Recommendation 9) to allow extra and immediate revitalization work, such as documenting and archiving.

Language Education

Need for Culturally Relevant Education

In its Roundtable on Life Long Learning, Canada agreed with the Task Force that language education can play a vital role in language revitalization.

1. Immersion Language Education

The educational and social benefits of bilingualism, including those recorded by Inuit and First Nation language immersion programs, are explored, and the disparity in funding between federal French language immersion and First Nation, Inuit and Métis language programs is highlighted. The Task Force recommends that Canada provide equivalent funding to First Nation, Inuit and Métis language immersion programs (Recommendation 10) and that it fund five-week First Nation, Inuit and Métis youth language immersion programs like those currently offered youth for English or French language immersion (Recommendation 11).

2. Second-Language Programs

European experience shows that attaining second-language proficiency requires a high level of curriculum resources and teacher training, along with opportunities to use the language outside the classroom. Many First Nations whose schools are funded by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development offer second-language programs for their languages but lack the financial and related resources (such as regional support

mechanisms) to permit their students to achieve proficiency. A First Nation-sponsored study proposed a federal endowment fund for these purposes. The Task Force agrees and recommends that the DIAND increase its First Nation school funding to the same levels as those of the funding provided by the provinces for provincially managed schools (Recommendation 12).

The Community’s Role in Language Education

To revitalize an endangered language, language educators advocate full community involvement, especially that of parents and Elders, so that children arrive at school with some knowledge of their language and the opportunity to use it outside the classroom.

Language Education in Correctional Institutions

The revival of interest in learning about their own cultures among First Nation, Inuit and Métis persons in the federal corrections system has led to three types of culturally relevant programming: “Pathways Units” in high-security institutions, where Elders offer guidance; minimum-security institutions allowing incarcerated persons to gradually reintegrate into the social life of their communities; and community-run healing lodges offering traditional First Nation, Inuit and Métis teachings and methods of healing. The Task Force recommends that Canada take the next step by funding First Nation, Inuit and Métis language training in federal correctional institutions (Recommendation 13).

Language Teacher Training

During the consultations, there were calls for more and better-trained language teachers. The Task Force agrees and recommends the creation of a program by Canada and the provinces along the lines of other federal youth language programs to allow First Nation, Inuit and Métis students who wish to become teachers to learn their own languages and have access to summer bursaries or appropriate employment programs (Recommendation 14).

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and Canada’s ministers of education have called for greater First Nation, Inuit and Métis teacher training and recruitment. First Nation schools are at a disadvantage in terms of salary and benefits, and the training role that First Nation, Inuit and Métis post-secondary institutions could play remains unexamined. The Task Force recommends that First Nation, Inuit and Métis organizations and the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada review progress on teacher and language teacher training, including the role that First Nation, Inuit and Métis post-secondary institutions could play (Recommendation 15). Furthermore, the Task Force

calls on the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to fund these institutions so that they play a more prominent role (Recommendation 16).

Part VIII — A National Language Organization

On the basis of the Task Force's mandate and the views of consultation participants and the national First Nation, Inuit and Métis organizations, the Task Force recommends a Languages and Cultures Council (LCC) to continue the work it was unable to complete and to provide leadership in developing a long-term, national language strategy (Recommendation 17).

Languages and Cultures Council

The advantages of drawing on the corporate memory and collective wisdom of the Task Force led it to recommend that its members be named as the interim council for a one-year period to finalize the work that could not be completed within the relatively short time frame provided in the Task Force mandate (Recommendation 18).

Vision, Mission Statement and Principles

The Task Force set out a vision for the LCC that sees First Nation, Inuit and Métis language revitalization efforts being “child centred, Elder focused and community driven” and provided an LCC mission statement focusing on “supporting and advocating for the preservation, maintenance and revitalization of our languages and cultures.” The Task Force sees the LCC being guided by the following principles:

- equality of access for all language and community groups;
- priorities established by each region in consultation with linguistic communities;
- fiscal responsibility and transparency and accountability to the government of Canada and to First Nation, Inuit and Métis governments; and
- appropriate recognition and fair compensation to Elders for their expertise and traditional knowledge.

Mandate

The LCC mandate would be to oversee the national language strategy, including:

- establishing a program operations function to distribute funds to national First Nation, Inuit and Métis organizations and to assist in policy development and the development of regional clearing houses and communication centres;
- continuing the Task Force work by consulting the federal government to maximize the effectiveness and coordination of policies and programs that support language and culture, including self-government,

comprehensive claim and territorial language agreements;

- consulting with provincial governments to encourage collaboration and to advance an integrated language strategy;
- making recommendations to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and to stakeholders on program, planning and administration, including funding and evaluation criteria; and
- lobbying for a national language commissioner to monitor the implementation of the national language strategy.

Structure

The LCC should be independent and apolitical, and it should be governed by a 15-member council of representatives (six First Nation, two Inuit, two Métis, one from an endangered language group, two Elders, one youth and one from the Government of Canada), with staggered three-year terms, except for a nonvoting chairperson chosen to hold office for four years. Members would be experienced in language planning, programming or education, as well as in nonprofit governance, financial management and program administration; knowledgeable in community and government structures; and fluent in a First Nation, Inuit or Métis language.

Council Roles and Responsibilities

The LCC would have the following roles and responsibilities:

- overseeing development and implementation of the national language strategy;
- identifying and managing emerging priorities and implementing a plan based on community priorities;
- developing and implementing processes to properly allocate funds;
- identifying and (or) developing linkages at the national, provincial or territorial, municipal and local levels and identifying processes within government to support the implementation of the national language strategy;
- promoting languages as an integral part of Canadian and First Nation, Inuit and Métis identity;
- developing accountability frameworks;
- communicating information on the strategy to the public and to stakeholders;
- developing effective, multiyear evaluation methods and sharing with regions the responsibility for conducting evaluations;
- receiving reports from participating organizations and providing an annual report on spending, programs, services and results; and
- establishing and implementing a conflict-of-interest policy and code of ethics.

Accountability

The difficulties in measuring outcomes such as language fluency, where there is no clear definition, may hinder evaluation. The LCC should consult with communities and regions to come up with a clear set of objectives and outcomes, with reporting mechanisms and evaluative measures. This evaluation framework should match the standards of the Aboriginal Languages Initiative (ALI) program funding agreement.

Finances

Translation Services for French-Speaking First Nation, Inuit and Métis People

ALI evaluations show an inadequate level of services to French speakers, which the Task Force recommends be corrected with increased federal funding to the LCC, to enable it to provide a full range of services to French-speaking First Nation, Inuit and Métis people (Recommendation 19).

Current: Aboriginal Languages Initiative

Funded at \$5 million annually over four years, ALI was created in 1998 to help reverse First Nation, Inuit and Métis language loss. The Task Force reviewed a recent evaluation urging that the administration of ALI funding be examined to ensure optimal timing for release of funds and that new allocations account for regional variations.

Interim: Over the Next Five Years

Based on the consultations and the Task Force's own findings, the Task Force sees an urgent need for the \$160 million committed in 2002 for First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages and recommends that Canada provide the funds over 5, instead of 10, years (Recommendation 20).

Endowment Fund

The Task Force examined the advantages and disadvantages of an endowment, structured either as a charitable organization or as a foundation. Consultations did not support an endowment, with most people preferring to have funds for language revitalization immediately available. While the Task Force wants the LCC to continue the study and consultation on this issue, it also sees virtue in having such a fund in the long term, particularly in generating funds from nongovernmental sources, and recommends that Canada provide the funds necessary to endow such a fund in perpetuity (Recommendation 21).

Short-Term Program Delivery

The Task Force recognizes that First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities and organizations may wish to

maintain existing regional program delivery structures and local decision-making processes. It recommends that the majority of funds already committed by Canada be decentralized to allow these structures and processes to continue and that the current ALI breakdown of funding for First Nation (75 percent), Inuit (15 percent) and Métis (10 percent) languages be maintained until a long-term national language strategy is developed and implemented, within the next five years (Recommendation 22).

The Task Force proposes a set of principles based on the successful aspects of the ALI to guide regional allocations of funds and recommends that regional allocations of funds to First Nations take into account variations in their languages and populations and that appropriate funding formulas be developed to account for regions with large populations and many linguistic communities (Recommendation 23).

National Projects Fund

The Task Force envisions a variety of projects that would be better addressed by the LCC than by regional or local organizations. Some of these projects involve issues going beyond a single region or language group, examining models for a national clearing house, conducting research and analysis of the federal language recognition legislation, and coordinating the national baseline survey. The Task Force recommends that 10 percent of the annual budget allocation from Canada's \$160-million commitment be set aside for the LCC to use for these purposes (Recommendation 24).

Innovative Projects Fund

During the consultations, many spoke of the need to apply new technology and innovative approaches to language education and revitalization. The Task Force agrees and recommends a fund be established to promote development, testing, evaluation and integration of new pedagogical methods, but that Canada fund it separately from its existing commitment, so as not to detract from the funds urgently needed by communities to reverse current language loss (Recommendation 25).

Concluding Comments

The Task Force views this report as the first step of a 100-year journey to revitalize First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages and cultures and is confident that, with Canada's support and the collective will of First Nation, Inuit and Métis individuals, families and communities, this journey can be completed. Canada must recognize its rich linguistic heritage and accept that it is the oral histories, the songs and the dances that speak of the First Nation, Inuit and Métis connection with this land. They give the fabric of Canada the texture and coloration that

make it unlike any other fabric in the world. Restoring their languages and cultures would ensure that First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples remain strong nations for as long as the sun shines, the grass grows and the river flows.

Task Force Recommendations

1. The Link between Languages and the Land

That First Nation, Inuit and Métis governments and the federal, provincial and territorial governments enter into government-to-government agreements or accords on natural resources, environmental sustainability and traditional knowledge. The agreements or accords should recognize the importance for First Nation, Inuit and Métis people of maintaining a close connection to the land in their traditional territories, particularly wilderness areas, heritage and spiritual or sacred sites, and should provide for their meaningful participation in stewardship, management, co-management or co-jurisdiction arrangements.

2. Protection of Traditional Knowledge

That Canada take a more comprehensive approach on the protection, use and benefits arising from traditional knowledge under the international *Convention on Biological Diversity* and that greater recognition be accorded to First Nation, Inuit and Métis people, particularly the Elders, in the collaborative planning process under the *Convention*.

3. Legislative Recognition, Protection and Promotion

That Canada enact legislation that recognizes, protects and promotes First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages as the First Languages of Canada. This legislation, to be developed in partnership with First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples, must recognize the constitutional status of our languages; affirm their place as one of the foundations of First Nation, Inuit and Métis nationhood; provide financial resources for their preservation, revitalization, promotion and protection; and establish the position of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Language Commissioner.

4. Equitable Resources for Language Support

That Canada provide funding for First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages which is, at a minimum, at the same level as that provided for the French and English languages.

5. Language Support from All Federal Departments

That funding for First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages not be limited to that provided by the Departments of Canadian Heritage, and Indian Affairs and Northern Development. All government departments, and particularly the Departments of Justice, Health, and Human Resources and Skills Development, need to adopt policies and provide funding sufficient to allow for delivery of services and programs which promote First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages, in the same manner as for the French and English languages.

6. Restitution and Reconciliation

That Canada implement as soon as possible the recommendation of the Assembly of First Nations to pay a lump-sum award by way of compensation to any person who attended an Indian Residential School. Alternatively, Canada and the churches establish a restitution fund to pay a lump-sum award to any person who attended an Indian Residential School, as compensation for emotional and psychological trauma brought on by loss of connection to family and community and to language and culture.

7. A National Language Strategy

That a National Language Strategy be developed through community-based planning by First Nation, Inuit and Métis language communities, as well as by their regional and national representative organizations, with coordination and technical support to be provided by the proposed national language organization.

8. Baseline Language Survey

That as the first component of a national long-term strategy, the national language organization coordinate a baseline survey of language conditions. The baseline survey will be conducted by First Nation, Inuit and Métis people as part of community-based language planning and needs assessments. Further, we recommend that funding for this work be provided separately from current commitments.

9. Funding of Critically Endangered Languages

That Canada provide funding, in addition to what will be available under the current commitment, for those First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities whose languages are critically endangered, in order that they may undertake additional work to preserve their languages.

10. Funding of Immersion Programs

That Canada provide additional funding for First Nation, Inuit and Métis language immersion programs, at a level equivalent to that provided for the French and English languages through the Minority-Language Education component of the Development of Official-Language Communities Program.

11. Funding of Immersion Programs for Youth

That Canada make available bursaries to enable First Nation, Inuit and Métis youth to attend five-week immersion courses in their languages and cultures in the same manner as is provided to French and English youth in the Second-Language Learning component of the Enhancement of Official Languages Program.

12. Equitable Funding for First Nation Schools

That funding of First Nation schools by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development be provided at the same level and standard as that provided to Ministries of Education through Master Tuition Agreements.

13. Language Education in Correctional Institutions

That the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness and the Commissioner of Corrections use their powers under the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* to provide federal funding for language programming and strengthen cultural programming to federally incarcerated First Nation, Inuit, and Métis persons.

14. Training Opportunities for Post-secondary Students

That Canada, and the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada establish, as part of their Action Plan on Aboriginal education, a program to encourage First Nation, Inuit and Métis university students entering the teaching profession, particularly in language education, to become proficient in their languages by entering into master-apprentice programs or undertaking other cultural education in their communities. Specifically, that summer bursaries or employment programs be made available in the same manner as is provided for French and English youth language training programs.

15. Language Teacher Training

That First Nation, Inuit and Métis organizations and the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada conduct a review of progress made on First Nation, Inuit and Métis teacher and language teacher

training initiatives relevant to recruitment and retention. Further, as part of this review, that the role of First Nation, Inuit and Métis post-secondary institutions in delivering language teacher training be reviewed, particularly with respect to immersion language teacher training.

16. First Nation, Inuit and Métis Post-secondary Institutions

That the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development provide additional resources to First Nation, Inuit and Métis post-secondary and existing institutions to enable them to establish language teacher training programs and, more specifically, immersion language teacher training programs.

17. A National Language Organization

That a permanent body of First Nation, Inuit and Métis representatives (Aboriginal Languages and Cultures Council or “LCC”) be established.

18. Establishment of the LCC

That current Task Force members be named as Interim Council members and have the responsibility of establishing the LCC. The Interim Council members will act for a period of one year and carry out the following duties:

- finalize the governance structure of the LCC;
- develop a three-year strategic plan;
- establish operations by preparing operating budgets, identifying staffing requirements and recruiting staff;
- negotiate transfer of Aboriginal language funds from Canadian Heritage;
- develop terms of reference and oversee a planning study for a language clearing house;
- plan and carry out the necessary research for implementation of a baseline survey and community-based language planning;
- seek nominations for the LCC; and
- shortlist candidates and provide list to national First Nation, Inuit and Métis organizations for final selection.

19. Provision of Services to French-Language Speakers

That funding be provided under the Official Languages Support programs to enable the LCC to provide a full range of services to French language speaking First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

20. Use of Short-Term Funding

That the existing commitment of \$160 million be provided on an urgent basis to First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities for language preservation

and revitalization efforts over a five-year period, rather than the proposed 10-year timeframe, taking into consideration the critical state of languages and the needs identified by the communities.

21. Establishing a Language Endowment Fund

That Canada provide funding to establish an endowment fund to finance community-based language programs in perpetuity.

22. Administration of Short-Term Funding

That the majority of funds committed by Canada be decentralized to allow existing First Nation, Inuit and Métis language decision-making structures to continue with their work. The current national allocation of funding under the Aboriginal Languages Initiative, that is, 75 percent to First Nation languages, 15 percent to Inuit languages and 10 percent to Métis languages, should be maintained until a long-term national language strategy is developed and implemented within the next five years.

23. Allocation of Interim Funding to First Nation Languages

That regional funding allocations for First Nation languages take into account varying populations and languages. Funding formulas should be developed which provides for base funding at the current level, with additional funding adjustments made for regions having large populations and many language communities.

24. National Projects Fund

That ten percent (10%) of the annual budget allocation from the \$160-million commitment be set aside to establish a National Projects Fund to be administered by the LCC, in partnership with the national First Nation, Inuit and Métis political organizations.

25. Innovative Projects Fund

That Canada provide funding to the LCC for the creation of an Innovative Projects Fund that will support innovative projects, research and the use of new technology in language education and revitalization efforts. The Innovative Projects Fund is to be established with funding separate from the \$160-million dollar commitment and should reflect participation and support by all federal government ministries.

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OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES



One of our responsibilities should be to see that our language is passed on to future generations. It is our soul and identity to celebrate the uniqueness of who we are.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Our work as a Task Force is informed by values and principles taught to us by our Elders in our own communities as well as in our consultations held in communities across Canada.

We believe that First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages are sacred and are gifts from the Creator.

We believe our languages are living languages to be used every day in our communities as expressions of our continuing nationhood.

We believe First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages embody the past and the future. To enter into a relationship with our ancestors we must speak our languages and by doing so we honour their spirits. However, we also adapt our languages to new environments, new situations and new technologies.

We believe that each generation of speakers carries the responsibility for preserving and revitalizing the unique and irreplaceable values, spiritual and traditional beliefs, and sacred ceremonies.

Our task is to ensure that the present generation of First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples continue their traditions by recovering and strengthening their ability to speak and be understood in their own languages. Our task is also to ensure that the seventh and future generations of our young people will be fluent in their languages and will be able to articulate the traditional knowledge and spiritual beliefs embodied by them.

We believe that Canada must truly make itself whole by recognizing and acknowledging our First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages as the original languages of Canada. This recognition must be through legislation and must also provide for enduring institutional supports for First Languages in the same way that it has done for the French and English languages.

We are confident our principles and values are ones that all Canadians will recognize, share and support.¹

¹ These principals have been stated deliberately broadly to capture commonalities of First Nation, Inuit and Métis cultures, which are similar but not identical.



PART I:
INTRODUCTION TO THE
TASK FORCE REPORT

*In the work that must be done, we need to build relationships
and unity because we all believe in the same thing.*

PART I: Introduction to the Task Force Report

We recognize that language and culture are the foundations of First Nation, Inuit and Métis nationhood and that, as nations, First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples have government-to-government relations with Canada's federal, provincial and territorial governments. Our work is premised on this fundamental reality and is not intended to abrogate or derogate from the Aboriginal and treaty rights of First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples under section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.

Our report is grounded in Aboriginal and treaty rights referred to in section 35 of the Act. However, we have chosen to use “First Nation, Inuit and Métis,” or sometimes FNIM, instead of “Aboriginal” wherever possible in this report. We believe these are more appropriate terms that affirm the unique and distinctive cultures, histories and identities of First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples. It is our view that indiscriminate use of the term “Aboriginal” may unintentionally mask this distinctiveness and fail to recognize differences in historical and present government-to-government relationships.

This introduction is Part I of our report. What follows in Parts II to VIII reflects our view as a Task Force of the best way to set out our findings and the conclusions we were able to reach in the time available to us. We are conscious that this is only the beginning and that much work remains to be done if our many First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages and cultures are to survive and prosper in the coming years. What follows also reflects our decision on the best way to highlight Part VI, the part of our report dealing with our Canada-wide consultations, particularly the crucial initial meeting with the Elders in Winnipeg. Together, the meeting with our Elders and the subsequent consultations form the heart of our report.

Part II, entitled **The Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures**, describes who we are and how we set about discharging our duties. It is divided into four sections. Here we give the political context for the creation of this Task Force in 2002 and introduce members of the Task Force as well as the Circle of Experts with whom we consulted during the course of our work. We also discuss the broad mandate we received from the Minister of Canadian Heritage and the terms of reference provided to us subsequently. A separate section of Part II describes the crucial initial meeting with Elders from across Canada, where our work received their blessing and guidance. Without this meeting, our work would not have been able to go forward. We conclude Part II with a discussion

of limitations and difficulties we encountered in fully addressing our mandate and terms of reference considering the resources and time available.

We follow with Part III, entitled **Our Languages and Cultures: Cornerstones for Our Philosophies**. There we discuss the philosophical and spiritual context for our report — the central importance of our languages and cultures for the collective sense of First Nation, Inuit and Métis identities, nationhood and place in the universe. We identify language as the primary vehicle for culture and give examples of the unique philosophies embodied by the distinctive languages of the First Peoples of Canada and transmitted by the oral tradition. We note that our many First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages are largely languages of relationship that reflect our profound connection with the land, reinforce our identities as the First Peoples of Canada and enable us to participate in sacred ceremonies under the guidance of our Elders.

We then explore the difference in cultural perspectives between First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples and other Canadians in the context of the historical treaty process and discuss the relationship between First Nation, Inuit and Métis cultural practices and the rights enshrined in section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. We consider First Nation, Inuit and Métis nationhood through the lens of our distinctive languages and cultures and discuss Canada's obligation and fiduciary duty to rectify the damages resulting from its past assimilative policies. We end this part of our report by giving specific examples of the federally sponsored actions of the churches and residential schools that have contributed to the current endangered state of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages.

Part IV of our report, entitled **First Nation, Inuit and Métis Languages: Where We Are Now**, deals with current language conditions. It builds on the preceding part by discussing the great variety of conditions in which our languages now find themselves; these have an impact on language planning and programs at the local, regional and national levels. We first examine the wide diversity of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages in Canada, noting 11 language families with a total of 61 languages and an unknown number of dialects.

We then discuss language vitality in terms of the number of speakers and the potential for intergenerational transmission, bearing in mind the need for better data on the number of fluent speakers and the lack of a generally accepted definition of fluency. Using published

data and community-based surveys, we highlight the diversity of First Nation, Inuit and Métis language vitality on a scale ranging from “flourishing” to “critical.”

Turning to measures of intergenerational transmission such as language use in the home, we discuss broad trends in language vitality based on factors such as number of speakers, age group and level of language comprehension, and use in the home. Moving to the urban situation, we consider the decline in language use among non-reserve First Nation people, as well as among Inuit and Métis people living away from their home communities. Here we note the need for current and accurate data on language use and transmission as existing data have gaps and shortcomings.

Part V of our report is entitled **Calls for Action**. Here we discuss the key role played by the Assembly of First Nations over the past decades in raising awareness of the importance of these issues and in proposing federal legislation to establish a First Nation languages foundation. We also examine and comment on the approach and conclusions contained in the 1996 final report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and conclude by reproducing the submissions made to us in 2004 by the Assembly of First Nations, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and the Métis National Council.

The heart of our report is set out in Part VI, entitled **What We Heard in the Consultations**. Here we report on the input and advice from First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities on the many issues before us as a Task Force. These consultations are reported in two sections. The first section summarizes the substantive comments and advice we received during the crucial initial meeting with the Elders in Winnipeg. They are grouped under four headings: Where We Are Right Now; Ethics and Concepts; Personal Practices; and Institutional and Governmental Actions.

The second section of this part summarizes what the people said during the 16 consultation sessions held across the country. These community consultations not only expanded on the advice from Elders, but also proposed and developed the concept of a National Language Organization. Both sections include input and advice by the Circle of Experts. Here we present our findings under four broad themes, which were prevalent in our consultations. First we discuss the role of our languages and their importance for connecting with the Creator, the land and each other. We then discuss the status of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages; the need for a community-driven revitalization strategy; and the roles and priorities of a National Language Organization. Here we highlight

specific recommendations made in the areas of supporting community-based language initiatives, such as language planning and language education.

In Part VII of our report, entitled **Protecting and Promoting Our Languages**, we apply lessons learned in language revitalization among endangered languages under the broad themes raised in the community consultations: the role of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages; status planning; community-based language planning; and language education. We conclude each of these sections with specific recommendations on actions that should be taken to recognize First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages and to assist in efforts to preserve, protect and promote them.

Part VIII of our report is entitled **A National Language Organization**. We discuss a national entity as provided for in our terms of reference and as discussed in our consultation sessions. We consider how a Languages and Cultures Council (LCC) could provide leadership in the planning and administration of a long-term national language revitalization strategy. In the first sections we propose a vision for the LCC that is child-centred, Elder-focused and community-driven; we go on to provide a mission statement oriented around support and advocacy for First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages and cultures. We propose a mandate for the LCC involving such elements as distributing funds to First Nation, Inuit and Métis organizations, helping to develop language revitalization policies and research, giving technical and financial assistance, and lobbying governments for a variety of purposes associated with language and culture including the creation of a national First Nation, Inuit and Métis Language Commissioner.

We go on to propose a structure for the LCC with 15 members whose qualifications, roles and responsibilities we outline in some detail. We recommend a body of principles such as equality of access by all language and community groups, community assessment of language needs and priorities, and modern accountability and financial transparency rules and guidelines. We note the difficulty of results-based management and accountability measures in light of the lack of a generally accepted definition of language fluency and call on the LCC to develop appropriate measures in collaboration with regions and communities.

We then consider funding of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages through the lens of recent assessments of the Aboriginal Languages Initiative (ALI), a 1998 Canadian Heritage program, as well as the views of those with whom we consulted during the course of our work. We propose an interim (five-year) strategy and program

delivery, and conclude that the LCC should be structured to provide coordination and support for First Nation, Inuit and Métis language initiatives while avoiding the creation of a centralized bureaucracy. We discuss how the vast majority of the funds should be transferred to First Nation, Inuit and Métis organizations and communities according to the existing ALI funding split of 75% to First Nations, 15% to Inuit and 10% to Métis. We close this part of our report by considering an endowment fund, a national projects fund and an innovative projects fund. We conclude with a series of recommendations summarizing our views and conclusions.

A young girl with dark hair in two pigtails is sitting at a table, focused on playing a blue and yellow toy instrument. She is wearing a white shirt with black polka dots. The background is slightly blurred, showing a white stuffed animal and other toys on the table.

PART II:
THE TASK FORCE ON
ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES
AND CULTURES

*Let us continue to work with one mind in the future to preserve
our languages and cultures because we can do that in spite
of what other realities are out there.*

PART II: The Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures

Composition of the Task Force

In December 2002, the Minister of Canadian Heritage announced that Canada would establish an Aboriginal Languages and Cultures Centre as part of the commitment in the 2002 Speech from the Throne to help preserve, revitalize and promote First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages and cultures. At that time, it was already clear that, to survive and prosper, the languages and cultures of Canada's First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples must be under their stewardship and control and receiving local community direction.

In early 2003, the Minister took the next step by creating the Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures as a body whose advice would help set the direction for this new initiative. The remaining months of 2003 involved a call for recommendations from First Nation, Inuit and Métis organizations for individuals knowledgeable in the area of languages and cultures who might be willing to serve on this Task Force. From the lengthy list of potential members, the Minister invited 10 persons to join the Task Force. These invitations were issued through consensus among the partners: the Government of Canada, the Assembly of First Nations, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and the Métis National Council.

The Task Force members are Bruce Flamont, Ron Ignace, Mary Jane Jim, Amos Key Jr., Helen Klengenber, Alexina Kublu, Rosemarie McPherson, Ruth Norton, Frank Parnell and Linda Pelly-Landrie. The Task Force members are profiled in Appendix A.

In addition, a group of knowledgeable and experienced First Nation, Inuit and Métis language and culture leaders, educators and community workers drawn from across Canada was identified and designated the Circle of Experts. The Circle's role was to be a resource group for the Task Force, providing advice, research papers and other forms of assistance as required. The members of the Circle of Experts are identified in Appendix B.

Task Force Mandate and Terms of Reference

In the letter of invitation to the members of the Task Force, the Minister noted the importance for Canada of the linguistic and cultural heritage of the First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples and provided the Task Force with the broad mandate of proposing a national language strategy:

The official mandate of the Task Force is to propose a national strategy for the preservation, revitalization and promotion of Aboriginal languages and cultures. This will include — but not be limited to — a focus on support to communities for the preservation of their languages; interactive learning, education, communications and potential for partnering; a national repository and clearing house for best practices and tools; and learning and inter-cultural exchanges to enrich the lives of Canadians of all ethnic origins.

Given Canada's commitment to establish the Aboriginal Languages and Cultures Centre, this broad mandate was later supplemented by the Department of Canadian Heritage with more specific terms of reference related to the proposed centre itself:

1. The Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures (Task Force) will consider and make recommendations to the Minister of Canadian Heritage concerning the following:
 - A. The role and mandate of a proposed non-profit corporation, as a key element of a comprehensive national strategy for the preservation, revitalization and promotion of Aboriginal languages and cultures;
 - B. Appropriate names for the corporation, provisionally referred to as the Aboriginal Languages and Cultures Centre (ALCC);
 - C. The proposed ALCC's organizational and governance structure and operational framework, the composition and selection criteria for the corporation's Board of Directors, consistent with relevant provisions of Treasury Board policies and the *Financial Administration Act*, to be reflected in the appropriate bylaws and Articles of Incorporation;
 - D. Key priorities with respect to proposed business lines and activities for the ALCC, including but not limited to:
 - (i) Encouraging and supporting in-home and community-focused activities, including research and development of innovative tools and methodologies to increase intergenerational transmission of Aboriginal languages and cultures;
 - (ii) Utilizing interactive learning and communications models through the use of state-of-the-art technologies;

- (iii) Generating and disseminating information on relevant effective practices and approaches;
 - (iv) Collecting, preserving and sharing written documents and audio-visual materials related to Aboriginal history, languages and cultures; and
 - (v) Fostering greater knowledge and appreciation of Aboriginal languages and cultures as an integral part of Canada's national heritage.
- E. An accountability framework outlining clear objectives, mechanisms for reporting on progress, measuring results and evaluating success;
 - F. A system for ensuring sound financial management practices consistent with generally accepted accounting principles; processes for assessing funding proposals and reviewing funding decisions; and effective accountability provisions and remedies;
 - G. Options for the appropriate facilities to support the activities of the proposed ALCC;
 - H. Potential for obtaining charitable status and securing funding from other sources, including other levels of government, the private and voluntary sectors and effective strategies to help achieve long-term financial viability; and,
 - I. Effective approaches to eliminate overlap and duplication, improve coordination and maximize the effect of existing federal policies and programs that directly and indirectly support Aboriginal languages and cultures (including appropriate linkages with self-government, comprehensive claims and territorial languages agreements).
2. In conducting its activities, the Task Force shall:
 - A. Operate in an open, transparent, inclusive manner, in keeping with the spirit of partnership and collaboration among Aboriginal peoples and the Government of Canada, and recognizing and respecting the diversity among Aboriginal peoples;
 - B. Solicit and consider representations from national Aboriginal organizations, provincial and territorial governments, and agencies that are involved in the preservation, revitalization and promotion of Aboriginal languages and cultures;
 - C. Receive and consider representations from other interested and affected groups including, but not limited to, Elders, youth and parents;
 - D. Seek the views of, and invite participation from, the Circle of Experts, particularly in the initial stages of the Task Force's work and in advance of submitting a final report, as deemed appropriate by the Task Force;
 - E. Seek advice from other individuals and organizations with expertise in the preservation, revitalization and promotion of Aboriginal languages and cultures;
 - F. Commission research studies directly related to the fulfillment of its mandate; and,
 - G. Adopt such practices and procedures, as it may deem necessary to carry out its mandate efficiently and effectively.
 3. The Task force will be required to:
 - A. Submit to the Minister of Canadian Heritage on September 15, 2004, a report in fulfillment of its mandate;
 - B. Submit such interim reports on progress as requested by the Minister; and
 - C. Make available to the Minister copies of submissions received and research generated by the Task Force in the course of its work.

As will be discussed in more detail below, the challenge of reconciling the broad initial mandate with the narrower terms of reference received later required more time than is normally the case with a task force or commission of this nature. In this exercise, the guidance of the Elders was essential.

How Our Elders Guided the Task Force Process

Task Force members were drawn from First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities from different parts of Canada and brought to their deliberations the perspectives, practices and traditions they inherited as part of their respective cultural legacies. One perspective all members share, however, is that while language and culture are the attributes of nations, they are maintained and transmitted at the family and community level, sanctified by spiritual practices and ceremonies, and symbolized by the inspiring presence of Elders. After its establishment and initial meetings, the Task Force took the important step of meeting with Elders from across Canada to seek their guidance and blessing prior to undertaking consultations, in keeping with the traditional process of First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples (see Appendix C for a list of Elders consulted). This meeting began with the protocol of a traditional feast hosted by the Anishnabe people in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The pipe ceremony and spiritual feast gave the Elders the opportunity to guide and bless the work of the Task Force and to counsel us to follow the protocols of each nation in each territory where our consultations were to be conducted. During the gathering, the Elders shared stories and traditional dances with the Task Force, thus giving us the traditional acceptance for the consultations to proceed as planned within each First

Nation, Inuit and Métis territory that we intended to visit.

The following day provided the setting for the Task Force to explain its work to the Elders and to seek their explicit guidance. Elders were invited to give their views and insights in the following areas:

- How can we preserve/save our languages?
- How can we mobilize all levels of government to support our needs?

The Elders' responses to these questions covered four key areas:

Where We Are Now

This refers to the impacts of the erosion of traditional languages and cultures on First Nation, Inuit and Métis people, families and communities.

Ethics and Concepts

Many statements were made by the Elders on the value of traditional knowledge and the ethical considerations we needed to bear in mind for our work as a Task Force. As a result, in June 2004 we developed a *Protocol and Guiding Principles for Conducting and for the Implementation of Research Using Traditional Knowledge* as a reflection of our understanding of how best to proceed in an appropriate and respectful way in discharging our Task Force duties. This document was prepared as a tool to assist in the management of Task Force research, and to ensure that researchers do not exploit traditional cultural knowledge. It also addresses approaches to gathering traditional knowledge. Please refer to Appendix D.

Personal Practices

This refers to the actions that we as individuals take to preserve and strengthen First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages and cultures. In essence, personal choice is a valuable means for creating awareness of the value and importance of our languages and cultures. Creating a personal mission to engage the community, leadership, youth and government is a useful component of this type of choice.

Institutional and Governmental Actions

This refers to the actions that can be taken by institutions and various levels of government to support the preservation, revitalization and maintenance of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages and cultures. Here the term "government" includes the federal, provincial, territorial, First Nation, Inuit and Métis governments.

The substantive discussions with the Elders during this important two-day meeting will be addressed in detail in Part VI of this report, entitled *What We Heard* in the Consultations. The context provided there will permit us to highlight the central importance of their advice to us and the links between their views and our own recommendations in a better way than can be done here.

The overall result of this two-day meeting with Elders was that all Task Force processes were animated by a profound respect for the gravity of the work being undertaken. The Task Force went on to conduct its consultations and to commission research in a respectful manner with the diverse First Nation, Inuit and Métis groups with whom we met during the past year. This was a priority and meant that more time was taken for the consultations than would have been the case had such respect not been shown. Given the sacred nature of the work to be done by the Task Force, anything less would have been unacceptable.

Task Force Approach and Activities

From the outset, the Task Force has been faced with what it considers to be a serious underestimate of the time needed to carry out its mandate in a respectful, complete and dignified way. This initial underestimate has been compounded by additional events. For example, the process of consultations on the mandate and make-up of the Task Force between the Government of Canada and the Assembly of First Nations, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and the Métis National Council, coupled with the large number of administrative and related tasks associated with the establishment of a group of this size, meant that the Task Force was not able to begin working in earnest until well into 2004.

The result was that the Task Force had less than a year to carry out its mandate and report back to the Minister of Canadian Heritage if it hoped to meet the deadline of September 15, 2004. This has proven to be impossible for the following reasons.

The first has to do with the breadth of the task and the paramount importance of the issues to be addressed. For instance, while international examples generally speak to revitalization and creation of fluency, in most cases they focus on revitalizing or strengthening a single language. In contrast, the Task Force was asked to propose policies and funding mechanisms to address the needs of at least 61 different languages. This massive task proved to be particularly daunting in light of the time and budgetary restrictions faced by the Task Force.

A second reason why the initial deadline was impossible to meet flowed from the need to harmonize the Task Force guiding principles cited earlier, the initial broad mandate received from the Minister and the narrower terms of reference provided later by the Department of Canadian Heritage. One of the first orders of Task Force business, therefore, was to interpret its mandate and terms of reference in light of these guiding principles. The dilemma is captured in the initial statement in the terms of reference referring to the “role and mandate of a proposed non-profit corporation as a key element of a comprehensive national strategy for the preservation, revitalization and promotion of Aboriginal languages and cultures.”

This wording seems at first blush to assume the existence of a national strategy and to direct the Task Force to give priority to the composition and functioning of the proposed Aboriginal Languages and Cultures Centre. In short, it assumes that the Centre will fit into an already-existing strategic framework as a component element. Thus, the Task Force found it necessary to first consider what elements should form a national strategy before turning to the more technical issues associated with devising the vehicle in the form of the Aboriginal Languages and Cultures Centre with its corresponding structures and procedures.

This interpretation of the preferred order in which to proceed was almost universally supported by those with whom the Task Force has consulted over the past year. The many people who shared their knowledge and experience appear to speak with a single voice in calling for a long-term strategy that will address the concerns of First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities to control their own destinies within a broad national strategy in which the proposed Aboriginal Languages and Cultures Centre will play a coordinating role rather than a central or dominant role. The Task Force felt bound to do justice to this vision and to reflect it as fully as possible in this report. Given the diversity among the First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada and the great variety of conditions in which their languages now find themselves, this has proven to be no small task.

The third reason why the deadline of September 15, 2004, could not be met has to do with the transition from the government of Prime Minister Chrétien to that of Prime Minister Martin in late 2003, the ensuing national election and the general government-wide air of uncertainty concerning Aboriginal policy and program matters.

The Task Force is not independent of government in the way that a public commission of inquiry is, having neither a budget that it controls nor staff that it employs and directs. Thus, the Task Force has been entirely dependent on the support of the federal government in discharging its mandate. The Task Force was unavoidably affected by administrative changes in government including changes in the structure and functioning of the federal government particularly relating to contracting for services, as well as staff turnover in the Department of Canadian Heritage Secretariat charged with supporting the Task Force. Despite these limitations, the Task Force carried out the following activities during the course of the past year.

1st Quarter 2004

- Reviewed mandate and terms of reference
- Adopted mission/vision statement
- Assessed needs and developed work plan
- Gathered information through government liaison, First Nation, Inuit and Métis Elders and organizations
- Collected research and conducted literature review on governance models, research on languages and culture, and past reports, such as the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and *Improving the Health of Canadians*

2nd Quarter 2004

- Consulted with Elders to seek their guidance and blessing
- Consulted with First Nation, Inuit and Métis organizations and community stakeholders through 16 focus group consultations across Canada involving our Circle of Experts, key stakeholders, Elders and community members (average of 39 attendees per focus group)
- Expanded research collection through implementation of 1-800 number and Web site

3rd Quarter 2004

- Compiled and analysed information from consultations and collected data
- Commissioned research on international best practices for language revitalization, a background document on Aboriginal languages in Canada and an evaluation of the state of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages
- Reviewed and considered findings and preliminary recommendations
- Advocated separately and collectively to promote interest in and understanding of our mandate

4th Quarter 2004

- Recruited and instructed writers on foundational report
- Continued information sessions and consultations with First Nation, Inuit and Métis organizations
- Refined findings, developed consensus on recommendations
- Provided instruction on report design and artistic input
- Adopted communications/outreach strategy for pre- and post-release of report

PART III:
OUR LANGUAGES
AND OUR CULTURES:
CORNERSTONES FOR
OUR PHILOSOPHIES



*Language is part of us. Even before we were born, we heard
it in our mother's womb. It's a part of us, and it's our identity.*

PART III: Our Languages and Our Cultures: Cornerstones for Our Philosophies

Our Languages: Our Social and Spiritual Values

Our languages are more than just tools of communication. They also describe who we are as peoples and tell us of our relationship to each other and to the land. The late Elder Eli Taylor from the Sioux Valley First Nation expressed this as follows:

The Aboriginal languages were given by the Creator as an integral part of life. Embodied in Aboriginal languages is our unique relationship to the Creator, our attitudes, beliefs, values and the fundamental notion of what is truth. Aboriginal language is an asset to one's own education, formal and informal. Aboriginal language contributes to greater pride in the history and culture of the community: greater involvement and interest of parents in the education of their children, and greater respect for Elders. Language is the principal means by which culture is accumulated, shared and transmitted from generation to generation. The key to identity and retention of culture is one's ancestral language.²

The philosophy and culture of a people are embedded in their language and given expression by it. Language is the vehicle for a network of cultural values that operate under the level of consciousness and shape each speaker's awareness, sense of personal identity and relationships with others and with the universe itself. First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages reflect philosophies quite different from those reflected by European languages like English and French. Mary Siemens, a Dogrib language specialist from the Northwest Territories, describes this as follows:

Our Dogrib language is very important to us because it identifies us as a people in a unique culture within the land we occupy. Our language holds our culture, our perspective, our history, and our inheritance. What type of people we are, where we came from, what land we claim, and all our legends are based on the language we speak.

² Assembly of First Nations, *Towards Rebirth of First Nations Languages* (Ottawa: AFN, 1992), p. 14.

Our culture depends on our language, because it contains the unique words that describe our way of life. It describes name-places for every part of our land that our ancestors traveled on. We have specific words to describe the seasonal activities, the social gatherings, and kin relations. Rules which govern our lives bring stability to our communities, and our feast days, which bring people together, are all inter-related within our language. Losing our language will not only weaken us as a people but will diminish our way of life because it depends so much on our language.³

Our languages were born here and are profoundly different from languages spoken and developed elsewhere in the world.⁴ The deepest structures of our languages reflect our distinctive philosophies as uniquely North American peoples. Thus, our First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages have more words to describe nature through their many references to geography, weather, wildlife and the seen and unseen forces animating the universe. But the differences between the languages of Europeans and those of First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples are deeper than mere vocabulary.

Our languages, although as different from each other as the many languages of Europe are from each other, are largely languages of relationship. They tend away from isolating the speaker from other people or from the events or phenomena of the world about which he or she is speaking. This is a broadly shared cultural value that accepts the relationship between the mind of the speaker and the person, thing or event being described.

Inuktitut offers an example of linguistic reinforcement of relationship — that between the speaker and his or her understanding of the world. For instance, where English or French might have one or two verbs meaning “to know,” the language of the Inuit has several depending on what it is that is known and the nature of how that ‘knowledge’ was acquired. An example

³ Northwest Territories Literacy Council, *Languages of the Land: A Manual for Aboriginal Language Activists* (Yellowknife: 1999), p. 9.

⁴ This is as true for Michif, the historical and official language of the Métis nation, as it is for the First Nation and Inuit languages. While reflecting its Cree and French origins, Michif arose on the North American continent as an expression of the unique culture and distinct character of the Métis nation. The title for a Michif language conference in 2005 highlights the unique character of Michif: “Our Children and Our Languages, The Way It Was”: *Nutr Zaafahn pi Nutr Laang, Kaayash Aachimowyn*.

is offered by the following verbs from the Igloodik North Baffin dialect:

- ʔᓄᔨᔨ- ᕐᓇᕐᓇᕐᓇᕐᓇᕐ- “to find something out” (process),
- ʔᓄᔨᔨᔨ- ᕐᓇᕐᓇᕐᓇᕐᓇᕐᓇᕐ- “to be in state of having found something out,” i.e. to, “know” (state),
- ᓇᔨ- ᕐᓇᕐᓇᕐᓇᕐᓇᕐ- “not to know” (state),
- ᓇᔨᔨᔨ- ᕐᓇᕐᓇᕐᓇᕐᓇᕐᓇᕐ- “to stop not knowing” (process),
- ᓇᔨᔨᔨᔨ- ᕐᓇᕐᓇᕐᓇᕐᓇᕐᓇᕐ- “to not not know,” i.e., “know” (state),
- ᓇᔨᔨᔨᔨᔨᔨ- ᕐᓇᕐᓇᕐᓇᕐᓇᕐᓇᕐᓇᕐ- “to realize/make sense of/’ahh now I see...’ ” (process),
- ᓇᔨᔨᔨᔨᔨ- ᕐᓇᕐᓇᕐᓇᕐᓇᕐᓇᕐᓇᕐ- “to have understanding of” (state),
- ᓇᔨᔨ ᕐᓇᕐᓇᕐᓇᕐᓇᕐᓇᕐ- “meaning/sense”; and
- ᓇᔨᔨᔨᔨ- ᕐᓇᕐᓇᕐᓇᕐᓇᕐᓇᕐᓇᕐ- “find meaning/make sense of,” i.e., “understand.”⁵

Inuktitut has other verbs that may also be translated by “to know” that are not listed here. Evidently, they, as well as those cited above, may also be adequately expressed in a European language as they have been above. No language has a monopoly on self-expression. The point is that the presence in the language of these precise verbs shows how Inuktitut has been shaped by the environment in which it was born. Thus, speakers of Inuktitut convey directly to themselves and to others how they understand their own experience of the world of the Inuit. And this is communicated to others as part and parcel of the communication of information.

Anishnabe provides another example of how Indigenous languages reinforce relationship. Its structure establishes the relationship between the subject and object of a phrase differently than do languages such as English or French. In most contexts an Anishnabe speaker will normally refer first to the person (*gin*) or object (*ihweh*) that is the object of the statement and place the reference to himself or herself later in the phrase. While an English speaker would say, “I am speaking to you,” an Anishnabe speaker would normally say the equivalent of “you are being spoken to by me.” One way of saying this is *gin geganonin*.

Neither linguistic structure is superior to the other. English and Anishnabe offer different ways of highlighting aspects of the human experience of the world and of each other. Anishnabe permits the speaker to emphasize the identities of the objects of the phrase and the relationship between them. Unlike English,

which focuses on awareness of oneself and on what one has to say, Anishnabe allows a speaker to focus on awareness of others as a precondition to verbal expression. Language in this context is more than simple communication of information, it is a social event whose goal is to establish and maintain the web of identities and relationships within which the speaker finds himself or herself.

That being said, the inherent flexibility of Anishnabe allows the speaker to easily change its normal subject-object order to respond to different contexts. There are very few situations in English, for example, where it would not be awkward to say, “you are being spoken to by me.” However, in Anishnabe it is neither awkward nor unusual to reverse the subject-object to suit a variety of social functions or to emphasize to the listener what the speaker is saying. Storytelling is one example. Another example is provided by certain ceremonies where it is appropriate or even required to say the equivalent of “I am speaking to you” in Anishnabe: *niin giwi ganoninim*. This is to acknowledge that the speaker is addressing everyone at a ceremony.

This also highlights the sacred aspect of Anishnabe language use. To participate fully in the spiritual aspect of Anishnabe society, vocabulary, facility with the language and knowledge of the various ways and contexts within which it is appropriate to change the word order or to use particular forms of old or oratorical language are absolutely required. Elder Tobasonakwut Kinew underscores the relationship between language and ability to understand and to take part in the ceremonies:

If you are going to do something about the languages, you should be able to do the ceremonies of your people. If you cannot do the ceremonies of your people, there cannot be a spiritual basis for your language.⁶

Our Languages: Our Connection to the Land

The fundamental relationship reflected by our First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages is our connection to the land. The words for “the land” in our various languages reflect the fact that the land is more than the mere physical landscape comprising the various material elements known to science. The “land,” the “country,” the “place” — all these and equivalent terms have an even subtler meaning. In the language of the Secwepemc

⁵ In Inuktitut linguistics, a dash indicates that the stem is a verb since it requires a subject to make it a complete word.

⁶ Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures, *Report on Proceedings: Consultation with Elders* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: May 2004), p. 6.

(Shuswap) people, for example, tmicw, the land, “involves its fauna and flora, as well as the people’s spiritual and historical relationship with it.”⁷

Innu-aimun offers another example of how our languages reinforce relationship with the land. Although referred to by Europeans as Montagnais and Naskapi respectively, the Innu of Sheshatshiu and Natuashish are a single people, speaking the Innu-aimun language and sharing a similar tradition of hunting, trading and movement from place to place across the great breadth of Labrador.

Innu-aimun reflects this lifestyle. It has numerous nouns and verbs reflecting complex relationships with nature, wildlife and each other including extensive terminology referring to hunting and describing every detail of the geography and weather of their traditional territory. The term “*nutshimit*” — “the country” in the sense of the Innu relationship with the land, the animals and the spirits — provides the conceptual framework for the traditional Innu sense of identity and their place in the universe through the constant links to Innu history and to the natural, social and mythological realms.⁸

The result is a linguistically reinforced sense of intimate connection to the land and a philosophical orientation toward the Labrador interior for social gathering, festive and spiritual activities. Their settlement in permanent villages on or near the coast has diminished the Innu capacity to renew the relationship with the land that their language reflects. It also hampers them from performing their ceremonies on the sacred sites in their traditional territory. The Innu have repeatedly called on the governments of Canada and the province of Newfoundland and Labrador to recognize and accommodate their connection to their own land as one of the keys to establishing a stable long-term relationship with them.

The relationship reflected by our languages means that we are not separate from the land. It also means that we have a responsibility for the land and all that is on it. This responsibility flows from the fact that the Creator placed the various First Nation, Inuit and Métis nations in particular places that continue to sustain us as peoples. Chief Edmund Metatawabin of Fort Albany expressed this as follows with regard to the Cree people’s relationship with their traditional territory around James Bay:

Mushkegowuk of James Bay ancestry dating back 10,000 years hold a belief that the Creator put them on this land, this garden, to oversee and take care of it for those who are not yet born. The law of maintenance or just maintaining that garden means taking care of the physical environment. It also means maintaining a harmonious relationship with other people and the animals depended on for survival.⁹

Taking care of the land takes many forms. Among the Anishnabe of Ontario and Manitoba, for instance, harvesting the wild rice that gives sustenance to the people is a life-long commitment and sacred responsibility to be carried out properly in accordance with strict protocols within designated families. Responsibility for the land for the Anishnabe means passing that responsibility on to worthy members of the younger generation within an extended family to ensure that those not yet born will, in their turn, be able to benefit from the land.

Responsibility for the land also means protecting the important places that allow us to reconnect with the land that defines who we are as peoples. These sacred places are sites where spiritual and other ceremonies are performed. They also include places where special types of plants or materials used in painting or ceremonies are found. Such special places may be the spiritual responsibility of certain families who must honour traditional protocol. Yet other sacred sites include areas used for fasting and vision quests, burial sites and places of historical significance where important events in the life of the people may have occurred.

The memory of these places and their significance are preserved in the oral tradition of the various First Nation, Inuit and Métis nations. The tradition of oral recounting in the language of a people is the special preserve of Elders and other uniquely qualified individuals whose sacred responsibility is to preserve and hand down the stories that reflect the distinctiveness of the people and the relationship between the people and the places and events that define them.

⁷ P. J. Murphy, George P. Nicholas and Marianne Ignace (eds.), *Coyote U: Stories and Teachings from the Secwepemc Educational Institute* (Penticton, B.C.: Theytus Books, 1999), p. 15.

⁸ For the centrality of *nutshimit* to the Innu sense of their identity and place in the universe, see Innu Nation and Mushuau Innu Band Council, *Gathering Voices: Finding Strength to Help Our Children* (Toronto: Douglas and McIntyre, 1995). See also the official Web site of the Innu Nation: www.innu.ca.

⁹ Canada, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *Final Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Volume 1, Looking Forward, Looking Back* (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1996), p. 632.

The courts have recognized that oral history must have a role in Aboriginal rights and treaty cases. In its seminal decision in *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia*, the Supreme Court of Canada validated courtroom use of *adaawk* and *kungax*, the oral histories of the Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en nations respectively. The *adaawk* and *kungax* contain the most important laws, history, traditions and descriptions of the traditional territory of these two nations and are passed on orally from generation to generation as a living testament of the relationship of the people to their land and to particular places on that land. In rendering its decision, the Court quoted the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples' succinct description of First Nation, Inuit and Métis oral history as follows:

Oral accounts of the past include a good deal of subjective experience. They are not simply a detached recounting of factual events but, rather, are "facts enmeshed in the stories of a lifetime." They are also likely to be rooted in particular locations, making reference to particular families and communities. This contributes to a sense that there are many histories, each characterized in part by how a people see themselves, how they define their identity in relation to their environment, and how they express their uniqueness as a people.¹⁰

We came from the land — this land, our land. We belong to it, are part of it and find our identities in it. Our languages return us again and again to this truth. This must be grasped to understand why the retention, strengthening and expansion of our First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages and cultures is of such importance to us and, indeed, to all Canadians. For our languages, which are carried by the very breath that gives us life, connect us daily to who we are. Without this awareness and understanding, the past will not be understood and appreciated by all Canadians, and in particular, by the youth of Canada.

The Past: Different Cultures, Different Perspectives

First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages and philosophies are unique in Canada. And because of this, we do not always see things in the same way as do other Canadians. Nor should we be expected to. The reasons for our different approaches to the issues that have arisen in our relationship with other Canadians and with Canadian governments are rooted in the different philosophies reflected by our distinctive languages and cultures.

To recall the words of the Assembly of First Nations, our ancestral languages are the key to our identities and cultures, for each of our languages tell us who we are and where we came from.

First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples rarely see the past in the same way as do other Canadians. The differences in outlook between the First Peoples of Canada and other Canadians have been noted again and again in report after report. This was the object of a separate section in Volume One of the final report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. The Commission highlighted the differences in interpretation of historical events between First Nation, Inuit and Métis and non-Aboriginal Canadians, ascribing them "to perspectives rooted in entirely different cultural traditions."¹¹

In this regard, the approach of First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples to the passage of time does not necessarily assume the finality of historical events. The effect of the past lingers in ways that are difficult to express in languages like English and French that are built around notions of temporal linearity, strict cause and effect, and ideas of material progress and social evolution. For the First Peoples of Canada, the past cannot be forgotten, deliberately overlooked or discarded as no longer relevant. The past is still present, but in a different form that must be addressed again in the new conditions in which it appears, now and into the future.

First Nation, Inuit and Métis approaches to the past are reflected in the oral tradition. Oral history has a variety of purposes, only one of which is the communication of information about a particular historical event. The others are social, going beyond any attempt to give a detached account of history. In our traditions, it is artificial and even presumptuous to assume that a detached account of a particular event is possible. As the earlier citation from the *Delgamuukw* case about the Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en *adaawk* and *kungax* indicates, the understanding of the person speaking is so tied up with the information being conveyed that to separate the speaker's values, perceptions, vantage point and motivations from the story is impossible and even undesirable.

Our oral tradition thus has many purposes. Among others, they may be to educate the listener for a moral purpose, to pass on aspects of culture through stories or sacred songs, or perhaps to establish the claim of a family or clan to a territory or to social authority or prestige. In keeping with the structure of our many languages, the oral tradition does not isolate, it establishes and maintains important relationships and passes them

¹⁰ *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia* [1998] 1 C.N.L.R. 14 at 49 .

¹¹ Canada, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *supra* note 9, p. 32.

on intact to future generations. For this reason our oral tradition has survived as a separate way of describing the human experience of this world even as we have survived as separate peoples.

The oral tradition was the primary basis of decision-making for First Nations at the time of entering the treaties and remains the basis for interpreting them. Instruments of relationship between us and other Canadians such as treaties and other protocols are not agreements set in stone or events referring to a time in the past that is now dead and gone. They are alive. They are to last for as long as the sun shines and the grass grows. They are tangible signs of the ongoing relationship between us and must be respected as such and renewed periodically.

The treaties are recorded orally in our languages, which were the official languages of the treaty negotiations and of the treaties themselves. That is why Crown representatives had the English terms translated into our various languages at the time of treaty making. It is problematic in our languages to conceive of the land as a commodity to be disposed of in the way suggested by the technical English terminology of many of Canada's treaties. We speak the same languages as our ancestors who entered into those agreements. It is difficult for us to accept that they truly understood what was meant by terms such as "cede, release, surrender and yield... forever, all their rights, titles and privileges whatsoever to the lands..."

This wording appears in the numbered treaties entered into between 1871 and 1921 in northern Ontario, the Prairie provinces, northeastern British Columbia and parts of southern Yukon and the Northwest Territories. Similar wording appears in other treaties signed elsewhere in Canada. Concepts such as these make sense in the western European cultural tradition of feudal relations in which human beings own the land and dispose of it as they see fit. However, they were and remain foreign to our way of seeing things in a world where, as we have described earlier, human beings are in an entirely different relationship to the land.

The quality of the translations provided to our ancestors has become an issue in recent decades as the courts struggle to find the true nature of the agreement between treaty nations and the Crown. It is a hopeful sign to us that Canada's courts have finally begun to give credence to our oral tradition in cases involving our Aboriginal and treaty rights. Many of those cases involve claims by our peoples to their traditional lands or to rights associated with the land. Since our languages reflect our relationship to the land and to activities

practised on the land, it is not only just, but it is also entirely fitting that the evidence contained in our oral tradition and expressed in our languages should be heard and given the weight it deserves.

In summary, it is clear that language and culture are inseparable concepts for First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples. Over time, however, they have come to be separated to varying degrees. This process began with the first contacts between our ancestors and the Europeans who first visited these shores, mistakenly believing they had found a new world.

But our world was not lost, certainly not to us. And it was only new to those who had never lived here before. To us it was an old world, a familiar world in which our languages, cultures and sense of identity had been born. It was a world to which we were attached in ways that defied definition in the languages of the newcomers.

Our Languages and Cultures: Our Nationhood

In the introduction to this report we stated our recognition that language and culture are the foundations of First Nation, Inuit and Métis nationhood and that our many nations have government-to-government relations with the federal, provincial and territorial governments. Our nationhood is not a new idea. It has been a key element of the relationship between First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples and the Crown since the beginning. As Regina Crowchild notes, it is expressed in the form of political autonomy and is reflected in the treaty process:

When our peoples entered into treaties, there were nations of people. And people always wonder why, what is a nation? Because only nations can enter into treaties. Our peoples, prior to the arrival of the non-Indigenous peoples, were under a single political society. They had their own languages. They had their own spiritual beliefs. They had their own political institutions. They had the land base, and they possessed historic continuity on this land base.

Within these structures they were able to enter into treaties amongst themselves as different tribes, as different nations on this land. In that capacity they entered into treaty with the British people. So, these treaties were entered into on a nation-to-nation basis. That treaty set out

for us what our relationship will be with the British Crown and her successive governments.¹²

The nationhood of First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples rested on foundations different from those of the European countries that were often unwieldy collections of different peoples with different languages, traditions and religions brought together by force or dynastic considerations. First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples were nations in the original and truest sense of the term — groups of people linked by common bonds of language, culture, ethnicity and a collective desire to maintain their distinctiveness and political autonomy.

Complex internal family, clan and broader kinship systems meant that First Nation, Inuit and Métis governments rested on consensus rather than princely or parliamentary decree. Use of the old language, that spoken by our ancestors before the modern accretions resulting from contact with Europeans, gave force and solemnity to the words used by our leaders in their dealings with European nations. First Nation, Inuit and Métis people never doubted either their inherent nationhood or the sacred connection between that nationhood and the land and never intended to relinquish either.

The *Royal Proclamation of 1763* indicates that the British Crown had a similar understanding. Issued by the King in response to settler incursions on traditional First Nation lands, it contains language referring to the nation-to-nation relationship and the Crown's fiduciary duty of protection of our lands as follows:

... the several Nations and Tribes of Indians with whom We are connected, and who live under our protection, should not be molested or disturbed in the Possession of such Parts of Our Dominions and Territories as, not having been ceded to or purchased by Us, are reserved to them or any of them as their Hunting Grounds...¹³

This joint commitment to the nation-to-nation relationship continued well into the colonial period. In 1867, however, the British Crown abandoned this shared understanding and its own policies by granting

power to Canada's Parliament over "Indians and Lands reserved for the Indians" through section 91(24) of the *Constitution Act, 1867*. Our nationhood was virtually ignored in the new federal structure. The next year Canada took direct control of our lands¹⁴ and in 1876 passed the first version of the *Indian Act* to rationalize and facilitate the administration of our lands and to monitor and control the political autonomy of First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples.¹⁵

As numerous court decisions and published studies including that of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples have noted, in the decades following Confederation, Canada increasingly failed to honour the nation-to-nation relationship reflected in the Royal Proclamation and the treaties by adopting policies that were explicitly aimed at undermining First Nation, Inuit and Métis nationhood and assimilating us into the Canadian population.¹⁶ Canada's policies of assimilation are discussed in more detail in the section entitled "Our Languages: Our Responsibility, Canada's Duty."

Nonetheless, the many historical treaties discussed earlier, the more recent ones in Quebec, British Columbia and northern Canada, and those that are in negotiations or are slated to be negotiated in the future are premised on Canada's recognition that, as the speakers of the original languages of Canada, the First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples were — and remain — nations with whom it is appropriate and just to enter into relations of a different kind than it has with other groups of Canadians. This is a modern constitutional and political reality as well as a historical fact. Our nationhood, the essential difference between First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples and other Canadians, is recognized and affirmed in section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* in the form of our Aboriginal and treaty rights.

Prior to the arrival of Europeans on this continent the "complex and heterogeneous human community"¹⁷ of the First Peoples of this land was a world unto itself, a world separated from Europe by enormous distance and vastly different languages, cultures, traditions and philosophies. Following sustained contact with Europeans came a long period of cooperation involving webs of commercial partnership and military alliances. This led to considerable mutual cultural adaptation, informal alliances and more

¹² Transcript of the comments of Regina Crowchild, former President of the Indian Association of Alberta, during a consultation conducted by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples on June 11, 1992, in Edmonton, Alberta, and reproduced in Canada, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Volume 2, Restructuring the Relationship* (Ottawa: Supply and Services, Canada, 1996), p. 9.

¹³ *Royal Proclamation of 1763*, R.S.C. 1985, Appendix II, No. 1.

¹⁴ *An Act providing for the organization of the Department of the Secretary of State of Canada and for the management of Indian and Ordnance Lands*, S.C. 1868, c. 42.

¹⁵ For a comprehensive discussion of the *Indian Act* see the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *supra* note 9, p. 255–322.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 137–99.

¹⁷ J. R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), p. 4.

formal treaties and protocols and increasing links of various kinds between First Nation, Inuit and Métis societies and those of the incoming settlers.

Despite the economic relationships and alliances that developed during the period of cooperation, our societies continued to function nonetheless as separate worlds. Our respective cultures adapted to each other, but without losing what made them distinctive. In fact, these distinctions between us, those aspects of First Nation, Inuit and Métis cultures that were and remain different from the cultures of other Canadians, form the heart of the Aboriginal rights recognized and affirmed in section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. As the Supreme Court of Canada stated in the *Van der Peet* case, “aboriginal rights lie in the practices, customs and traditions integral to the distinctive cultures of aboriginal peoples.”¹⁸ Going on, the Court clarified that what this means is that:

... the practice, tradition or custom was a central and significant part of the society’s distinctive culture... one of the things which made the culture distinctive — that it was one of the things that *truly made the society what it was*.¹⁹ [emphasis in the original]

The distinctiveness of our cultures and languages are clearly acknowledged and supported by the courts in other key decisions. For example, in the *Sioui* case the Supreme Court described the European approach to First Nations as being “good policy to maintain relations with them very close to those maintained between sovereign nations.”²⁰ Such court pronouncements are not restricted to First Nations. In other cases the inherent distinctiveness of Inuit and Métis peoples and their cultures have also drawn favourable judicial comment.

In the 1979 Baker Lake case,²¹ for instance, the Federal Court found in favour of Inuit Aboriginal title in the Baker Lake area of the Northwest Territories. The Court based its decision on the fact that, at the time of British sovereignty, the Inuit of that area were members of an organized society in exclusive occupation of their traditional lands.²² Since then Inuit have built on this important legal precedent and have established self-government based on their inherent status as nations in accordance with their traditions, language and culture over large areas of their traditional territories in Nunavik (northern Quebec), Nunavut and Nunaakput (the

Northwest Territories). In northern Labrador, negotiations to resolve the land claim and establish Inuit self-government in Nunatsiavut are progressing.

Most recently, the Supreme Court acknowledged in the Powley case that the Métis community in and around Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario has the constitutionally protected Aboriginal right to hunt for food. The significance of this ruling goes far beyond hunting, for the Court took the time to investigate and comment on Métis origins and culture. The Court concluded as follows regarding the distinctive identity of the Métis as a constitutionally protected people:

The Métis of Canada share the common experience of having forged a new culture and a distinctive group identity from their Indian or Inuit and European roots. The constitutionally significant feature of the Métis is their special status as peoples that emerged between first contact and the effective imposition of European control. The inclusion of the Métis in s. 35 represents Canada’s commitment to recognize and value the distinctive Métis cultures, which grew up in areas not yet open to colonization, and which the framers of the *Constitution Act, 1982* recognized can only survive if the Métis are protected along with other aboriginal communities.²³

In summary, it is clear that First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples are nations not only because they possess the legal and political attributes of nationhood according to European or Canadian court room definitions. We were — and remain — nations because of the undeniable fact of our distinctive languages, cultures, traditional forms of political organization, our inherent self-governing status and a collective desire to maintain our distinctiveness.

Our Languages: Our Responsibility, Canada’s Duty

The unique historical relationship between the Crown and the First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples is fiduciary in nature. All Canadian governments acting in the name of the Crown therefore owe a duty of loyalty and protection to the First Peoples of Canada. Moreover, this duty cannot be made the responsibility of any individual department or agency. It is the duty of the entire federal, provincial or territorial government and cannot be delegated and must not be avoided. In the case of the

¹⁸ *R. v. Van der Peet*, [1996] 4 C.N.L.R. 177 at 201.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* at 204.

²⁰ *R. v. Sioui*, [1990] 3 C.N.L.R. 127.

²¹ *Baker Lake v. Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development*, [1979] 1 F.C. 487.

²² *Ibid.* at 557–58.

²³ *R. v. Powley*, [2003] 4 C.N.L.R. 321 at 327.

federal government, for instance, the Crown obligation to protect our languages cannot be restricted to the Department of Canadian Heritage as is currently the case. It must be supported by, among others, key federal departments such as Justice, Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Health, Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness and by important federal agencies such as the Public Service Commission.

That being said, however, Canada cannot speak our languages for us. Canada cannot restore them. And Canada cannot promote them among our peoples. We must take our rightful positions as the first and most appropriate teachers of our languages and cultures. We must begin by speaking our own languages to our children in our homes and communities and we must do it daily. We cannot delegate this task to our schools or leave it for the next generation. To maintain, revitalize and preserve our languages, we must use traditional and contemporary methods and strategies in the development of new approaches. We believe this will nurture and sustain the use of our languages, particularly among First Nation, Inuit and Métis youth.

There are many reasons and causes for the current state of our languages. Although Canada and the churches have acknowledged responsibility for the damage to our languages and cultures, we recognize that there are other factors reflected in worldwide trends that have compounded First Nation, Inuit and Métis language and cultural loss. We should not be compelled to view these as insurmountable obstacles in our call for action.

Our languages and cultures must flourish on their own terms and be community-driven and supported by all levels of leadership. This report recommends that a comprehensive national strategy be developed and implemented by a national language organization representing First Nation, Inuit and Métis people. This strategy rests on the premise that we must address the current state of our languages and cultures including, but not limited to, the languages that are on the verge of extinction and those that are endangered and suffering. All First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages are sacred and important, and all require immediate attention. As a participant stated during the Fort Qu'Appelle consultation:

... our language is sacred. We walk with ceremony and prayer dealing with our languages and it's essential that we learn our languages.

Our little children are out there wandering and lost because they have lost their

languages. We should try our best to teach the language with whatever is available. We don't need a curriculum. We have our chairs, tables, and desks as tools. We have everything available to teach, and when you talk about curriculum, there are so many out there, and thousand of dollars are spent and they are not suited to our way of life.²⁴

Canada undertook actions in the past that were deliberate attempts to undermine our languages and cultures and is obligated to provide the necessary resources required to sustain the long-term strategy. The systemic racism and sustained assault on the core of our identity as the First Peoples of this land continues to hinder our ability to practise our cultures and to speak our own languages. This has contributed to the pressing need to restore the languages to their rightful place.

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples devoted a great deal of its final report to describing Canada's past actions in detail. There were relocations, attacks on traditional governments and spiritual practices, restrictive definitions in the *Indian Act* that forced people off their reserves, residential schools, and a host of other measures. The goal was assimilation — eradication of the differences between First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples and other Canadians by undermining our languages and cultures.

We will not go over these harmful measures here except to note that they resulted from attitudes of racial and cultural superiority that enabled Canadian officials to transform the differences between First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples and other Canadians into presumed inferiorities. Residential schools and church missionaries offer the most compelling example of how these attitudes operated in practice. The goal was nothing short of transforming “savage” children into “civilized” adults by teaching them the skills, habits and customs of the dominant English-speaking majority in the provinces and territories where these schools were located.

Language was key to this re-education process. For example, at Shingwauk school in Ontario, Reverend E. F. Wilson confirmed this, informing federal officials that “We make a great point of insisting that the boys talk English, as, for their advancement in civilization, this is, of all things, the most necessary.”²⁵ Other reports and books have documented the appalling punishments and other abuses suffered by children at these schools. Often it was for little more than speaking their own languages

²⁴ Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures, *Report on Proceedings: Consultation in Ft. Qu'Appelle* (Ft. Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan: June 12, 2004), p. 29–30.

²⁵ Cited in Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *supra* note 9, p. 341.

or expressing themselves in ways appropriate to their respective cultures among themselves. Mary Carpenter recounts the methods employed to divest her of her language, culture and Inuk identity:

After a lifetime of beatings, going hungry, standing in a corridor on one leg, and walking in the snow with no shoes for speaking Inuvialuktun, and having a heavy, stinging paste rubbed on my face, which they did to stop us from expressing our Eskimo custom of raising our eyebrows for “yes” and wrinkling our noses for “no”, I soon lost the ability to speak my mother tongue. When a language dies, the world it was generated from is broken down too.²⁶

Ultimately, the goal of assimilation was not achieved, for First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples are still here. Despite the forceful measures taken to eradicate our languages, they have managed to survive. This will be discussed further in “First Nation, Inuit and Métis Languages: Where We Are Now.” As our consultations (discussed in Part VI) revealed, however, First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples are determined to begin to undo the wrongs of the past. They are ready to take on the responsibility of restoring their languages and

traditions. But they cannot do this alone. They have told us they need help, from one another as nations, and also from Canada.

Canada has taken a positive first step in the direction of helping us as the First Peoples of this land to take on our own responsibilities. In 1997 Canada acknowledged in the *Statement of Reconciliation* that its actions “resulted in weakening the identity of Aboriginal peoples, suppressing their languages and cultures, and outlawing their spiritual practices.”²⁷ In particular, Canada acknowledged its role in the residential school system in “preventing children from speaking their own languages and learning about their heritage and cultures.”²⁸ Canada then took a second step in 1998, creating an Aboriginal Languages Initiative²⁹ at the Department of Canadian Heritage to begin the process of rebuilding our languages.

We acknowledge Canada’s first steps. They have been helpful and have served to begin the process of building awareness within the Canadian public and helping to mobilize concerned First Nation, Inuit and Métis educators and languages activists. We call on Canada to take the next step. What follows is our vision of that next step — of what all of us working together need to do to make this Task Force vision of fluency for future generations of the First peoples of Canada a reality.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 372.

²⁷ Canada, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, *Gathering Strength — Canada’s Aboriginal Action Plan* (Ottawa: Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1997), p. 4.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²⁹ For a description of this program, see the Canadian Heritage Web site at www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs.

PART IV:
FIRST NATION, INUIT
AND MÉTIS LANGUAGES:
WHERE WE ARE NOW



*Go home to your communities and do not forget the youth.
They sometimes get forgotten and shouldn't be. They're important
and they're the next generation. We need to ask the youth what
they need and want, and get them involved and get them excited
about this.*

PART IV: First Nation, Inuit and Métis Languages: Where We Are Now

Our Languages: Our Diversity as Peoples

A strategy to support First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples to revive, maintain and strengthen their languages must reflect their diversity as peoples and the varying degrees of language vitality. Moreover, the approximately 61 languages that continue to be spoken are at various stages of language loss: some are fairly widely spoken while others are in a critical or endangered state. Most are somewhere in between these extremes. All are in danger.

The following section discusses some of the complexities and the variation in language conditions that impact on planning and programs at the local, regional and national levels. We first examine the diversity and sheer number of languages then we discuss language vitality, in terms of the number of speakers and the potential for intergenerational transmission. As many First Nation, Inuit and Métis people live away from their home communities, we also consider languages in urban areas.

First Nations speak a total of at least 59 languages, by far the majority of the Indigenous languages that remain in Canada. They fall into 11 different linguistic families.³⁰ As noted earlier, within each language there are a number of dialects. The three largest First Nation language families in Canada — the Dene (Athapaskan) family, the Algonquian family and the Siouan family — stretch across large portions of Canada and into the United States. Each language family is separate and distinct from others. Cree, a language of the Algonquian family, is as different in its sound system, grammar and vocabulary from Mohawk as English is from Japanese. Even within the same language family, there are enormous differences: Halq'emeylem, spoken near Vancouver, is as different from Nsilxcen (Okanagan) as Finnish and Hungarian, members of the Finno Ugric

³⁰ When linguists began to systematically gather data on North American First Nation and Inuit languages during the latter part of the nineteenth century and to classify these languages into families and stocks according to their genetic relationships, they chose names for these language families that sometimes derived from a word that related languages had in common. Sometimes that word came from the self-designation of a particular Aboriginal group within that language family (Salish = Flathead people of the Bitterroot Valley, Idaho; "Algonquian" from the Algonquin people of the Ottawa River Valley); sometimes it came from the terms used by other Aboriginal groups for speakers of the language family in question ("Eskimoan" from "snowshoe netter" in Algonquian languages), or from a term selected by a linguist (e.g., "Athapaskan" supposedly from the Cree word "Athapaskaw" = grass or reeds here and there). Each Aboriginal group had, and continues to have, a name for itself as a people and for its language, which have been rendered into orthographies by the Aboriginal group.

or Uralic family, are from each other. British Columbia has the greatest language diversity, containing 8 of the 11 language families.

The Inuit speak various mutually comprehensible dialects of a single language that is called Inuktitut in parts of the Eastern Arctic, Inuvialuktun in the Beaufort Delta area, Inuinnaqtun in the Western Arctic, and Inuttitut in northern Quebec and Labrador.³¹

Michif, the unique national language of the Métis, has evolved on the historical basis of Cree verbs and sentence structure and French-derived noun phrases.³² Besides Michif, many Métis speak First Nation languages, in particular Cree, Dakota, Ojibwe and Dene.

The Status of First Nation, Inuit and Métis Languages

The vitality of languages may be determined by a number of factors. Two of the most commonly used measures are the number of "fluent" speakers, and the rate at which successive generations learn and speak the language (intergenerational transmission). Earlier published studies by authors and linguists estimated the number of fluent speakers of a particular language. Accurate counts of the number of fluent speakers are not available. This is due not only to the difficult task of enumeration, but also to the more fundamental question of what constitutes fluency.³³ Despite these limitations,

³¹ The Nunavut Special Parliamentary Committee appointed to review the *Official Languages Act* recommended in their interim report that Inuinnaqtun be listed as a separate language, along with Inuktitut in the Nunavut *Official Languages Act* (Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, Special Committee to Review the *Official Languages Act*, *Final Report*, December 2003).

³² Michif's sentence structure and much of its vocabulary is based on Cree. For this reason, it may also be counted among Algonquian languages and is reported as such by Statistics Canada.

³³ There is no single or widely accepted definition of fluency. Fluency is therefore a subjective concept, the definition of which will vary depending on an individual's perspective and experience. A linguist would define a fluent speaker as someone with full phonological and grammatical accuracy and communicative competence in a language, and a good range of vocabulary, including specialized vocabulary. Fluent speakers will intuitively use their assessment of phonological (sound system) and grammatical accuracy, using a good range of vocabulary without the need to engage in code switching to the acquired dominant language, along with conversational and culturally relevant competence. Daniel S. Rubin identifies five levels of fluency — passive, symbolic, functional, fluent and creative — in "Sm'algayax Language Renewal: Prospects and Options," in *Revitalizing Indigenous Languages*, edited by Jon Reyhner, Gina Cantoni, Robert N. St. Clair and Evangeline Parsons Yazzie (Flagstaff, AZ: Northern Arizona University, 1999), p. 17–32, online: <http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/>.

these studies indicate the relative vitality of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages and assist in framing the background against which a national strategy to revitalize language will operate. One such study by Kinkade compiled estimates of speakers, giving the following snapshot of First Nation and Inuit languages:³⁴

- Cree had by far the largest number of speakers, estimated at 80,000, followed by Ojibwe with 45,000 speakers, Inuit (Inuktitut) with 25,000 speakers and Chipewyan with 15,000 speakers.
- In a mid-range are Mi'kmaq, some of the Dene (Athapaskan) languages, along with Mohawk, Dakota and Nakoda, all of which had between 7,000 and 15,000 speakers.
- B.C. Interior Salish languages, along with the languages in the Tsimshian family, Kwakw'ala, Nuu-chaa-nulth and several of the smaller Dene languages in northern B.C., the Northwest Territories and the Yukon, fell within a range of more than 300, but fewer than 1,000 speakers.
- Some Coast Salish languages, along with most of the Iroquoian languages, some of the northern Dene languages, Maliseet, as well as Heiltsuk, Haisla, Ktunaxa and Tlingit had fewer than 200 speakers, but more than 50.
- Other languages, such as the Han, Tagish, Tahltan, Munsee (Delaware), Western Abenaki and Upper Tanana, were reported as having fewer than 50 speakers.

Linguists and language planners classify language vitality on a scale ranging from “flourishing” to “critically endangered.” Bauman’s scale³⁵ is used in a number of community studies and is as follows:

Flourishing languages have speakers of all ages, and intergenerational transmission occurs without disruption; the language is supported in all parts of community and home life, schooling, and communications.

Enduring languages have a critical mass or percentage of speakers in all generations, although some of them have switched to another language as their home language and/or language of work and language used in communication with the outside world.

Declining languages are languages in which a significant part of the adult population, perhaps half, still speak the language, but only a portion of young people and children know the language and most use the nationally or regionally dominant language instead.

Endangered languages are languages in which people of the older generation, or Elders, know and use the language, but in which parents of childbearing age by and large use a different language with their children, thus disrupting intergenerational transmission.

Critical languages are languages that have only a handful of speakers of an elderly age, without a significant number of parent-age and adult speakers, and no new speakers being raised through intergenerational transmission.

Extinct, or sleeping, languages have no remaining speakers who learn the language in natural intergenerational transmission. Interestingly, some languages that are officially deemed “extinct” have seen efforts at revival.³⁶

First Nation organizations as well as provincial and territorial organizations have conducted surveys on the state of First Nation and Inuit languages with the objective of determining the extent of intergenerational transmission.³⁷ A 1989 Canada-wide survey (supplemented in 1991 by the Assembly of First Nations) studied language maintenance or decline at the community level using Bauman’s scale.³⁸ Based on the 171 (of a total of 600) First Nation communities that participated in the survey, the following trends emerged:

- 12% or 21 First Nations had flourishing languages (over 80% of all age groups are fluent in the First Nation language and many are able to read and write the language).
- 18% or 31 First Nations had enduring languages (over 60% of almost all age groups are fluent in the language).

³⁴ M. Dale Kinkade, “The Decline of Native Languages in Canada,” in *Endangered Languages*, edited by Robert H. Robins and Eugenius M. Uhlenbeck (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1991), p. 157–76.

³⁵ Bauman, James, *A Guide to Issues in Indian Language Retention* (Washington, D.C.: Centre for Applied Linguistics, 1980).

³⁶ Leanne Hinton and Ken Hale (eds.), *The Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice* (San Diego: Academic Press, 2000).

³⁷ Assembly of First Nations (1989, 1991, 2000); Manitoba (1997); Saskatchewan (1991); Government of Northwest Territories (2000); Marianne Ignace, *Kwadacha Band Language Survey and Bella Bella Heiltsuk Language Survey* (Ph.D. diss., Simon Fraser University, 1999); Secwepemc Cultural Education Society (1995); Matthew (1999); First Nations, Inuit and Métis Culture, Heritage and Language Foundation (British Columbia: 2003); Yukon Aboriginal Language Service (2004).

³⁸ Published in *Towards Linguistic Justice for First Nations* (Ottawa: AFN, 1990) and *Towards Rebirth of First Nations Languages* (Ottawa: AFN, 1992). Data from these surveys are subject to the same caution as for other surveys that rely on self-reporting. Individual interpretations of what constitutes fluency also affect survey results.

- 28% or 48 First Nations had declining languages (at least 50% of the adult population and a lesser percentage of young people are speakers of their language).
- 30% or 52 First Nations had endangered languages (less than 50% of the adult population were reported speaking the language and there were few if any young speakers or, although over 80% of the older population spoke the language, there were no identified speakers under 45 years old).
- 11% or 19 First Nations have critical languages (there were fewer than 10 speakers, or there are no known speakers living in the community).

The Assembly of First Nations survey showed that the vitality of languages varied greatly across First Nation communities. For example, the state of the Cree language ranged from enduring to critical in different First Nation communities, as did Dene languages.

Language Use in the Home

Unlike the community-based estimates of number of fluent speakers in the above calculations, the Statistics Canada Census and its post-censal surveys, the Aboriginal Peoples' Surveys of 1991, 1996 and 2001, sought to measure the number of First Nation, Inuit and Métis people with an Aboriginal mother tongue; the average age of those with knowledge of a language; and the number of those who use an Aboriginal language at home either frequently or regularly.

Although information from the Census is an important resource, **the data on First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages should be interpreted with caution.** Some communities did not participate in the survey. Data on languages from the Iroquoian family as well as some of the Algonquian languages may not be representative owing to incomplete enumeration of reserves. There is also incomplete reporting on many languages with small populations that were not counted separately, but instead may have been grouped under a linguistic family. A case in point is Michif. It was not enumerated separately until 2001 and prior to that was reported as "other Algonquian." Inaccuracies may also have resulted from sampling and reporting errors (where populations being surveyed are small), survey administration techniques, and the actual wording of questions on language that may or may not have been clear to those interviewed.

While the Task Force recognizes the shortcomings of Census data, the information nonetheless provides some assistance in identifying overall trends in language vitality. For example, information from the 1996 Census compiled by Norris indicates that three languages with

more than 25,000 speakers — Cree, Ojibwe and Inuktitut — are "viable." That is, respondents to the Census survey who reported having an Aboriginal mother tongue spoken in the home were relatively young. This indicates potential for language maintenance through intergenerational transmission. For example, the average age of Inuktitut language speakers using the language in the home was 23.9 years old — well within the child bearing range.

There are also a number of languages used by small populations (fewer than 10,000) that continue to be spoken among younger age groups. They too have the potential to be maintained through intergenerational transmission. These languages include Mi'kmaq (Micmac), Montagnais-Naskapi, Maliseet, Attikamekw, Oji-Cree, and Blackfoot from the Algonquian linguistic family and Dakota of the Siouan linguistic family. A number of other languages are similarly positioned. The Gitksan from the Tsimshian linguistic family and the South Slave, Dogrib, Chipewyan, Carrier and Chilcotin from the Dene language family all reported an average age of speakers and those using it in the homes at less than 41 years of age, thus also in the child-bearing ages.

Based on the average age of speakers and the use of languages in the home, responses for quite a number of languages indicate that they are endangered. In this regard, Salish languages Nuu-chah-nulth (Nootka) and Kuitkiutl (Wakashan), Haida, Kutenai and Tlingit reported an average age of approximately 50 years old among mother tongue speakers.

Norris' analysis of 2001 APS data³⁹ indicates that several languages, including relatively stronger languages such as Cree and Ojibwe (Ojibway), have lost ground in terms of the number of respondents identifying an Aboriginal mother tongue. Larger drops were reported among Blackfoot and Carrier respondents. This likely reflects an aging population of Aboriginal speakers who are dying and not being replaced by younger speakers. On the other hand, some Dene languages, as well as Montagnais-Naskapi, Attikamekw and Mi'kmaq (Micmac), show an increase in mother tongue population. This suggests that young people are acquiring the language in the home.

Statistics Canada Census data do not provide complete coverage on many of the languages with few speakers. However, local surveys are helpful in filling in gaps in information. The current state of B.C.'s First Nation

³⁹ See Appendix E for the detailed tabulations by Mary Jane Norris, reported in "The Diversity and State of Aboriginal Languages in Canada," research paper prepared for the Department of Canadian Heritage (undated).

languages, which account for at least 30 languages, is documented by a recent First Nation Language Needs Assessment.⁴⁰ Although based on only partial data on B.C. languages, it reports the following distribution of fluency reported by respondents as follows:

- None was under age 5
- 2 were aged 6–15
- 16 were aged 16–29
- 153 were aged 30–45
- 1,631 were aged 46–65
- 1,675 were aged 65+

These figures suggest that intergenerational transmission of B.C.'s First Nation languages has virtually ceased, and that almost no young children are acquiring the First Nation language in the home. Even among the population of child bearing age, especially younger parents, very few individuals are fluent.

Responses were slightly more encouraging for the category “speak/understand some of the language”:

- 163 were under age 5
- 748 were aged 6–15
- 969 were aged 16–29
- 1,146 were aged 30–45
- 1,100 were aged 46–65
- 407 were aged 65+

With responses from 748 children between the ages of 6 and 15, it appears that some children are growing up with at least some knowledge of a First Nation language. However, it is not clear if this is through socialization in the home or through school programs. Many parents of child bearing age speak or understand some of their language. This may indicate that there is opportunity to learn in the home.

First Nation, Inuit and Métis Languages in Urban Areas

A strategy to respond to language needs should also take into consideration the significant numbers of individuals and families who live away from their home communities. Often they find themselves in larger urban centres. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples underscored the importance of language and culture to First Nations, Inuit and Métis living in urban areas and highlighted the obstacles many encounter in trying to

maintain these in what often may be difficult social and economic circumstances.⁴¹

Furthermore:

Isolation from family and home community, lack of culturally relevant resources and activities and the necessity to deal with non-Aboriginal institutions and agencies for programs and services create tensions and difficulties in maintaining Aboriginal identity in general, and even more so for Aboriginal language.⁴²

The trend in language shift or loss among those living away from their communities is confirmed by Statistics Canada data. Norris' analysis of Census data indicates that, from 1996 to 2001, several key indicators of Aboriginal language strength declined among the non-reserve North American Indian⁴³ population as well as among the Inuit and Métis:

- North American Indian people able to speak a First Nation language well enough to conduct a conversation fell from 20% in 1996 to 16% in 2001, while those speaking it in the home declined from 13% to 8%.
- North American Indian children aged 14 and under in non-reserve areas with enough knowledge of a First Nation language to carry out a conversation declined from 12% in 1996 to 9% in 2001.

Among Métis, language use is in a critical state. Only 5% of Métis of all ages were able to converse in Michif or in a First Nation language in 2001, down from 8% five years earlier. Only 2% used their language in the home in 2001 compared with 3% in 1996. In terms of absolute numbers it should be noted that while there may be as many as half a million people who describe themselves as Métis, fewer than 1,000 are able to speak Michif. Thus, less than one half of one percent of Métis people are able to speak Michif, the historical and official language of the Métis nation.

Inuktitut, on the other hand, remains relatively strong in the North. Census data bear this out, reporting the following:

⁴¹ See Part 7, “Urban Perspectives,” in Canada, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *Final Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Volume 4, Perspectives and Realities* (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1996), p. 519–37.

⁴² M. J. Norris and L. Jantzen, “Aboriginal Languages in Canada’s Urban Areas: Characteristics, Considerations and Implications,” in *Not Strangers in These Parts: Urban Aboriginal Peoples*, edited by David Newhouse and Evelyn Peters (Ottawa: Privy Council Office, 2003), p. 110.

⁴³ The Census uses the term “North American Indian” to refer to First Nation people.

⁴⁰ First Peoples’ Heritage, Language and Culture Council (Victoria: 2003).

- The number of Inuit able to carry on a conversation in their language remained unchanged at 82% between 1996 and 2001.
- There was a slight decline in language use in the home. In 2001, 64% of Inuit children used this language most often at home, down from 68% five years earlier.

The fact that First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages tend not to be used in the homes in urban areas makes intergenerational transmission exceedingly difficult. Languages with small populations with high levels of migration to urban areas are in an extremely vulnerable position. A strategy must be developed for those languages to address this reality.

Although First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages outside of their home communities are in a precarious state, there is definite interest among First Nation, Inuit and Métis people in becoming speakers of their respective languages. The Aboriginal Peoples' Surveys measured the interest among non-reserve North American Indians (First Nations), Inuit and Métis in learning an Aboriginal language. Interest was highest among Inuit (87%), followed by First Nations (64%) and Métis (50%).

Summary of Language Conditions

As the foregoing discussion illustrates, the situation of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages is not identical because First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples are not the same. Different origins, locations and histories mean different language conditions and language revitalization approaches and strategies.

First Nations, for example, occupy most of Canada's land mass south of the Arctic and speak a total of 59 out of the 61 First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages that continue to be spoken in this country. The acculturative forces to which First Nations are subject are not identical. Some First Nation people reside far from urban centres and follow a traditional lifestyle. Others live in or near Canadian urban centres where language maintenance is much more difficult. Although many First Nations, especially in the North, are self-governing or will be, most operate under the *Indian Act* and do not therefore have the legislative tools available under self-government arrangements that would enable them to strongly promote the use of their languages for official functions.

First Nation languages fall all along the spectrum from relatively strong (in the case of Cree) to nearly extinct (in the case of Han). However, even within the same language there may be variations. As a result, First Nation language strategies must be community-oriented and will

range along a continuum from maintaining already strong languages to strengthening those that are weaker to restoring those that are in danger of disappearing. The fact that First Nations each have a land base and that some are self-governing are factors that may support their language strategies and allow a greater degree of control than is the case where speakers are more scattered and less collectively organized as in urban environments.

The Inuit, on the other hand, speak a single language divided into various mutually comprehensible dialects. They occupy four distinct political regions — Nunatsiavut (Labrador), Nunavik (northern Quebec), Nunavut and Nunaakput (Northwest Territories). All are in the Canadian Arctic, the largest geographic part of Canada. Inuit still live away from urban centres for the most part, in smaller communities in the north where it is easier to maintain aspects of their traditional ways of life. The result is that the Inuit language continues to be widely spoken, albeit with considerable variations and increasing intergenerational transmission challenges in some areas.

Moreover, Inuit are self-governing in three regions and are able to use their language in government as well as in less formal settings. In the fourth region, Nunatsiavut, the people are in the process of ratifying their land claim settlement and negotiating self-government and may soon be in the same position as Inuit in the other regions in terms of being able to legislatively promote their language for official functions. The result is that Inuit language strategies are generally focused more on maintaining and assuring the intergenerational transmission of languages that will increasingly be the languages of work and official communications in areas under their effective governmental control.

The situation of the Métis people is quite different from that of First Nations and Inuit. Although Métis people are found throughout Canada, they are particularly prominent in western and northwestern Canada. They speak their own distinctive language, Michif, as well as several First Nation languages. While they have a historical homeland in western Canada, with the exception of the Alberta Métis settlements, they have yet to obtain through litigation or negotiation a constitutionally protected land base. Therefore, Métis language strategies are directed at reviving their languages off a land base. This poses daunting challenges.

Although Michif is both the historical as well as the official language of the Métis Nation, it is now spoken by fewer than 1,000 people in Canada and is in imminent danger of disappearing if urgent measures are not adopted. Thus, Métis efforts focus on restoring this

once-widespread language and standardizing Michif vocabulary and spelling. In this regard the first Michif Language Dictionary has just been released by the Manitoba Métis Federation.

In sum, the studies and surveys considered by the Task Force portray a multi-dimensional picture of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages spoken, in some cases only by a few Elders, and in other cases by tens of thousands of people. Some of the 61 First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages have withstood tremendous pressures, continuing to be used in homes and in the communities. More commonly spoken languages such as Inuktitut, Cree, Ojibwe and Montagnais-Naskapi are viable, having at least 25,000 speakers ranging from the

young to the elderly. However, consultations and local language surveys and studies showed that all languages, including those considered “viable,” are losing ground.

Despite the gravity of the current situation, First Nation, Inuit and Métis people, many from communities with critically endangered languages, continue their efforts to reverse language loss. Those communities with enduring languages are also taking steps to strengthen their languages. Finally, it is important to keep in mind that statistics on language tell only a small part of the story. As with any endeavour, it is the human spirit and the will to achieve, despite tremendous odds, that ultimately determines what the future can hold.



PART V:
CALLS FOR ACTION

*What we do will affect the future of our children, our young people.
What we do with our language will affect the rest of our generations.*

PART V: Calls for Action

Calls by the Assembly of First Nations

First Nations have the longest track record of lobbying for recognition and support for their languages. For example, as early as 1972 in their paper entitled *Indian Control of Indian Education*, the National Indian Brotherhood sought Canada's support for education in First Nation languages and cultures.

Although two additional reports in 1990 and 1992 provided recommendations to First Nation governments on how to begin to preserve their languages and cultures, until recently the critical state of First Nation languages was for the most part a very low priority for all levels of government. However, in 1998 the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) by resolution of the Chiefs in Assembly, declared a State of Emergency regarding First Nation languages and called on Canada to take action as follows:

That the government of Canada act immediately to recognize, officially and legally, the First Nation languages of Canada, and to make a commitment to provide the resources necessary to reverse First Nation language loss and to prevent the extinction of our languages...

In their submissions to the federal government, the AFN took the position that First Nation language rights are constitutionally protected by the wording of section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, which reads: "The existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed." Going on, the AFN noted that, far from recognizing and affirming the linguistic rights of First Nations, the Crown has historically ignored them. To correct this situation, it was proposed that Canada act in partnership with the AFN to create by legislation a national First Nation languages foundation.

This was not the first time such a body had been proposed. In 1989, for example, the former Department of the Secretary of State proposed to include Aboriginal languages in Bill C-37 an "Act to Establish a Heritage Language Institute." First Nations opposed their inclusion in Bill C-37 on the grounds that First Nation languages cannot be relegated to the status of minority languages. Instead, they have a unique position as the languages of the founding nations of Canada and as treaty signatories that must be reflected in separate provisions for their protection and maintenance.

In keeping with their long-standing views in this area, in the year 2000, the AFN advanced a plan for a First

Nation language policy for Canada. The policy proposed by the AFN was to include (but not be limited to) the following:

- to recognize that First Nation languages are the first languages of Canada;
- to protect and promote the right and freedom of First Nations to revitalize, maintain and use their own languages;
- to recognize the inherent right of First Nations to take action on, and give official status to, their languages for the purpose of conducting their own internal affairs; and
- to enter into agreements with First Nations governments for the transfer of First Nation language programs and services to their jurisdiction.⁴⁴

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

In its 1996 final report, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples addressed the state of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages in Volume Three, *Gathering Strength*, under the overall heading of "Arts and Heritage." The Commission proposed that language revitalization be part of a broader strategy of national renewal of the relationship between Canadian governments and First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples. The goal of such a strategy was to remedy the interruption in the transmission of cultures resulting from prior Canadian policies of assimilation.

In the area of arts and heritage, the Royal Commission recommended a wide-ranging strategy involving the recovery of historic artifacts and sacred objects, the renewal of sacred ceremonies and recovery of access to the sites associated with them, and the protection of crafts and traditional knowledge. In addition, the Commission called for more active promotion of the visual arts and the growing body of work produced by a new generation of First Nation, Inuit and Métis scholars, journalists, writers, poets and filmmakers.

As the primary vehicle for the transmission of culture, language revival was key to the Commission's vision of restored First Nation, Inuit and Métis nationhood and cultural renewal. For the Commission, the fragile state of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages and the threat that some might disappear in the near future involved far more than the loss of tools of communication. Rather,

⁴⁴ Assembly of First Nations, *National First Nations Language Strategy: A Time To Listen and The Time To Act*, adopted by resolution of the Chiefs in Assembly, July 2000 (see AFN Web site at www.afn.ca).

it meant the imminent loss for all time of the distinctive world views and collective experience, knowledge and perspectives of entire peoples.

Language shift from a First Nation, Inuit and Métis mother tongue to either English or French was identified as the main reason for the increasingly fragile state of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages. The Commission noted that the declining rates of intergenerational transmission of language were caused by a variety of forces, some unique to Canada and some reflective of broader trends affecting Indigenous and minority languages worldwide. Based on the ratio of home language use to mother tongue, it was observed that there were great variations in First Nation, Inuit and Métis language loss from region to region and community to community across Canada.

In the view of the Commission, there are two prerequisites to developing a national First Nation, Inuit and Métis language policy. The first is to understand the relationship between language shift and language maintenance, particularly in the context of worldwide trends, studies and revival efforts. Studying language revival strategies employed in other countries may be useful for the lessons they can provide to the unique situation in Canada. Notably, the international experience may help assess the prospects of success for particular courses of action such as language immersion programs and the like.

Although the Commission did not mention this point, it is clear that the domestic applicability of lessons drawn from international efforts will depend in the first instance on better baseline data on the state of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages than is currently available in Canada. In the absence of this information, it was difficult for the Royal Commission to move beyond broad generalities in its assessment of language loss in Canada.

The second prerequisite to a national policy highlighted by the Commission was the relationship between language and identity. The Commission's view was that language loss does not necessarily imply cultural loss and resultant loss of identity. Canada is unique not only because of the historical forces that have contributed to language loss, but also because language loss among particular groups does not necessarily mean assimilation into the dominant culture. First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples in Canada continue to maintain distinctive identities even where, as in the urban environment, language loss is acute and possibly irreversible.

This Royal Commission observation should not be understood to mean that language is not relevant to identity. In the same section of its report the Commission noted the vital connection between language, culture and identity, referring to language as “the quintessence of culture” and as being “symbolic of identity.”⁴⁵ These statements were amply borne out by our own Task Force consultations during which First Nation, Inuit and Métis people from all over Canada spoke to us about the vital relationship between our languages and our sense of who we are. Moreover, it is also supported by the AFN, which in its submission to this Task Force, noted as follows:

We also wish to clarify that although we refer to “Languages” in our submission, it is understood that “Cultures” is included, as it is our belief that language and culture are one and the same. Without languages there is no culture.⁴⁶

In the context of First Nation, Inuit and Métis national identity the Commission concluded that the power to establish language priorities, policies and laws is a core nation-building and self-government authority that Canada must respect. Using Fishman's analysis of the stages of reversing language shift in First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities,⁴⁷ the Commission called on Canada immediately to begin working in concert with First Nation, Inuit and Métis nations to help revive their languages by, among other things, establishing and endowing an Aboriginal languages foundation along the lines proposed by the AFN in 1988.

Although broad national strategies and jurisdictional clarity were important to the Royal Commission vision, ultimately the success or failure of First Nation, Inuit and Métis language revitalization efforts will be determined at the community level. In this regard the Royal Commission concluded its discussion of language and culture as follows:

Conservation or revitalization of a language demands maintaining or restoring intergenerational language transmission. Since intergenerational transmission depends primarily on family and community networks,

⁴⁵ Canada, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *Final Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Volume 3, Gathering Strength* (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1996), p. 612.

⁴⁶ Assembly of First Nations Chief's Committee on Languages Submission to the Ministerial Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures, August 25, 2004, p. 2.

⁴⁷ See Fishman's eight-stage language revitalization strategy quoted in: Canada, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *supra* note, p. 614.

the focus of language conservation and revitalization efforts must shift from formal institutions to Aboriginal communities, families and social networks. This does not mean that other avenues should be ignored. It does mean, however, that the effect of all actions on language use and transmission in everyday communications must be taken into consideration.⁴⁸

Submissions by First Nation, Inuit and Métis National Political Organizations

The Task Force also consulted with representative national political organizations to hear their views and recommendations on how governments and First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples could collaborate on a national language revitalization strategy. As has been discussed earlier, there is great diversity among First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples in terms of origins, locations, histories and current language conditions.

This diversity means that the overall perspectives of the national political organizations representing First Nation, Inuit and Métis people are not necessarily similar. For example, the AFN would prefer to see a specific First Nation languages foundation along the lines of the model it has been proposing for several years. The Métis National Council, on the other hand, would prefer to see language funding dispensed through the Federal Interlocutor's Office and directed to its provincial affiliates. The Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami expressed no preference, but would reserve the right of the Inuit to participate at a national level, preferring to take their share of any funding and spend it on explicitly Inuit priorities.

Rather than try to summarize the positions of the First Nations, Inuit and Metis national political organizations, they are reproduced below.

⁴⁸ Canada, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *supra* rom, p. 616–17.

**Assembly of First Nations
Chiefs Committee on Languages
Submission to Ministerial
Task Force on Aboriginal
Languages & Cultures**

August 25, 2004

Note: Due to the size of the AFN's submission, only the deck presentation is included.

Preface

For the purposes of this presentation, the following recommendations represent our strategy as it relates to First Nations languages only. We do not presume to know what is best for Métis and Inuit languages as those decisions are best left to the Métis and Inuit people.

Dedication

The following submission is dedicated to our Ancestors for their wisdom, courage, vision and love of their people and to all of our people who fight to keep the voices of our Ancestors alive.

A Declaration of First Nations

We the Original Peoples of this land know the Creator put us here.

The Creator gave us laws that govern all our relationships to live in harmony with nature and mankind.

The Laws of the Creator defined our rights and responsibilities.

The Creator gave us our spiritual beliefs, our languages, our culture, and a place on Mother Earth which provided us with all our needs.

We have maintained our Freedom, our Languages, and our Traditions from time immemorial. We continue to exercise the rights and fulfill the responsibilities and obligations given to us by the Creator for the land upon which we were placed. The Creator has given us the right to govern ourselves and the right to self-determination.

The rights and responsibilities given to us by the creator cannot be altered or taken away by any other Nation.

Assembly of First Nations Charter, 1982

Statement on First Nation Languages

Language is our unique relationship to the Creator, our attitudes, beliefs, values and fundamental notions of what is truth. Our Languages are the cornerstone of who we are as a People. Without our Languages our cultures cannot survive.

*Towards Linguistic Justice
for First Nations,
Assembly of First Nations
Principles for Revitalization
of First Nations Languages,
September 1990*

- The National Indian Brotherhood formed in 1968 and became the Assembly of First Nations in 1982.
- The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) is the national representative organization of the First Nations in Canada.
- There are 633 First Nation communities in Canada representing over 50 distinct nations and languages.

Indian Residential School Policy-Impact on First Nation Languages

- The “Indian Act of Canada” enacted in 1876, granted the federal government and its agents sweeping powers over Indian education.
- Under the Act the federal government developed and implemented Indian Residential School and Indian Day School policies that were meant to assimilate Indian children into Canadian society.
- Children were forced to “un-learn” their indigenous language, culture, heritage and beliefs and to re-learn a foreign language, religion and way of life.
- These policies remained in effect for over 100 years in Canada.
- The intergenerational impact of these destructive policies are still being addressed today.

Indian Control of Indian Education

- In 1972 the National Indian Brotherhood developed a position paper on behalf of Indian leaders to take back control of their children's education.
- On February 3, 1973, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development gave official recognition to the position paper and committed to implementing its various directives.
- The position paper states that:
“Unless a child learns about the forces which shape him: the history of his people, their values and customs, their language, he will never really know himself or his potential as a human being”

State of Emergency Respecting First Nation Languages

- A State of Emergency respecting First Nation Languages was declared by the Chiefs-in-Assembly, Resolution #35/98, at its 19th Annual General Assembly, June 25, 1998.
- The Resolution included the following Key Directives:
 - *“That the government of Canada act immediately to recognize, officially and legally, the First Nation languages of Canada, and to make a commitment to provide the resources necessary to reverse First Nation language loss and to prevent the extinction of our languages...”*
 - *“That the Government of Canada, in partnership with the Assembly of First Nations, establish a national First Nation Languages Foundation as a vehicle for the promotion of our languages, in keeping with the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples...”*
 - *“That the aforesaid national institution be mandated, utilizing our own First Nation educators and educational institutions, to facilitate the conduct of research and documentation of First Nation languages, the development of First Nation language immersion curricula, the training of First Nation language immersion teachers, and the promotion of First Nation languages in our communities and in mainstream education institutions...”*

Chiefs Committee on Languages

- The Chiefs Committee on Languages was established in 1998 by resolution of the Executive Committee of the Assembly of First Nations to address growing concerns over the loss of First Nation languages.

Mandate of Chiefs Committee on Languages

The mandate of the CCOL is to protect and maintain Aboriginal and treaty rights to languages and provide advice, guidance and recommendations to the National Chief, AFN Executive, Confederacy of Nations and Chiefs in Assembly on matters pertaining to First Nations languages.

Constitution Act 1982

Section 35.1. Entrenches our First Nation language rights in the Canadian Constitution.

“The existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed.”

Fiduciary Duty

- The Crown has historically ignored the linguistic rights of First Nations Peoples.
- The Supreme Court of Canada has declared; *“... the historic powers and responsibilities assumed by the Crown constituted the source of a fiduciary obligation... [There is] a general guiding principle for s.35(1). That is, the government has the responsibility to act in a fiduciary capacity with respect to Aboriginal Peoples.”*
R. v. Sparrow

Federal Obligations

- The Federal Government has a legal obligation through various treaties, and through legislation, to provide adequate resources that will enable us to exercise this right.

International Covenants

- Article 27 of The United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights provides, *“In those states in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language”* (Ratified by Canada, August 1976)
- Article 14 of the United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states, *“Indigenous Peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures...States shall take effective measures, whenever any right of indigenous peoples may be threatened, to ensure this right is protected...”*

First Nation Languages Foundation

- Since 1988 there have been numerous proposals to create a First Nation Languages Foundation.
- In 1988 during AFN's Aboriginal Language Policy Conference (Ottawa: January 1988) the Honourable David Crombie, Minister of Secretary of State, offered to create an Aboriginal Languages Institute.
- In 1989 the Secretary of State included Aboriginal languages in Bill C-37 an “Act to Establish a Heritage Language Institute” however, First Nations opposed inclusion in Bill C-37 on the grounds that Aboriginal languages have a unique position as founding nations, signatories to treaties and under federal legislation.

First Nation Languages Foundation (Bill C-269)

- On Nov. 29, 1989, a private members bill, Bill C-269 “An Act to Establish an Aboriginal Languages Foundation” was introduced by Ethel Blondin based on the ‘Kirkness Report.’ The Bill was not introduced to parliament.
- A lobby for Bill C-269 identified the need for updated research and the AFN undertook and documented additional research: “Toward Linguistic Justice.”
- In January 1991- An Aboriginal Language and Literacy Conference was held which once again recommended that an Aboriginal Languages & Literacy Foundation be established.

First Nation Languages Foundation (RCAP Recommendation)

- In 1996, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) recommended the endowment of \$100 million for an Aboriginal language foundation with contributions from the federal government, churches and other private and public donors.
- RCAP recommended that the foundation be developed over a two-year period by a federally planned body composed on a majority of Aboriginal representatives.
- RCAP further supported the concept of giving Aboriginal languages “official status”.

First Nation Languages Foundation (ALI Recommendation)

- In July 1997 the Aboriginal Languages Initiative was established as a result of Securing Our Future Together (Redbook II) which contained a commitment to “work with Aboriginal Peoples to establish a program to preserve, protect and teach Aboriginal languages and to ensure that these languages, which are vital components of Aboriginal culture and Canada’s heritage are kept alive for future generations.”
- In 2002 the ALI Evaluation recommended: The Department of Canadian Heritage should explore various delivery mechanisms, including options for an institution that could receive and distribute language funds from the federal government and the private sector, providing access to all Aboriginal language groups.

Lessons Learned from Aboriginal Languages Initiative (ALI)

- The AFN has coordinated and monitored the national ALI on behalf of First Nations since 1998.
- The ALI Evaluation in 2002 indicated that overall the initiative has been successful.

Lessons Learned from ALI: Positive Outcomes

- There are more language projects than prior to the ALI.
- Most informants viewed the ALI as an important first step.
- Heightened awareness of community and political leadership towards language revitalization.
- Increase interest in Aboriginal languages among Aboriginal politicians and community leadership.
- Links between language ability and economic opportunities. (ALI Evaluation 2002)

Lessons Learned from ALI – Negative Outcomes

- No broad national strategy and framework for language revitalization.
- No baseline data.
- Not enough resources for long-term initiatives.
- Serious delays in receiving annual funding.
- No multi-year funding arrangements.
- Lack of consultation with First Nations on guidelines and policy impacting on First Nations languages.

What should the entity be?

In 2002 – Sheila Copps, former Minister of Canadian Heritage announced the creation of a shared-governance entity that would be:

- financially accountable to the Minister of Canadian Heritage through the funding arrangements
- a not-for-profit corporation under the stewardship of the Aboriginal peoples.
- On July 13, 2000 at its Annual General Assembly, the Chiefs-in-Assembly ratified the two documents that the Chiefs Committee On Languages will present today.
- Draft – First Nations Languages and Foundation Act, 2000.
- National First Nation Language Strategy: A Time to Listen and the Time to Act, AFN Languages Sector, 2000.

First Nations Language Foundation

Our vision is:

- A First Nation Languages Foundation supported in enabling protective legislation such as that represented by the AFN Draft First Nation Languages and Foundation Act and supported by a “Declaration of Policy” by the Government of Canada on First Nation languages.

First Nation Language Policy of Canada

The Policy should include (but not be limited to) the following:

- recognize that First Nations Languages are the first languages of Canada;
- to protect and promote the right and freedom of First Nations to revitalize, maintain, and use their own languages;
- to recognize the inherent right of First Nations to take action on, and give official status to, their languages for the purpose of conducting their own internal affairs;
- to enter into agreements with First Nations Governments for the transfer of First Nations language programs and services to their jurisdiction...

1. What should the priorities of the entity be?

- Implement the First Nations Languages Policy of Canada.
- Affirm the unique status of First Nations languages.
- Encourage provincial, territorial and local authorities to take actions that promote and protect First Nations languages.
- Establish a First Nations Languages Foundation.
- To facilitate throughout Canada the acquisition, preservation, maintenance, retention, renewal and use of First Nation languages, that contribute to Canada's heritage, by responding to the needs and directions of First Nations communities.

Provide funding required to assist First Nations communities and their authorities, institutions and organizations to develop resources, and carrying out community based activities needed to protect, promote and revitalize their languages.

2. How can these priorities be achieved?

- A) Negotiate an agreement on the establishment of the entity.
- B) Enact enabling legislation on Aboriginal Languages to recognize the foundation:

i.e. “First Nations Language & Foundation Act”, copyright 2000, AFN.

- C) Implement the legislation and agreement.

3. What types of programs should it support?

The CCOL supports the various program needs identified by the First Nation communities and regions including:

- Documentation
- Orthography Development
- Dictionary Development
- Community Research Planning
- Language Family Collaboration
- Language Classes
- Traditional & Cultural Programming
- Master Apprenticeship Programming
- Community Resource Training

From a national perspective these are the long term strategic initiatives identified in the National First Nation Languages Strategy:

- National Clearinghouse on First Nation Languages
- Annual Symposium on First Nation Languages
- National First Nation Communication Strategy
- International Networking with Indigenous Language Groups
- National Research Initiatives on the State of First Nation Languages.

4. What can the entity do to support language & cultural preservation, revitalization and promotion in the Communities?

- A) Recognize that the First Nations People of Canada must take full control of the revitalization of First Nations languages.
- B) Promote the internal use of First Nations languages in First Nation communities.
- C) Encourage First Nation governments to pass by-laws in support of First Nation languages and establish community advisory boards.
- D) Resource First Nation communities to develop their own written and oral languages, develop and approve materials relevant to their languages and restore their own languages. (National First Nation Language Strategy: Recommendations)

The “entity” or foundation is viewed as a first step for the Federal Government to recognize its responsibility to revitalize and preserve First Nation languages and cultures.

National First Nations Language Strategy

“A Time To Listen and The Time To Act”

- A National Strategy was developed by the Chiefs Committee on Languages, Technical Committee on Languages and the AFN Languages Secretariat.
- The National Strategy was adopted by the Chiefs in Assembly, 21st Annual General Assembly, July 13, 2000.

The Goals of the National First Nations Languages Strategy

- To establish an endowed First Nations Language Foundation;
- To legislate First Nation languages as official languages;
- To document First Nation languages;
- To assist in professional development and certification of fluent First Nation language speakers, teachers and elders;

- To ensure community promotion and use of First Nation languages;
- To establish a National First Nations Clearinghouse for the development of curriculum, materials and instructional aids.

Recommendation 3

- The Assembly of First Nations National Chief and Executive Committee reaffirms the establishment of a First Nations Language Foundation for language planning initiatives and language retention activities. The Foundation will facilitate throughout Canada the acquisition, preservation, maintenance, retention, renewal and use of First Nation languages, that contribute to Canada’s heritage, by responding to the needs and directions of First Nation communities at the grassroots level...”

**Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami
Submission to Ministerial
Task Force on Aboriginal
Languages & Cultures**

August 26, 2004

The Inuit language, Inuktitut.

Δ i	▷ u	◁ a	
Λ pi	> pu	< pa	◁ p
∩ ti	∩ tu	∩ ta	∩ t
∩ ki	∩ ku	∩ ka	∩ k
∩ gi	∩ gu	∩ ga	∩ g
∩ mi	∩ mu	∩ ma	∩ m
∩ ni	∩ nu	∩ na	∩ n
∩ si	∩ su	∩ sa	∩ s
∩ li	∩ lu	∩ la	∩ l
∩ ji	∩ ju	∩ ja	∩ j
∩ vi	∩ vu	∩ va	∩ v
∩ ri	∩ ru	∩ ra	∩ r
∩ qi	∩ qu	∩ qa	∩ q
∩ ngi	∩ ngu	∩ nga	∩ ng
∩ kli	∩ klu	∩ kla	∩ kd

How Inuk is Canada?



Inuit regions make up 1/3 of Canada's landmass.

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK)

- Represents Inuit in Canada.
- The board includes representation from each of the four Inuit land-claim settlements in Canada; Inuit women; Inuit youth; Canadian circumpolar Inuit; and a President.

ITK Priorities

- Inuit-Specific Policies
- Housing (approximately 8000 units needed to meet national standard)
- Health Renewal (access)
- Economic Development / Job Creation
- Environmental Protection
- Language & Culture

Statistics

- The use of Inuktitut in Inuit households remains very strong, however there is a noticeable decline in the use of Inuktitut.
 - APS 1996, 68% Inuit used Inuktitut most often
 - APS 2001, 64% Inuit used Inuktitut most often

National Inuit Language Committee (NILC)

- The NILC is made of language technicians, each working on initiatives that preserve and strengthen Inuktitut in their respective region.
- The NILC provides expertise on all aspects of Inuktitut.

ITK and NILC

- ITK has a coordinating role with the NILC.
 - Dialect/regional specific work.
 - National Forum.

Inuit involvement with the Task Force

- Prior to Inuit becoming involved with the ALCC Task Force, Inuit agreed that in order to have Inuit participate the following principles should guide the process....

Inuit Principles

- Inuit to have equal say in governance of funds (equal to other parties);
- Inuit to get a guarantee of 15% of the funds (similar to the current ALI allocation where Inuit get about 14.5% of the funds);
- Inuit to have a separate process for selecting language initiatives to support Inuktitut;
- Inuit not obliged to join National language initiative but may do so if Inuit interests are met within a national context.

What should the priorities of the organization be?

- Undertake research and archive pertinent material and resources.
- Promote Aboriginal languages and culture.
- Learn from other cultures and language groups.
- Ensure that the ALCC is accessible to all Inuit.

How can these priorities be achieved?

- There is a need for the ALCC to be housed in a physical building, and not to be a virtual centre.
- Caution should be taken that the funding for ALCC doesn't end up in the capital costs of construction and maintenance of a building.
- Existing institutions and/or organizations should be utilized to house ALCC.
- Inuit have to have ongoing input into the design and operation of the ALCC.

What types of programs should it support?

- Community-based.
- Community accessible.
- Language and cultural learning.
- Language development.
- Continuation of a program like ALI with more resources.
- Resources for communities to develop programs that meet their needs.

What can it do to support language and cultural preservation, revitalization and promotion in the communities?

- In addition to electronic materials and tools, Inuit communities need hard copies of materials and tools as not all communities have access to the Internet or have the financial resources to be connected.
- One-stop shopping for information on best practices – learn from others, but don't duplicate and stop re-inventing the wheel.
- Ensure that there are enough resources to achieve our goals.
- Advocating for language preservation, revitalization and promotion.
- Have research readily available.
- Develop legislation that promotes Aboriginal languages and that will encourage professions, such as Teaching, to use culturally appropriate material.
- Make curriculum generic, so that it is inclusive of all Aboriginal languages and cultures. However, ensure that it is flexible, so that it can be regionalize.

Inuit Specific

- Inuit are constitutionally recognized as a distinct aboriginal group with its own language, culture, and organizations that are very different from other aboriginal groups.
- Inuit are very much in favor of a continuation of an initiative like ALI... however...
 - Inuit need initiatives that respect the uniqueness of the culture, people and environment. The federal government has to stop homogenizing aboriginal cultures in its initiatives.

Métis National Council Submission to Ministerial Task Force on Aboriginal Languages & Cultures

August 26, 2004

Tanché, Bonjour, Good Afternoon... Chair, Task Force members...

With me is President Clément Chartier and Kathy Hodgson-Smith, Interim Executive Director of the Métis National Council.

I wish to thank you for inviting us to speak to you today... on a subject which is of vital concern to the Métis Nation, that is, the preservation of our languages and culture. Indeed, our object must be more than simply preservation. Ultimately we must aim at creating conditions where the languages and cultures of the first inhabitants of this land not only survive, but thrive.

I must confess that the Métis National Council had some reservations about appearing before this Task Force. Your stated purpose is to elaborate the structure of an Aboriginal Languages and Cultures Centre that the Métis National Council has opposed from the very beginning and which our Board of Governors, as of last month, continues to oppose. In your letter of invitation you also stated that you wish to receive our views on the Task Force's national strategy, which unfortunately was not provided to us, so we cannot make comment on that. Perhaps we can do so at a future sitting of the Task Force.

We also fear that federal officials will control your report to serve their policy purposes. This was our experience when we, together with the Assembly of First Nations and the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, negotiated the Terms of Reference for this Task Force last year: the Terms of Reference that were presented to you were not the ones we had developed, but ones which federal officials designed. This should be made clear for the record.

We have the sense that many of the key decisions regarding the federal role in maintaining and enhancing Aboriginal languages may already have been made for us. We hope that is not the case, and that you will be free to write your interim report, and eventually your final report, which accurately reflects the perspectives of each of the three Aboriginal peoples of Canada, through their respective governments.

On April 19th, 2004, the Prime Minister held a Round Table with Aboriginal leaders in Ottawa. He made

a commitment at that time that never again would policy be made by federal officials, and Aboriginal leaders simply informed of these decisions after the fact. The Métis National Council takes the Prime Minister at his word.

This sets the context for our remarks to you today.

The Key Role of Culture and Language in Métis Nation Building

There is a Métis Nation.

Métis are not "half-Indians".

Our people originally had Indian ancestry, to be sure, but there is more to being Métis than that. The Métis coalesced into a distinct people in the Old Northwest, well before Confederation or the take-over of the Northwest by Canada. We are a new Nation – a unique nation – a people original to what is now known as North America. Our Homeland roughly includes the three prairie provinces, and parts of Ontario, British Columbia, the Northwest Territories, and the northern United States.

You will understand nothing about the Métis unless you appreciate the central role that national identity plays in defining who we are. That national identity is founded, first, on a history of doing things together; and second, on a common culture that makes us different than either First Nations or Europeans.

Since the 1870s, it is safe to say that Métis history has been dominated by the overriding imperative of maintaining and protecting our national identity and heritage in the face of persistent and overwhelming pressures from the federal government and society at large to deny our existence as a distinct people. Nation building has emerged as the central vehicle for our survival as a people, and as an expression of our right of self-determination. We survive because we stick together – as families, as communities and, above all, through our national and provincial representative governments.

Our people do not fit the organizational/governmental paradigm associated with the First Nations peoples. First Nations peoples have land bases – normally called "reserves" – which each have their own government. Métis do not have reserves. Our people were dispossessed from our lands through the biggest government sponsored swindle visited upon an Aboriginal people in what is now known as Canada. Only in Alberta has any land been set aside by that province specifically for Métis.

The vast majority of Métis live either in small rural and remote communities, primarily in the northern reaches of the former Métis homeland, or in the urban centres of mainstream Canada, both large and small.

The form of organization that best gives expression to our reality is province-wide representative organizations, now emerging as governments. In this, we are very different from First Nations. It is critically important for the federal government and this Task Force to understand that we do not fit the First Nations governance paradigm. We are constantly bombarded with federal directives for “community-based” programming. However, this approach reaches a small minority of Métis living in rural communities where the majority of inhabitants happen to be Métis. If you want to reach the general Métis population, you have to deal with our provincial representative governments. This is how we are structured.

I mentioned that a common culture is one of the central foundations of our national identity. Where ever Metis have organized for collective purposes, their organizations have placed priority on Metis culture and cultural activities. This is key to the nation-building efforts to which I referred earlier. For us, there can be no separation between culture on one hand and political life of the community on the other. They go hand-in-hand.

This is why the Metis so strongly oppose any attempt by the federal government to usurp our responsibilities for the cultural well-being of our people – including the development of policy on languages and culture of the Metis Nation. If you want to help the Metis, you must give us the tools to promote our culture and preserve and enhance the use of our original languages. However, it would be wrong for the federal government to believe that it can do this for us.

Metis and Aboriginal Languages

- Historically, our people spoke many languages – French, English, Cree, Sauteaux, Dene – reflecting our mixed heritage.
- Our people also developed our own unique language: Michif – a cross between French and Cree. Michif uses French nouns, but Cree syntax and verbs.
- In 2000, the Métis National Council adopted Michif as the National Language of the Métis Nation
- However, it would be fair to say that more Metis today speak Cree, Sauteaux or Dene than Michif
- The number of fluent Michif speakers left is hard to calculate but is likely no more than 1000, with the

majority being elderly and living either in Manitoba, Saskatchewan or North Dakota.

- Consequently, Métis have a two fold interest in Aboriginal language policy:
 - A) to protect, enhance and promote the use of Michif, our national language; and
 - B) to access support for other Aboriginal languages spoken by our people.
- It is therefore, critical to recognize that not all Aboriginal languages are in the same circumstances: with many other Aboriginal languages, you still have a reasonably large core of elders upon whom you can rely to transmit the language to youth – Michif does not have that luxury. The work required to rescue the language, let alone propagate it, is immense.
- It must also be recognized that our people do not have access to First Nation instruction in what are traditionally regarded as First Nation languages. Efforts must be made to ensure that Métis also have access to language support for Cree, Sauteaux and Dene.

Conditions for Successful Language Policy

- 1) There is a need for a Long Term Strategy: we have to develop a plan. Aboriginal languages have been eroded over centuries – this cannot be repaired in a year – long term is required – the Métis National Council and its Governing Members are working on such a plan for Michif through the Michif Language Working Group at the national level
- 2) Multi-Year Funding Agreements are necessary to implement such a strategy – the one-year approach is not suited to long term planning
- 3) Funding must be sufficient – the Métis National Council receives only \$47,000 per year to foster Michif – Governing Members from \$125,000 to less than \$50,000 – this is not sufficient
- 4) Funding must flow – cannot be subject to the type of interruptions which have become characteristic of PCH Aboriginal programs – this is why the Métis National Council would support Aboriginal language program away from PCH – for the Métis. We would prefer funding to flow from the Federal Interlocutors Office.
- 5) There must be specific funding – a set aside – for Métis.
- 6) Funding channels must respect our governance structures – this is the only way to reach the Métis population as a whole – and recognize the distinctive reality of Métis relative to First Nations and Inuit

Position on the proposed Aboriginal Centre

- Pan-Aboriginal approaches do not work for Métis – nor do they respect our governance structures (e.g. NAHO)
- The ALI had a set aside for Métis to be used for Michif – this would be lost
- The ALI gave us some flexibility in terms of policy and program development – this would now be usurped by a bureaucracy over which we would have no control
- Danger that a significant proportion of new resources announced in December 2002 would be diverted to supporting a bureaucracy to process applications (such as occurred with the AHF)

Conclusions

- The Métis National Council will be interested in reviewing your interim report, and the national strategy referred to in your letter of invitation.
- But what we are really looking for is the creation of a Partnership with the federal government on how to promote, protect and enhance Métis languages and culture
- This calls for a Métis specific approach and dialogue with the Government of Canada
- It calls on the federal government to respect who we are and treat with us on a nation-to-nation or government-to-government basis. In this connection, we would probably recommend adopting the rather successful relationship we have with Human Resources and Skills Development, through our National Accord.

- If we could establish and solidify that dialogue, then we would not have to rely on this Task Force to try to develop policy for us
- The key is to provide us with the tools to allow us to do it ourselves, based on our proposed 10 year strategy. This of course includes the securing on not only dedicated funding, but in fact, adequate fiscal resources.
- We will also address this issue within our current dialogue with the federal government which we hope will end up in a Framework Agreement, which will address federal legislation which recognizes the Métis Nation, and amongst other things, provides for legislative protection, preservation and enhancement of the use of the Michif language.
- FINALLY, the key to our success is for the government of Canada to use the *Constitution Act, 1982* as the foundation upon which to build relationships with the Aboriginal Peoples within Canada, the Métis, Indian and Inuit peoples. These peoples have their own governments, mandates, structures, and languages. That is with whom the relationships must be. Those are the governmental authorities for their respective peoples.

THANK YOU.



PART VI:
WHAT WE HEARD IN THE
CONSULTATIONS

*If you lose the language the Creator gave you, you won't be able
to speak from your heart to Him.*

PART VI: What We Heard in the Consultations

Let us have a vision that when we meet the Creator we can stand before him with pride and dignity as warriors for our languages.

Elder Shirley Williams of the Wikwemikong Nation, Manitoulin Island

The first section summarizes what our Elders said to us during the crucial meeting held with them in Winnipeg, Manitoba, on May 14, 2004. We are deeply indebted to them, and to other Elders we met across Canada, for their support and guidance. These Elders are listed in Appendix C. The second section summarizes what the people said during consultation sessions held across the country after our initial meeting with the Elders. These community consultations not only expanded on the advice from the Elders, but also proposed and developed the concept of a National Language Organization. Both sections include input and advice from the Circle of Experts.

What Our Elders Said

As described earlier in this report, the comments and advice provided by the Elders during the Winnipeg meeting are grouped under four headings: Where We Are Now; Ethics and Concepts; Personal Practices; and Institutional and Governmental Actions. They are summarized below.

Where We Are Now

The Elders noted that valuing our First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages is an enormous challenge; however, we have approached a crossroads, where choices must be made. We must either resolve to protect our languages to keep them alive in our homes and communities or we must accept that our languages will be lost to our grandchildren and their children. We cannot expect schools to keep them alive for us with the limited time and resources that are made available to our languages. Teachers struggle with inadequate classroom space and even fewer resources; and without a curricula, teachers find themselves struggling to plan, prepare resources and teach at the same time.

The Elders voiced particular concern for communities where it is especially difficult for First Nation, Inuit and Métis people to speak their languages and to practise and live their cultures. This is notably the case in certain First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities and urban centres where our people are struggling with alcohol and drug abuse. Elders stressed that people in these communities must be provided with the opportunity to access funding

resources, so as to bring hope where there is hopelessness through the vehicle of language and cultural activities.

Many of the Elders attributed the loss of traditional languages and cultures to the residential school system, which utterly devalued and deliberately undermined them. The negative experiences of those who attended these schools left large numbers afraid to use their languages and ashamed of who they are as First Nation, Inuit and Métis people. The result, as Elder Mona Jules noted, is that many former students simply refused to speak their own languages or to pass them on to their own children: “Our languages are dying because of the shame instilled in our young people who are now Elders.” Elder Julianna Courchene echoed these comments, noting that despite the fact that many schools now teach our languages, these efforts often go unsupported in the home:

Parents see no importance in providing the language, so children don't see the importance of learning. When they learn in school, there is no one at home to support what they learn.

One result is that the loss of language has reversed traditional family relations to some extent. Today, young people typically know English or French better than their parents or grandparents, who often rely on their children's language skills. Elder Theo Sanderson elaborated on this: “In our community, a lot of youth speak English and the parents want to learn it too — it should be the other way around, with the parents teaching the youth their language.” His comments were reinforced by Elder Mona Jules: “Grandparents were learning the language to communicate with their grandchildren, when it should be the other way around.”

In this context the Elders emphasized the importance of developing support mechanisms that will help youth to learn their traditional languages, take pride in their cultures and raise their self-esteem. Elders asked that we listen carefully to the voices of youth to understand their concerns and hear their needs, and then to draw on our own spiritual guidance to help them. Children need the opportunity to be proud of who they are and to learn their traditional cultures so that they can be nurtured by the essence and power of our spirituality. Elder Mona Jules described some of what has been lost in this fast-paced world, in which people are increasingly cut off from their own traditions:

Our children are now born in hospitals and are not delivered by midwives or

grandmothers. In the past, they were born at home and could hear the language of the grandmothers. They were placed in baskets and could smell the medicine water. They were surrounded by their culture. In the first hour, they had a sense of who they were.

Finally, the Elders pointed out that action must be taken now to preserve and strengthen traditional languages and cultures and that they should be involved. Elder Ted Chartrand described Elders as “the best sources of languages... in the communities where they grew.” That being said, however, Elders repeatedly reminded us that they are an exhaustible resource. In this regard, Elder Ollie Itinnuar stated bluntly:

Those of us who are Elders... know that in 10–15 years, there will not be Elders who are as fluent in their languages as we are. People are dying at a faster rate than they used to be... We’re running against time, because we want to deal with this while there are still fluent speakers.

Ethics and Concepts

One of the most important points made by the Elders was that language, culture, spiritual values and our sense of identity are inseparable concepts. Elder Shirley Williams stated this emphatically as follows:

Language and culture cannot be separate from each other — if they are, the language only becomes a tool, a thing... Our language and culture are our identity and tell us who we are, where we came from and where we are going.

Languages are therefore more than just ordered systems of words. Culture animates language. A language cannot simply be stored in books or recorded in other forms. Although writings and recordings are important as a supplemental resource for the preservation of languages, especially for languages that are spoken only by a very few, language must be kept alive by active, daily use. It must be preserved as a dynamic language by people who speak it. As an Elder stated:

We don’t need to institutionalize our language into extinction. We need to practise the living organism of language that resides in each of us... I don’t want to leave my children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren the ability to ask a bureaucrat

to help them retain their language — I want to leave them their language.

Another remarked on the manner in which we speak and express ourselves, observing that this is grounded in the ethics and values of our cultures. She gave the example of a conversation with her brother concerning a conflict between two groups of people. In keeping with the ethics and values of their culture, those involved in the conflict were not identified. This was to ensure that simply by talking about the conflict, she and her brother did not contribute to its escalation.

To preserve our languages, the Elders advised, we must teach these languages. Education, they pointed out, should be about learning, rather than forgetting, and about empowerment, rather than loss. An Elder shared the advice that her father gave her and her siblings when they first went to residential school:

My mother did not speak English and my father said to us three younger ones that if we didn’t hold onto our language and practise it all the time, we wouldn’t be able to communicate with our mother and make her understand. He also said that he sent us to the school, not to forget our ways, but to learn what they could teach. He said to take what we were taught and to combine it with what we knew and to make it work for us.

To educate and empower our children, we need to think carefully about both what and how we teach them. Elder Shirley Morven reminded Task Force members that the world is more complicated now and that teaching children has to recognize this reality:

Today we live in a culture that is combined mainstream and Aboriginal. When we teach our children, we have to focus on the values that we are teaching them — to reap and run or to leave an invisible footprint on our territories.

These statements are powerful. Again we are reminded that we, too, share in the responsibility to teach language, not only through ceremony, but also using every strategy we can to give it life and power.

Personal Practices

The Elders proposed specific actions that individuals can take to preserve and strengthen First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages and cultures. Here are some of their suggestions:

1. Do not forget our languages

We should begin our day with prayer; as the sun rises, we give thanks for another day. We give thanks for the land and all the creatures who share it with us. Our children and grandchildren must hear it so they don't forget it, and they too will embrace the words, and they too will echo these in prayer.

2. Speak and write our languages

We live in a world where preservation has become an important tool. While we have spoken about the importance of learning to speak our language, it is also important to equip our children and grandchildren with the tools to write our languages so that they can use them to learn abstract concepts in a world filled with technology.

3. Teach and learn our languages

There is opportunity to teach and learn language all around us. It does not, in every instance, require a classroom to learn. The voice is a powerful tool. It has the power to pray, it has the power to move people to action, to injure, to empower, to sing and to teach. We teach by our actions, by modelling those behaviours that construct knowledge through speech. Our kitchens can become havens for learning. We must look beyond the four walls of classrooms if we truly desire to revitalize our languages.

4. Respect each other's dialects: Do not ridicule how others speak

Humour exists in all of us and is a particularly strong aspect of First Nation, Inuit and Métis cultures. In the face of tragic situations, we have often risen from the depths of sadness by laughing at ourselves and at each other, not maliciously, but in a way that reflects on our imperfections openly and honestly.

However, at the same time, we have ridiculed one another for mispronouncing words or phrases when a person is trying to learn one of our languages. Ridiculed into feeling embarrassed, we do not try again. We must be mindful to encourage those who make concerted efforts to speak and to give them praise for wanting to learn.

5. Focus on young people

Young people are the hope of our future. They must not only be nurtured to embrace and learn their languages and cultures, but also be mentored to embrace both worlds and to equip themselves with the tools needed to function in both worlds. Language and culture provide the tools to build

good character — a character that emulates the values of respect, humility, kindness, empathy and good leadership. Our way strives to create the best in our people.

6. Starting with our own homes, strengthen the will of the people to bring back our languages

Our homes are the cradles for our children and grandchildren. They should be filled with the lingering smell of sweet grass, sage, tobacco or cedar or with the light of our qulliq. Our fires should be kept burning, with language as the fuel. In other words, we must practise our living culture in our homes; this is where everything should begin. All other external situations should reinforce what is practised at home.

7. Work together to build a foundation for our peoples

A tremendous amount of work has been done by many people over the last 40 years. Some have worked quietly in the background and others have taken a more direct leadership role to raise awareness of the state of our languages and our cultures. No one person can lay claim to having done it all on his or her own. Many have carried the torch, and many of those early crusaders have passed on to the spirit world. Their memories and their work live on in the work we do today. Through this initiative, we hope their efforts and voices will not have been in vain.

Through common challenges, we have been brought together as nations, to work together to create that foundation of hope that our First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages will once again take their rightful place in this country. We are the First Peoples — our languages and cultures are the first languages and cultures of this country and must be accorded that status at every level of government, in the community and in our homes.

8. Speak with a united voice — although we have different languages, we seek one and the same thing

Our voices have been brought together by a common need — one that speaks of the preservation, revitalization and maintenance of all First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages and cultures. Our national political organizations must speak with a united voice. Together, they must call to action all governments, communities, institutions and organizations and urge all peoples to support our efforts to create partnerships and support mechanisms to encourage First Nation, Inuit and Métis linguistic and cultural initiatives.

We must not be deterred by the actions of those who may wish to see this endeavour fail.

Institutional and Governmental Actions

Aside from offering the advice and comments already described above, the Elders also gave quite specific directions on the measures that they believe ought to be taken by educational institutions and various levels of government to preserve and strengthen First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages and cultures.

In terms of educational institutions (including early childhood education centres, public schools, post-secondary institutions and community-based and continuing education programs), they urged educators to focus on several key areas, which have been summarized as follows:

1. Consider various environments for offering training programs

- Provide immersion schools and bilingual schools.
- Develop cultural camps that provide an immersion experience in language, culture and traditional ways of living, such as the skills required to live on the land.
- Establish language nests, in which younger people (from infants to five-year-olds) are joined by Elders and where only traditional languages are spoken.
- Establish programs to provide urban First Nation, Inuit and Métis people with opportunities to learn their languages and cultures.
- Establish similar programs to give First Nation, Inuit and Métis people living off-reserve in towns or other small communities opportunities to learn their languages and cultures. For example, the University College of the North, which is being established in northern Manitoba, will integrate traditional knowledge into a range of programs.

2. Consider that First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples have control over the development of a language curriculum

- Make language and linguistic studies mandatory in the public education system for all grades at all levels.
- Ensure that where First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages are offered as part of a school program, an adequate number of hours are allocated. In the public education system this should be at minimum one hour a day, rather than one and a half hours per week. Languages should be integrated into all strands of instruction, such

as language arts, social studies and spiritual arts.

- Establish language and cultural courses and programs (including post-secondary degree programs in First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages) that value traditional languages, cultures and people. This would create a support base for teachers to learn languages as part of their professional development.

3. Develop the necessary educational resources

- Develop language curricula, language books and other resources for language teachers. Allow First Nation, Inuit and Métis educators who are proficient in languages to work with communities to influence local adaptive teaching strategies in their teaching resource development.
- Develop promotional and supplemental materials to support the dynamic everyday spoken language.
- Use available technology (e.g., the Internet, e-mail and audio recording) to share and bank languages. Create CD-ROMs and interactive video programs.
- Conduct ongoing language and cultural research that addresses the needs of specific professions, such as medicine, law and engineering, while at all times exercising and respecting protocol guidelines.
- Involve young people in language preservation by inviting them to be part of research projects and by creating opportunities for them to both study and experience languages and culture. Create leadership opportunities for young people wherever possible.

4. Develop and draw on all possible sources for training

- Establish language mentoring programs in which apprentices and students can work together, speaking only their traditional language for 200–300 hours per year.
- Train First Nation, Inuit and Métis language teachers.
- Recognize and formally acknowledge Elders' ability to teach languages and the knowledge they possess and accord them appropriate professional recognition.

The Elders also suggested a number of ways in which governments might demonstrate the depth of their commitment to preserve and strengthen First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages and cultures. These are as follows:

1. Recognize the value of traditional languages and cultures

- Recognize and acknowledge First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages as dynamic modern languages, rather than heritage languages. In the words of one Elder, expressing a commonly held viewpoint, “the only way to protect and preserve Aboriginal languages is to enshrine languages in the Canadian Constitution at the same level as English and French... There is no other way to protect and preserve them.” Without “equality for all languages” in Canada, we run the risk of “politicizing languages into extinction.” As an Elder from Rankin Inlet added, “If our languages were entrenched [in the Canadian Constitution], our identities as Aboriginal people would also be recognized.”

2. Support the development of infrastructures to preserve and strengthen languages

- Support the development of a strategic plan to revitalize First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages.
- Establish and enforce standards for linguistic and cultural programs.
- Ensure that the funding and resources intended to support First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages and cultures actually go to First Nation, Inuit and Métis people and communities.
- Preserve the cultural authority of First Nation, Inuit and Métis people when linguistic and cultural programs and research are funded, by ensuring that those involved with the project have the cultural knowledge and understanding to work respectfully and productively with a particular First Nation, Inuit or Métis culture or community.
- Support the protection of traditional knowledge and spirituality as intellectual property.
- Support the development of community-based centres for learning languages and cultures. The centres should be governed by boards that include Elders and other community members. The centres could provide a range of supports, including teaching resources, reading programs, culture camps and archives of local history. These centres should be located in the communities of the languages.
- First Nations should establish language laws that require Chiefs, council members and employees to know their traditional languages.
- First Nations should work to standardize their written languages so that the languages will be easier to understand and learn.

3. Support resource development, including lifestyles that foster language retention

- Provide funding to support the development and distribution of teaching resources, technology and research materials.
- Provide funding to support research on traditional languages, cultures and knowledge, such as healing knowledge.
- Provide appropriate financial assistance to First Nation, Inuit and Métis people who choose to live a traditional lifestyle, similar to the subsidies currently available to farmers.
- Provide appropriate financial support to young people who want to learn the necessary skills to live traditionally or live on the land, such as by summer and winter fishing and trapping, preparing traditional foods, conducting spiritual practices and ceremonies, and using their traditional languages. This financial support should be similar to that currently available to university students.

What the People Said

A national program to respond to First Nation, Inuit and Métis language needs must reflect community concerns and priorities. The following section summarizes the views expressed to the Task Force by First Nation, Inuit and Métis community members over a nine-month period, during which 16 consultation sessions were held in various locations across Canada.

The Role of First Nation Languages

All across Canada, First Nation, Inuit and Métis participants spoke of the vital connection they experienced between themselves, the land and the Creator and of the need they felt to give voice to, and to honour, that connection in their own way, using their own languages. In this context, many participants stated that the ability to speak one’s own language helped people to understand who they are in relation to themselves, to their families, to their communities and to Creation.

The importance of the relationship to the Creator was an important theme. As Ken Goodwill of the Standing Buffalo First Nation in Saskatchewan explained, the connection between sacred ceremonies and one’s language is a fundamental part of a person’s relationship to the universe and to the Creator:

The language is our history, the tribal memory and the basis for our world view. In the case of Dakota speaking people,

it is very much how we see things spiritually and how we react to things around us... In our concept of the universe, you can beseech the universe and the universe responds... We have a sense that all of Creation has a spirit and energy that is transferable from person to person, person to animal, and person to plant or tree. These are part of our world view. While all of it can be explained in English, it is in the Dakota languages.

Other participants echoed this sentiment many times. For instance, the Squamish consultation focused as follows on the direct connection with the Creator established by one's own language:

... language and culture are not only words or syllables, but... have spiritual links to the Creator. When I could pray in my own language it was like the first breath I could take after being on a life support respirator. Language and culture are an umbilical cord to the Creator.

There was a shared sentiment among those attending the consultation sessions that when a First Nation, Inuit or Métis person enters the next life, they should be able to greet the Creator in their own language and tell the Creator their name. Alex Crowchild, an Elder of Tsuu T'ina Nation, explained this in the Calgary consultation:

... the reason language is important is because of the ceremonies. Six hundred to 700 years ago, there were no Englishmen here. The spirits of those ceremonies that have gone before us spoke the language. We still have our ceremonies, the sun dances, the ring lodges, the night lodges, the sweat lodges. In all of these, our spiritual leaders still communicate with the spirits and those spirits can only speak the language that was there before. That is how important the language is. If it is lost, you lose your way of life.

Participants also stressed that focusing on the ceremonies and spirituality will facilitate growth, increase self-esteem, familiarize the people with their culture, and facilitate healing in communities. Many also spoke of language and culture as being intertwined and inseparable and of how both are linked to the use and occupancy of traditional lands. Teaching one without the other would result in a dilution or loss of their unique world views and an incomplete understanding of how they relate to and use their lands.

Participants from all language groups spoke with sadness of the threatened loss of their languages. It was a commonly held view that when language and culture are ignored or lost, the individual and the wider community experience cultural and spiritual poverty. A number of Elders pointed to the moral teachings inherent in language and culture. They said that, without those moral teachings, many First Nation, Inuit and Métis people become involved in substance abuse and conduct themselves in ways that are harmful to their communities, families and themselves. An Elder from Rankin Inlet in Nunavut expressed concern that there are many young people who have not been taught their language as young children and who then go to school where they learn English. Too often these young people drop out of school early and as a result are not fluent in either language. They come to be adrift between languages and cultures.

Many participants voiced their conviction that the loss of languages can be attributed in good part to colonization and Canada's assimilation policies, particularly when children were taken from their communities and placed in distant residential schools where they were systematically punished for speaking their languages. Voicing the experiences of countless others, an individual talked with profound sadness of having been taken away and being kept in the residential school for six years before returning to her family, at which point she was no longer fluent in her language. Others spoke of the lasting impact on the children of residential school survivors who were not taught their languages, so that they would be spared the suffering their parents underwent.

Loss of languages was also attributed to complacency on the part of individuals and institutions at all levels, particularly of the provincial, territorial and federal governments. In terms of government, many noted that even some First Nation, Inuit and Métis governments give very little attention or support to languages. It was pointed out, however, that First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities have many competing priorities and that when communities do not have enough housing for their people, for example, it is difficult to fund language programs.

Many participants spoke more broadly of their distress at the lack of respect accorded to their languages and of the fact that their languages are often viewed as historic remnants of the past, rather than as living languages, relevant to the present. As a result, individual First Nation, Inuit or Métis people often choose not to use their languages, despite being fluent, or choose not to develop the skills needed to become fluent. This was identified as a particular concern in Nunavut, where

many young people understand the language yet do not choose to use it. Other youth choose not to learn it at all. As pointed out by a participant from Saskatchewan, “Our youth do not value our languages. They say language is not part of their world.”

A recurring theme among participants was the importance of revitalizing languages. This was seen as a means of healing at an individual and community level. It was also seen as a means of reconnecting with the land, because of its central importance in the structure of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages. Despite the critical state of many languages, participants expressed an unwavering commitment to take the necessary steps to revitalize all of our many languages. Participants emphasized that all languages are sacred and that a concerted effort should be made to ensure that future generations benefit from the knowledge embodied by these languages. The fact that some communities may have very few fluent speakers should not preclude them from receiving support to revive their languages.

Participants in the consultations made many recommendations on what steps should be taken to assist communities in revitalizing their languages. The following section examines their views in detail. These views form the basis for the Task Force’s recommendations.

Status of First Nation, Inuit and Métis Languages

In consultations across Canada, the Task Force heard that, as the original languages of Canada, First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages must be accorded the same recognition and respect as English and French. It was a widely held view that the creation of federal legislation that recognizes this fact would be one of the most important outcomes of the Task Force’s work. Many referred to Canada’s special relationship with First Nations, as reflected in treaties and in the *Indian Act*. They also referred to Aboriginal rights and title decisions by the courts and to the recognition and affirmation of Aboriginal rights in section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* as the bases for language legislation.

Many also held the view that legislation should not only acknowledge the place of First Nation, Métis and Inuit languages in Canada’s social fabric, but also provide for funding for languages on the same footing as English and French, the current official languages. In the Cambridge Bay consultation session, for instance, reference was made to inequities in language funding. Despite the fact that Inuktitut is an official language of Nunavut and the language of 72% of its people, under the Canada–

Northwest Territories Cooperation Agreement, the participants said that \$3,000 is provided per Francophone person to deliver services in French, whereas only \$55 per person is provided to deliver services in Inuktitut. Similar frustration was expressed in other consultations. In Saskatchewan, language educators contrasted the approximately \$43 million provided for French language education with the \$330,000 provided for First Nation languages, in a province where there are far more people who speak First Nation languages than there are people who speak French.

In further discussions on legislation, the issue of traditional knowledge was raised. It was recommended that legislative protection should apply not only to languages, but also to intellectual property rights. Many participants voiced their concern with sharing their languages and teaching practices via technology, without any means of protecting them from being used in inappropriate ways. Intellectual property rights were seen as very important to maintaining control over the revitalization of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages. In the interim, it was suggested, the United Nations protocol on intellectual property should be adopted to ensure protection against the inappropriate use of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages and cultures.

Need for a Community-Driven Revitalization Strategy

Many explained that language is the breath of the community; it keeps the community alive and connects all people in a web of relations. In short, it is the community that must play a central role in revitalization. *There was broad consensus that it is the communities that must come together to identify priorities and develop plans to revitalize their languages.*

Many stated that language revitalization could be successful only if the community as a whole makes a commitment to support such an initiative. Planning should therefore be driven by the needs and will of each community. The understanding of the meaning of community should be broad enough to incorporate every type of community in which First Nation, Inuit and Métis people find themselves. It was a commonly held view that involvement and commitment by all community members is necessary to ensure that any language revitalization plan is realistic and achievable. All age groups need to be involved: youth, Elders, adults and young children all need to have a voice.

It was recognized that plans would vary from community to community, depending on the state of the language and the resources available in each. Some

languages may have a large numbers of speakers and be widely spoken; here, efforts would focus on maintaining and expanding the language. In other communities, only a few elderly speakers may be remaining; efforts here would need to concentrate on preserving the language.

Many also linked language revitalization to individual and collective healing. It is through learning and speaking the language that intergenerational communication can be achieved, and this communication could be the doorway to many positive outcomes, including the healing of the community itself. It is not only the youth who need to feel empowered by the language, but also the Elders, who may have been taught at a young age that it is shameful to speak their language. As well, some community members know the language and are afraid to speak it. One participant stated in this regard:

Empower the nonspeakers. They are a powerful force because they feel the pain... Stop the superiority and distinguishing between the people who speak and the people who don't speak. The people who do not speak the language should not be made to feel ashamed, as it is not their fault. It is important not to ridicule those learning the language, as they need to feel encouraged.

In all consultation sessions, the Task Force heard the urgent call for immediate action to stem the loss of languages, as many are on the brink of extinction. It was pointed out that First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages have endured at least a century-long assault and neglect. Therefore, revitalizing the language is a 100-year project and should not be rushed. Nonetheless, short-term goals should be set, and projects should begin immediately. The need is urgent, though the process will be long. Many participants emphasized that there is little time remaining to prevent the imminent loss of a number of languages. There was particular concern for communities where speakers are concentrated among the elderly and where there are little or no resources to preserve the languages through recording, translating or archiving, or to train language teachers. Although all First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages are sacred, it was recommended that languages in a critical state should be given special consideration. Communities in less pressing circumstances also called for immediate access to resources to avoid their languages becoming compromised, as a result of a failure to encourage fluency in younger age groups.

Roles and Priorities of a National Language Organization

Participants discussed how a national language organization — a Languages and Cultures Council (LCC) — could be part of a long-term revitalization strategy. The following section presents their discussions, concerns and recommendations.

Goals and Objectives

Participants recommended that a primary function of the LCC should be coordinating research and planning needed to develop a long-term strategy to revitalize First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages. Many stated that a vital component of the long-term strategy should be federal legislation to protect and promote First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages. The LCC was seen as something to assist in this effort by providing information and advice to government and to national political organizations. In addition to having this work to do at the national level, the LCC was seen as supporting efforts to promote language at the community level. Examples of ways in which the LCC could assist communities included providing information to local governments on language policies and to individuals and families on the benefits of maintaining language.

There was broad consensus among those participating in the consultations that one of the primary functions of an LCC should be to provide financial assistance to communities to enable them to take the necessary steps to revitalize their languages. In addition to seeing it as a funding mechanism, many participants viewed the LCC as providing technical support to community and regional programs. The benefits of taking a collaborative approach were stressed. Considering the short time frame available to many languages and the severe shortage of learning resources, participants wished to see a sharing of materials, as well as of lessons learned, in language programs throughout the country. Those making the recommendation stressed that consideration should be given to a virtual centre, rather than one of bricks and mortar. Consideration should also be given to developing a network or regional language clearing houses.

All participants thought that increasing awareness about First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages and their importance in the communities and in Canada was a necessary function of the LCC. Within First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities, the youth should be given the opportunity to feel pride in their language, identity and history. Within the wider Canadian community, non-Aboriginal people should be made aware of the importance and diversity of First Nation,

Inuit and Métis languages. To encourage broad support for First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages, it was recommended that the LCC should create partnerships with industries and with all levels of government. Many participants were also of the view that the LCC should create awareness and build relationships with other Indigenous peoples internationally.

Governance

There was also broad consensus that the LCC should be streamlined, with minimal infrastructure, so that resources can be conserved and the majority of funds distributed at the community level. Many participants recommended that, where possible, the three national political organizations should develop an intergovernmental governance structure as a cost-saving measure. Participants emphasized that the LCC should take direction from the community level, as opposed to giving direction to the local level. The LCC should conduct its affairs in an equitable and transparent manner and not be linked to any particular political agenda. There was also agreement that all regions should have representation on the governing body and that Elders should play an advisory role.

Funding and Program Delivery

The Task Force received a consistent message from the Circle of Experts, the Elders and community representatives about the need for resources. *Participants in the consultation sessions all stated an urgent need to flow funds to communities to immediately begin addressing the critical state of their languages.* It was pointed out that existing funding is generally piecemeal and short-term, making it extremely difficult to retain personnel and carry out longer-term planning. There was also concern that, as a result of bureaucracies under the present process, program funds do not reach the community level.

Concern was expressed that communities are put in the position of competing for the limited funding currently available. Inequities result, as communities that have personnel skilled in preparing grant proposals or those with larger populations and greater administrative capacity are in a better position to receive funding for language initiatives. Others also pointed out that individuals may be denied access to funding if community organizations are given priority, and that a new program should recognize that individuals or informal groups have a place in language revitalization efforts. Funding allocations are frequently based on population, so smaller communities are left to struggle alone. One participant stated that, in the First Nation context:

When various bands are putting out project proposals for grants, one gets funding and 14 others get none. We have to stop competing for which language is the most worthy of being saved — which one gets saved... We're all worthy of being saved.

In this same vein, others pointed out that some federal monies are provided to communities earmarked for specific endeavours. This practice ignores the fact that each community is different and has its own plan for language revitalization.

In discussions of the role of the LCC in funding, participants expressed concern that a large central administration could result in funds being taken up to support bureaucracy and that small projects would become lost in an administrative maze. *It was recommended that decision making be delegated to the regional levels, as they are better situated to be aware of, and respond to, local conditions and needs.* It was pointed out that some regions, such as the Northwest Territories, have regional language centres that should be supported and that a regionalized infrastructure is already in place as part of the current federal Aboriginal Languages Initiative. While regionalization was preferred, caution was raised that regional program delivery systems must be inclusive and nonpolitical to avoid leaving communities that are not politically affiliated without access to funding. Participants also recommended that funding allow for longer-term projects and that funding criteria be equitable.

Program Priorities for the LCC

1. Language preservation

Many participants called for immediate funding for language preservation efforts, pointing out that in many communities few fluent speakers remain. It was noted that there are many lesser-spoken languages, particularly in British Columbia, where it is not unusual for a language to be spoken by only one or two communities. Preservation work, therefore, becomes more urgent. However, even languages with many speakers encounter difficulty. As pointed out by a participant in Ontario, the names and uses of local flowers are being lost, and ways of describing kinship relationships are also being forgotten.

It was pointed out that even where communities had been able to tape-record Elders in the past, often the knowledge is inaccessible. This may be due to obsolete recording media or recordings that have been lost or that have deteriorated because of improper storage. It may also result from a lack of funds to transcribe the material.

2. Language planning

Providing access to resources for communities to carry out community-based research and long-term language planning was a common theme in the consultations. Participants were in agreement that it is important to identify speakers and fluency as part of initial planning to assess the effectiveness of different approaches to language revitalization. Communities also need to discuss and agree on the steps to be taken to reintegrate language into the communities, prioritize objectives in language programming and, in some cases, reach consensus on basic issues, such as a common orthography.

For instance, it is not uncommon for more than one writing system to have been developed by linguists who have studied the language at various times, and the system or systems may not be conducive to ease in writing or learning. As one participant explained:

*Our writing system was developed for Sauteaux in part by a linguist. It wasn't modern Roman orthography and when the linguists developed it, there were too many rules and a structure that didn't work. For instance, for a *d* they put an *h* in front of a *t* to make the *h* sound. A lot of children in elementary school were mispronouncing the words. We added the letters we needed, and there is still a lot that needs to be addressed in our writing system.*

It was also noted that communities may need to thoroughly discuss issues such as standardization. In this context, it was recognized that some communities may need to make the difficult decision to support a particular dialect or adopt the dialect of a nearby community. There is also a need to fund development of the language through the creation of terminology for new concepts and technology.

A number of participants pointed out that current and accurate data are needed to carry out language planning. It was recommended that the LCC undertake or coordinate such research. In particular, it was recommended that a language survey be carried out, as such research would help the LCC and the communities to develop programs to support language revitalization.

3. Education in First Nation, Inuit and Métis language and culture

All participants agreed that language and cultural education should be a main program focus of the LCC. A number of

issues should be addressed to rectify inadequacies and problems encountered with the policies and programs that language educators must work in. Concern was expressed that First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages are not given recognition or support in the school system. Particular reference was made to Indian and Northern Affairs Canada's failure to adequately fund language education programs in departmentally funded schools on reserve.

Educators pointed to the difficulty of achieving language fluency in the present language education system. When language classes are offered for 15 minutes during a school day, it is very difficult to make any progress towards achieving fluency. The problem is compounded when the language is not spoken in the home or in the community. Many participants noted that it is very difficult for First Nation, Inuit and Métis children to truly learn the language if their parents did not speak it. As one participant in the Fort Qu'Appelle consultation put it, "The learning must come from home and the community. One language teacher cannot do it."

In this regard, entering children into immersion programs when their parents are themselves unable to speak their own language would create barriers, as the parents could not participate fully in their child's education. Though numerous participants agreed that much of the focus should be on the youth, it was said that it is also necessary to begin teaching young parents the language. They, in turn, would teach their children. That being said, and despite interest in learning the language, First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities often do not have the resources or language instructors to offer courses to adults. It was therefore strongly recommended that the LCC support training and certification of language teachers, not only in second-language education, but for immersion programs as well, as there are not enough language teachers to meet the demand.

Many spoke passionately of the importance of giving young children the opportunity to connect with their heritage at a very early age and to support them in their learning as they move through their childhood and youth. Educators recommended that language education begin prior to nursery school and that parents be given the opportunity to learn as well. One participant suggested beginning language nests using the federal government's child care initiative and combining it with language instruction.

There was widespread agreement that language education must be made available at all levels, from day care through to university. Adult education should be considered as important as youth education, and there should be classes for advanced speakers as well as beginners. At the university level, advanced degrees should be available in the language that would help advance research and produce scholars of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages.

Participants recommended that language programs incorporate traditional skills and lessons. One suggestion that was heard across Canada was that cultural camps are an effective way to transmit the language and values. This frequently involves taking the children out into the wilderness, and teaching them how to live on the land and how to interact with the environment in the manner of their ancestors. Many cited successful immersion programs, of the Maori and Hawaiians internationally and of the French in Canada, to support this approach. Others recommended funding cultural camps or immersion programs that teach traditional skills as an effective way to connect people to their culture and language.

Participants also strongly recommended that programs funded by the LCC should adopt a holistic approach, incorporating First Nation, Inuit and Métis cultures. Language and culture are intertwined, and education in the language is an important vehicle for sharing First Nation, Inuit and Métis values, teachings and histories. All participants stated that, through learning the language, many other aspects of First Nation, Inuit and Métis cultures can be taught as well. For instance, it was stressed that education programs be designed to reflect First Nation, Inuit and Métis methodologies, rather than English or French methodologies. Equally, teaching of the language should take various forms, including storytelling, drama, dance, singing and art, and that it should not be limited to classroom instruction.

Rather than being limited to language classes, which some adults may not have the time for, language participants suggested instruction should be made the focus of many community activities. The participants suggested that language instruction be made part of learning the traditional names of places and sacred sites. In this context, many recommended that Elders be recognized as experts in the language and be treated as such. This would involve accrediting and paying them as befitting their status. By employing Elders in this manner, many traditional

values could be taught, such as respect and a particular protocol in approaching Elders.

Educators also spoke of the need for curriculum resources generally, because either very little is available or, when resources do exist, it is not uncommon for the material to be decades old. Therefore, the LCC should not only support the development of new materials, but also facilitate a sharing of resources.

4. Innovation and technology

Innovation and technology were prevalent themes throughout all of the workshops. All participants thought that it would be important to make use of technology in language revitalization efforts.

Recognizing the enormity of the task that lay ahead, many participants strongly recommended that the LCC coordinate a clearing house or houses to allow sharing of resources and research on best practices. Development of a Web-based national database on language programming, resources and language planning was generally envisioned. Such information would provide First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities with immediate knowledge of the promising practices of other communities so that they could build on and learn from them. Using technology would also help the LCC stay in constant touch with the communities, as well as aiding communities in sharing information with one another.

The participants pointed out that the use of innovation and technology would assist in making community education programs more accessible. Language tutorials available on CD-ROM or on-line would aid those people who cannot attend language classes. An example of successful use of technology was given by one participant, who explained how videoconferencing was used, thereby enabling Elders who were hundreds of miles apart to speak together. Another participant shared how she offered an opening prayer during a videoconference with five schools across Canada. Through that technology, she was able to share her teachings with many different children.

It was also noted that the LCC should use a multimedia approach to make learning the language fun and accessible to young children and youth. Television, music, movies and computers could increase the younger generation's exposure to the language, thereby revitalizing the language. For example, television programs such as cartoons and adventures could reach the youth. In addition, the

LCC should support radio programming already running and explore the use of the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network as a vehicle for teaching the language.

A number of participants called for the LCC to fund a national conference on languages to examine best practices and to allow sharing of resources and research.

PART VII:
PROTECTING AND
PROMOTING OUR
LANGUAGES



*We are just like forests... many species standing strong and tall
and just as we are today.*

PART VII: Protecting and Promoting Our Languages

During the Task Force deliberations, we considered not only the views of First Nation, Inuit and Métis linguistic communities and organizations, but also domestic and international research on other endangered languages, particularly Indigenous languages, most of which confront similar challenges. The results of our deliberations are reported below, grouped under the four major themes highlighted in our consultations with the communities, namely:

- the rationale for protecting and promoting First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages;
- the need for status planning, including language legislation and supporting policies;
- languages in First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities; and
- languages in education.

In the discussion of these four themes, we conclude each section with specific recommendations that Canada should follow to protect and promote First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages.

Protecting and Promoting Languages at the National Level

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in its *Red Book on Endangered Languages*, reported that at least half of the world's languages are in danger of extinction by the end of this century. The vast majority of these endangered languages are Indigenous and have fewer than 10,000 speakers.⁴⁹ Canadian experience mirrors international trends, with both primary and secondary research warning of the possibility of extinction for the vast majority of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages. We do not believe that this should deter us from making every effort to save all our languages. In our consultations, we heard that all languages, whether there be 5 or 25,000 speakers, are equal and should be treated as such. We support this fundamental principle. Every effort must be made to save our languages, not only for present and future generations of First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples,

⁴⁹ We do not consider the reasons for language shift and loss in this report but refer the reader to a number of studies that document and discuss this, including David Crystal, *Language Death* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); James Crawford, "Seven Hypotheses on Language Loss: Causes and Cures," in *Stabilizing Indigenous Languages*, ed. by G. Cantoni (Flagstaff, Ariz.: Center for Excellence in Education, Northern Arizona University, 1996); Scott Palmer, "Language of Work: The Critical Link Between Economic Change and Language Shift," in *Teaching Indigenous Languages*, edited by Jon Reyhner, 263–86 (Flagstaff, Ariz.: Northern Arizona University, 1997); Joshua Fishman, *Can Threatened Languages Be Saved? Reversing Language Shift, Revisited: A 21st Century Perspective* (Clevedon, U.K.: Multilingual Matters, 2001).

but also for fundamental reasons that speak to who we are collectively as peoples, as nations and as Canadians.

We are cognizant of the historical and legal basis for recognizing and protecting the equality of languages that the national political organizations cited in their presentations to the Task Force and that was referred to by many in our consultations with the communities. Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, which entrenches Aboriginal and treaty rights, as well as the Crown's obligations under pre- and post-Confederation treaties and the fiduciary relationship that they reflect, leads us to affirm that government support of language revitalization is to be grounded in the principle that all First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages must be protected and promoted.⁵⁰

This historic and constitutional reality in itself should lead Canada to unequivocally protect and promote First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages. In our view, the honour of the Crown requires no less. However, there are other equally fundamental reasons to support First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages, reasons that we believe all Canadians will identify with and support.

In the first place, First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages are the original languages of Canada. They reflect this land in a way that languages formed in Europe or elsewhere cannot. During our consultations we heard many speak of the intimate connection between the people, their languages and the land. It is this connection in fact, it is the history of First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples and their languages and cultures – that truly defines Canada. We believe it is crucial that our languages be revitalized and protected, not only for future generations of First Nation, Inuit and Métis people, but also for all Canadians.

This is more than a symbolic reality, for the connection of First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples to the land also speaks of a wealth of traditional knowledge, as each people and their language represent a unique way of organizing information and knowledge about the ecosystem. Environment Canada describes this knowledge as follows:

Aboriginal traditional knowledge has been and continues to be accumulated through time spent living on the land. It encompasses all aspects of the environment — biophysical, economic, social, cultural and spiritual —

⁵⁰ International conventions and instruments listed in Appendix F also point to Canada's obligation to protect First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages and cultures.

and sees humans as an intimate part of it, rather than as external observers or controllers. TK [traditional knowledge] is part of the collective memory of a community, and is passed on orally through songs and stories, as well as through actions and observation.⁵¹

International research also highlights the critical linkages between Indigenous knowledge, stewardship of the land, and Indigenous languages and culture.⁵² UNESCO, in its report, *Language Vitality and Endangerment*, makes clear the intrinsic value of promoting cultural diversity, stating:

The extinction of each language results in the irrecoverable loss of unique cultural, historical and ecological knowledge. Each language is a unique expression of the human experience of the world. Thus, the knowledge of any single language may be the key to answering fundamental questions of the future. Every time a language dies, we have less evidence for understanding patterns in the structure and function of human language, human prehistory and the maintenance of the world's diverse ecosystems.⁵³

The interconnection of linguistic and cultural diversity and biodiversity is strongly reflected in the Canadian physical and cultural landscape. At least 47 of the approximately 61 First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages in Canada are unique to their particular territories and not spoken in any other location on Earth.⁵⁴ Moreover, these languages are found in ecosystems that are recognized globally as being important from a standpoint of biodiversity.⁵⁵ The Arctic and high alpine tundra, the traditional territories of the Dene and Inuit; the boreal forest, the territories of the Cree, Ojibwe and Algonquin; the Northern Plains, the territories of the Blackfoot, Sioux, Oji-Cree and the Métis; and the temperate rainforest — which include the

territories of at least 30 languages in British Columbia, are all in the top 200 critical ecosystems in the world.⁵⁶

We believe this traditional knowledge must be protected, not only for Canadians, but also for all of humanity. Certainly, the 1992 *Convention on Biological Diversity*, whose objective is promoting sustainable development, recognizes this fundamental principle. Article 8(j) requires nation-state signatories:

subject to legislation, to respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and promote their wider application with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices and encourage the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of such knowledge, innovations and practices.⁵⁷

Languages have been described as being akin to the miner's canary: where languages are in danger, it is a sign of environmental distress.⁵⁸ Certainly, this is true for First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages. Language loss in Canada closely parallels the weakening of the vital connection of First Nation, Inuit and Métis people to their homelands as a result of the alienation of their lands or resource development, such as hydroelectric dams, mining and forestry. We believe (and the international experience we discuss above bears this out) that protecting and maintaining the First Nation, Inuit and Métis connection to the land is crucial to a strategy to protect language and culture, as well as Canada's biodiversity.⁵⁹

A number of successful co-management regimes exist under various land claims agreements in the Yukon and Northwest Territories and under treaties in other parts of Canada.⁶⁰ We believe opportunities for management,

⁵¹ Environment Canada, *Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge and Environmental Management*, at http://www.ec.gc.ca/science/sandsept02/article1_e.html.

⁵² Luisa Maffi (ed.), *On Biocultural Diversity: Linking Language, Knowledge, and the Environment* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001).

⁵³ UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages (Paris: March 13, 2003), p. 6.

⁵⁴ Languages not endemic are those found in other countries. These include languages in regions that border the United States, including Haida, Tlingit, Salish, Blackfoot and Mohawk, as well as Inuktitut, which is also spoken in Greenland.

⁵⁵ Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, Luisa Maffi and David Harmon, *Sharing a World of Difference: The Earth's Linguistic Cultural and Biological Diversity* (UNESCO, Terralingua, and World Wide Fund for Nature, 2003), p. 39, at <http://www.terralingua.org/RecPublications.htm>

⁵⁶ At <http://www.worldwildlife.org/science/ecoregions/g200.cfm>.

⁵⁷ *Convention on Biological Diversity*, 1992, at <http://www.biodiv.org/convention/default.shtml>. Legislation infringing on Aboriginal right must meet the justification test set down by the Supreme Court of Canada in *R. v. Sparrow*, [1990] 1 S.C.R. 1075.

⁵⁸ Daniel Nettle and Suzanne Romaine, *Vanishing Voices: The Extinction of the World's Languages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 14.

⁵⁹ Biodiversity or biological diversity refers to variety of life in the environment, including plants, animals and micro-organisms.

⁶⁰ Tracy Campbell, "Co-management of Aboriginal Resources," *Information North* 22(1) (March 1996), Arctic Institute of North America, at <http://arcticcircle.uconn.edu/NatResources/comanagement.html>; *Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Barren Ground Caribou Management Agreement* (2002), at www.arctic-caribou.com/PDF/ManagmtAgreement.pdf.

co-management or co-jurisdiction should be available to all First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples and that the agreements should clearly link traditional knowledge with sustainability objectives.

Recommendation No. 1: The Link between Languages and the Land

We recommend:

That First Nation, Inuit and Métis governments and the federal, provincial and territorial governments enter into government-to-government agreements or accords on natural resources, environmental sustainability and traditional knowledge. The agreements or accords should recognize the importance for First Nation, Inuit and Métis people of maintaining a close connection to the land in their traditional territories, particularly wilderness areas, heritage and spiritual or sacred sites, and should provide for their meaningful participation in stewardship, management, co-management or co-jurisdiction arrangements.

The international *Convention on Biological Diversity* requires Canada, as a party, to take action for preserving and protecting traditional knowledge; and to provide for sharing benefits resulting from utilization of such knowledge and practices. Many First Nation, Inuit and Métis people will have other concerns, not only about use and access, but also about ownership of their traditional knowledge. One way these concerns can be met is by confirming the right of traditional knowledge holders to protect and benefit from their interests. This generally takes the form of legislation that recognizes that the holders of traditional knowledge have a right to protect and promote this knowledge and to receive benefit from its use.⁶¹ Peru's Law 27811 illustrates the scope of this type of legislation. In addition to creating a registry to preserve and safeguard traditional knowledge and to provide authorities with information needed to defend traditional knowledge, the *Act* has the following provisions:

- Indigenous peoples in possession of collective knowledge may license third parties to use TK by written contract for a period of no more than three years. The contract is to provide for compensation for sustainable development, and a percentage of not

less than five percent of the pre-tax value of the gross sales resulting from the marketing of the goods developed directly and indirectly. [Article 26]

- Protects Indigenous peoples possessing collective knowledge against disclosure, acquisition or use of TK without their consent and in an improper manner provided that the TK is not in the public domain. It is similarly protected against unauthorized disclosure where a third party has legitimately had access to collective knowledge covered by a safeguard clause. [Article 42]
- Enables Indigenous peoples to bring a complaint of an infringement of Indigenous peoples' TK. [Article 47]
- In cases where TK has passed into the public domain within the previous 20 years, a percentage of the pre-tax gross sales resulting from the marketing of the goods developed on the basis of that knowledge shall be paid into an Indigenous Peoples Development Fund. [Article 13]

The legislation also establishes an Indigenous Knowledge Protection Board that is charged with, among other duties, monitoring and overseeing the implementation of this protection regime, administering the development fund, and giving opinions on the validity of contracts for the licensing of traditional knowledge.⁶²

Clearly, this type of legislation addresses a number of elements of traditional knowledge that do not fit into standard intellectual property laws. We believe such legislation holds merit and should be further investigated. *Canada's Response to the Convention on Biological Diversity* (1995) sets out principles and goals for achieving the objectives set out in the *Convention on Biodiversity*. This document refers to Article 10(c), which requires Canada to:

Protect and encourage customary use of biological resources in accordance with traditional cultural practices that are compatible with conservation or sustainable use requirements.

However, the response does not appear to take into consideration Article 8(j), which states:

Subject to its national legislation, respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional

⁶¹ Such legislation is called *sui generis*, as it is unique and of a special class or nature. The courts describe Aboriginal rights as being *sui generis* in nature.

⁶² Law Introducing a Protection Regime for the Collective Knowledge of Indigenous People Derived From Biological Resources, Peru — Law No. 27811, published in the official journal *El Peruano* (August 10, 2002), at <http://www.grain.org/bit/?docid=81&lawid=2041>.

lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and promote their wider application with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices and encourage the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of such knowledge, innovations and practices.

We believe that Canada's obligations under the Convention require a more comprehensive approach to protection, use and benefits arising from traditional knowledge. We also believe the custodians of traditional knowledge, particularly the Elders, must be recognized in this process.

Recommendation No. 2: Protection of Traditional Knowledge

We recommend:

That Canada take a more comprehensive approach to the protection, use and benefits arising from traditional knowledge under the international *Convention on Biological Diversity* and that greater recognition be accorded to First Nation, Inuit and Métis people, particularly the Elders, in the collaborative planning process under the Convention.

We believe that protecting First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages is another step in the continual process of Canada's nation building. As the Supreme Court of Canada and others, including the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, have noted, Canada has unfinished business with the First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples of this country.⁶³ Canada has acknowledged this in its 1997 *Statement of Reconciliation* as follows:

As a country, we are burdened by past actions that resulted in weakening the identity of Aboriginal peoples, suppressing their languages and cultures, and outlawing

spiritual practices. We must recognize the impact of these actions on the once self-sustaining nations that were disaggregated, disrupted, limited or even destroyed by the dispossession of traditional territory, by the relocation of Aboriginal people, and by some provisions of the *Indian Act*. We must acknowledge that the result of these actions was the erosion of the political, economic and social systems of Aboriginal people and nations.⁶⁴

In light of the foregoing, it is clear that First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages should be protected, revitalized and maintained as a priority matter for Canada. Regrettably, our preliminary review of the federal government's present role in protecting and promoting First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages indicates there is significant room for improvement.

As stated earlier, we recognize Canada's commitment to provide \$160 million to First Nation, Inuit and Métis language revitalization over the next 10 years. However, this figure does not reflect the urgency of the current situation. Nor does it adequately reflect the context in which these revitalization efforts must be made: First Nation, Inuit and Métis people are seeking resources to reverse the Crown's historic policies of assimilation that were aimed explicitly at eradicating our languages, cultures, religions, and social and political structures. This sustained assault on the core of our identity as the First Peoples of this land continues to hinder our ability to speak our own languages and practise our own cultures and has contributed to the pressing need now to restore them.

By way of contrast with other federal language policies, the current budget of \$5 million a year and the commitment of \$160 million over 10 years for First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages is only a very small fraction of the funding provided to promote the French and English languages. The federal Action Plan for Official Languages, announced in 2003, provides for funding totalling \$751.3 million over five years from eight different government departments.⁶⁵

The federal government has not yet adopted formal written policies on First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages. Further, it provides only minimal assistance to maintain languages and cultures; language education

⁶³ For example, in *R. v. Van der Peet*, *supra* note 18, the Supreme Court noted that s. 35 rights must be interpreted so as to effect a reconciliation between the prior, organized Aboriginal occupation of North America and Crown sovereignty:

... what s. 35(1) does is provide the constitutional framework through which the fact that Aboriginals lived on the land in distinctive societies, with their own practices, traditions and cultures, is acknowledged and reconciled with the sovereignty of the Crown. The substantive rights which fall within the provision must be defined in light of this purpose: the Aboriginal rights recognized and affirmed by s. 35(1) must be directed towards the reconciliation of the pre-existence of Aboriginal societies with the sovereignty of the Crown.

⁶⁴ *Statement of Reconciliation*, at <http://www.irs-rqpi.gc.ca/english/reconciliation.html>.

⁶⁵ Government of Canada, *The Next Act: New Momentum for Canada's Official Languages: The Action Plan for Official Languages* (Ottawa: 2003). See Appendix G for a summary of this funding.

is extremely limited; and little if any recognition is given to First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages. In our view, against international standards, such as UNESCO's yardstick on explicit and implicit government and institutional policy and attitudes to language, Canada could well be characterized as continuing to promote, either actively or passively, assimilation of First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples. UNESCO defines "active assimilation" as occurring when government encourages minority groups to abandon their own languages by providing education for the minority group members in the dominant language. Speaking and writing in the minority languages is not encouraged. Passive assimilation occurs when the minority language does not enjoy high prestige and the dominant group is simply indifferent as to whether or not it is spoken.⁶⁶

We believe that this situation is not in keeping with Canada's commitment to establish a renewed relationship with First Nation, Inuit and Métis people. Even Inuktitut, which is in the unique position of having official status in parts of Canada's North, is at a considerable disadvantage in terms of support in comparison with Canada's two official languages.

We urge Canada to take immediate action to remedy its historic mistreatment of, and present inaction on, First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages. In the following sections, we discuss and recommend specific avenues for Canada to begin to protect and promote our languages.

Status Planning for First Nation, Inuit and Métis Languages

International experience in language planning and policy demonstrates that for language revitalization efforts to be successful there must be a partnership between government and the communities whose languages are at risk. It is these communities that must rebuild and maintain the networks that will give life to their languages. Nonetheless, government support is vital, for without it there is very little likelihood of creating an environment in which a minority language and culture can flourish.

Government support is particularly important in addressing one factor that language planners identify as being crucial to language revitalization and maintenance. We speak here of the need to reverse the perception that First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages have less value than French or English. International experience in language planning, particularly in the area of minority

group languages, finds a correlation between a language's prestige and popular interest in speaking and using the language. There is greater interest and commitment to speaking a language when it is publicly recognized and held in high regard, whereas there will be reluctance to speak a language perceived as being inferior or archaic. In fact, some language planners go so far as to suggest that conferring power and prestige on a language is the surest way of reversing language decline.⁶⁷

Many First Nation, Inuit and Métis people have been taught that their languages are inferior and best forgotten. Generations of First Nation, Inuit and Métis people were taken away, often forcibly, from their families and communities and placed in residential schools. There, with the support and active cooperation of the churches, they were systemically stripped of their traditional languages, cultures and spiritual beliefs. During our consultations we heard many Elders speak of this with great sadness, telling us how these experiences led to many people losing the ability to properly speak their languages. Many were ashamed of their identities as First Nation, Inuit and Métis people and reluctant to have their children learn the languages for which they had suffered so much.

It is our view that while an apology by Canada and the churches would be an important step in the residential school healing process, additional steps must be taken to redress the language and culture loss brought about during this period in Canada's history. We see these steps at the national or collective level, as well as at the individual level.

At the national or collective level, we see Canada formally recognizing the importance of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages. As we discussed in Part IV of our report, "What We Heard in the Consultations," there was broad consensus among participants in their call for Canada to recognize First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages through legislation. In fact, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) has also been proposing this for several decades.⁶⁸ We support their call for the federal government to enact legislation to recognize the special status of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages and turn our attention to what, in general terms, such legislation should contain. We base this portion of our discussion on Canada's experience, as well as international experience with Indigenous language protection.

⁶⁶ UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages, *Language Vitality and Endangerment* (Paris: March 10–12, 2003), p. 13.

⁶⁷ Sue Wright, *Language Policy and Language Planning: From Nationalism to Globalisation* (2004); Daniel Nettles and Suzanne Romaine, *Vanishing Voices: The Extinction of the World's Languages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁶⁸ Assembly of First Nations, *Tradition and Education: Towards a Vision of the Future* (1988); *Towards Linguistic Justice for First Nations* (1990); *Towards Rebirth of First Nations Languages* (1991).

Aboriginal Languages as Official Languages

Domestically, First Nation and Inuit languages in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut are in the unique position of having their languages designated as official languages. The Northwest Territories *Official Languages Act* (1988) confers official language status on the Chipewyan, Cree, Dogrib, Gwich'in, Slavey and Inuit languages and provides for their use in the legislative assembly and in the courts. The *Act* also stipulates that government services are to be provided in the appropriate official language “where significant demand warrants” and provides for the appointment of a language commissioner charged with monitoring compliance with the *Act*.

This legislation is supported by an Aboriginal languages strategy that speaks to four key areas in language revitalization efforts: supporting language use in the communities, promoting the value of languages, supporting language education, and providing access to government services in the official languages. Exhibit 1 provides further details on the Northwest Territories' language strategy.

Exhibit 1 Government of the Northwest Territories Aboriginal Languages Strategy

- 1) **Support Aboriginal linguistic communities to develop and implement strategic language plans for the revitalization, enhancement and promotion of their languages by:**
 - Providing funds to Aboriginal linguistic communities for the development and implementation of their strategic language plans
 - Providing administrative and technical support to Aboriginal linguistic communities
- 2) **Promote the value of the Northwest Territories' official Aboriginal languages and their continued usage in day-to-day activities by:**
 - Promoting the visibility of Aboriginal languages in electronic media
 - Supporting the Aboriginal linguistic communities' literacy initiatives
 - Coordinating activities for the promotion of Aboriginal languages of the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and the Aboriginal linguistic communities
 - Officially recognizing Aboriginal language place names

- 3) **Create a learning environment that supports the Aboriginal linguistic communities' efforts to revitalize Aboriginal languages by:**

- Supporting community-based initiatives for culturally relevant early childhood programs
- Developing and implementing culturally relevant curricula
- Delivering Aboriginal language instruction programs in K–12
- Supporting schools to help them meet their linguistic and cultural goals
- Developing community capacity through the training of Aboriginal teachers and Aboriginal language specialists
- Supporting the development of training programs for interpreters and translators

- 4) **Provide reasonable access to government programs and services in Aboriginal languages, by:**

- Developing policy and guidelines on official languages in the GNWT (adopted in 1997)
- Developing and monitoring implementation plans for the delivery of services in all official languages in appropriate government departments, boards and agencies
- Developing a certification process and occupational standards to support the Aboriginal language interpretation and translation industry and to enhance the availability of such services to the GNWT

Source: Northwest Territories, Department of Education, Culture and Employment, *Revitalizing, Enhancing, and Promoting Aboriginal Languages: Strategies for Supporting Aboriginal Languages* (2001).

Funding totalling \$17.5 million during the five-year period from 1999 to 2004⁶⁹ was provided to implement the *Act's* provisions under an intergovernmental agreement with Canada. Approximately 50 percent of the funding was used to provide Aboriginal services in the territorial government, while a total of \$4.3 million went to communities to develop five-year strategic plans and to implement community-based activities.⁷⁰ A recent

⁶⁹ Similar levels of funding were provided in previous years; in 1991–1994, funding totalled \$17.37 million.

⁷⁰ Additionally, \$4.6 million was provided to Aurora College for interpreter and translator training and for preparation of resource materials and promotion of Aboriginal languages, and approximately \$0.5 million was allocated to terminology development and coordination and information sharing. Terriplan Consultants in association with Martin Spigelman Research, *Canada-NWT Cooperation Agreement for French and Aboriginal Languages in the Northwest Territories' Final Evaluation Report* (Yellowknife: Government of the Northwest Territories, Department of Education, Culture and Employment and Canadian Heritage March 2004), at http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/Divisions/culture_heritage/indexcult.htm.

evaluation of the agreement found the funding of community-based planning helpful not only for the community, but also for the funding agency, because it enabled more accurate assessment of project proposals.

Another perspective on the Northwest Territories' *Official Languages Act* is provided in the legislative committee's recent review of the *Act*, which identified a number of weaknesses. In response to recommendations made by the Committee, the territorial government amended the *Act* in 2003 to strengthen the government's commitment to, and accountability for, language policies. A Minister Responsible for Official Languages was appointed and an Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board was established. The Board, made up of representatives from each of the linguistic communities, will advise the Minister on government and community efforts to maintain, promote and revitalize the Northwest Territories' Aboriginal languages. The Committee also recommended that a marketing plan to promote Aboriginal languages be developed and that changes be made to the *Education Act* to provide guidelines and standards for instruction in Aboriginal languages.⁷¹ An amendment to the *Act* also provided for recognition of language rights within traditional territories. Section 11(3) sets out the following with regard to receiving language services:

- 11(3) In interpreting subsection (2), consideration shall be given to collective rights of Aboriginal peoples pertaining to Aboriginal languages and exercised within the traditional homelands of those peoples, consistent with any applicable lands, resources and self-government agreements, including land claim and treaty land entitlement agreements, and any other sources or expressions of those collective rights.⁷²

Nunavut, which adopted the provisions of the Northwest Territories' legislation as its own, also recently reviewed the *Official Languages Act* to determine whether it was sufficient to support language-related initiatives such as the Bathurst Mandate vision of having Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun as the working languages of government by the year 2020.⁷³ In its report the Committee concluded

⁷¹ Government of the Northwest Territories, *Response to the Final Report — Special Committee on the Review of the Official Languages Act* (2003).

⁷² R.S.N.W.T. 1988, c. 56 (Supp.), s. 12; S.N.W.T. 2003, c. 23.

⁷³ Special Committee to Review the *Official Languages Act*, *Interim Report, Fifth Session, First Legislative Assembly, Legislative Assembly of Nunavut* (March 2002); Nunavut Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth, *Next Steps Toward Made-in-Nunavut Language Legislation* (June 1, 2004).

that the present legislation would not achieve this objective. Importantly, since the *Official Languages Act* applies only to the territorial government and not to municipalities or private businesses, it does not have the full effect of true official language legislation. As well, the language commissioner's lack of authority was found to limit the effectiveness of the legislation.

The Nunavut government continues to work towards strengthening its language law; amendments to remedy shortcomings in the *Official Languages Act* will be tabled before its legislature during 2005. On the policy front, an Inuktitut language board is being developed, on the model of successful initiatives in Greenland, as well as on that of the *Office québécois de la langue française*.

What these studies by the Northwest Territories and Nunavut legislatures show is that despite official status being accorded to First Nation and Inuit languages in the North, inequities continue to exist and programming and services are not at a level that would assist in sustaining these languages. In this context, our earlier discussion of the significant differences in funding available to French and English, in comparison with First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages, is particularly relevant.

In the northern territories, speakers of Inuit and First Nation languages make up the vast majority of the population, followed by English speakers. There is only a relatively tiny population of French speakers. Nonetheless, funding provided by Canada, as part of its minority language support program is more than 10 times that provided to the Northwest Territories and Nunavut official languages. According to the Nunavut Language Commissioner, French speakers receive \$3,902 per capita in funding for language services and programs, whereas Inuit receive \$44 per capita for similar programs and services. We believe that this reflects poorly on Canada as a nation and is not in keeping with the notion of the honour of the Crown.

International Language Planning

The various efforts to protect and revitalize Indigenous languages in New Zealand, Scandinavia (Norway, Finland, Sweden), South Africa and Australia demonstrate that there is no single solution to the challenge of diminishing minority language use. In some countries, such as in the United States and Sweden, legislation tends to be more general and lacking in substantive support. The Native American Languages Act (1990) (NALA) states that the United States will take action to ensure the survival of Native American languages, including preserving, protecting and promoting the

rights and freedom of Native Americans to use, practise and develop their languages. However, the Act does not provide for resources or an enforcement mechanism. As noted by Suzanne Romaine, in *The Impact of Language Policy on Endangered Languages*, “Those who think that NALA is a pro-active policy rather than a recommendation lacking means of enforcement just because it is written and carries the grand name of Act deceive themselves.”⁷⁴

It is also clear that language revitalization will not necessarily result from a declaration of official language status in the absence of popular will and supportive mechanisms. A case in point is the Gaelic language in Ireland. Despite the fact that Gaelic has been recognized as an official language since 1919, various government-led initiatives have not resulted in its revival.⁷⁵ Even where legislation may be supportive, as in the case of South Africa’s 11 official languages, language use and support in most provinces is stagnating. This is a condition that may continue for years to come.⁷⁶

The situation is different in New Zealand, where Maori enjoys official language status alongside English. The *Maori Language Act* (1987) has played an important role in the revitalization of the Maori language. Both Maori and English are used in public service activities, in legal agreements, in educational institutions and in many other activities of normal daily life. The Maori Languages Commission plays a central role in promoting Maori as a living language.

For example, a research base for future action was established by a 2001 survey entitled “Health of the Maori Language,” conducted to ensure that future initiatives would be based on objective data, rather than subjective opinion. A 25-year plan is now in place, with a goal of having the Maori language spoken widely by Maori people by 2028.⁷⁷ As a result of this intensive effort by the Maori people, and with the support of the New Zealand government, the Maori language is a living language that continues to grow and develop.

International experience confirms that legislative recognition on its own cannot produce far-reaching improvements. Increase in language use and the transmission of the language from generation to

generation will occur only if there is engagement at the grassroots or local level. The lesson from all this is that appropriate infrastructures and resources and adequate funding, as well as the support and commitment of the linguistic community,⁷⁸ are all essential for the successful protection and enhancement of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages.

In our view, a renewed relationship between Canada and the First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada must be built on the recognition of language as the cornerstone of a people’s identity. We are therefore of the view that any First Nation, Inuit and Métis language legislation must contain the following elements:

- First, it must recognize the unique historical and constitutional position of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages, as the original languages of Canada.
- Second, it must equally recognize the inherent right of First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples to declare their languages as official languages within their respective jurisdictions.
- Third, and most important, it must provide for substantive policies linked to the financial and other resources necessary to ensure the preservation, protection and promotion of these languages.
- Fourth, it must establish the position of First Nation, Inuit and Métis language commissioner.

The language commissioner should be charged with responsibilities that parallel those of the Commissioner of Official Languages and the Aboriginal languages commissioners of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, that is:

- monitor and take action to ensure recognition of the rights, status and privileges provided for in the Act by government departments and agencies;
- hear complaints and conduct investigations;
- monitor government and Parliament’s activities relating to the promotion of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages;
- provide information to the public on matters relating to First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages; and
- prepare an annual report for Parliament, including recommendations on possible amendments to the languages legislation.

The foregoing may be incorporated into language legislation; however, actual duties of a First Nation, Inuit and Métis language commissioner would need

⁷⁴ Suzanne Romaine, “The Impact of Language Policy on Endangered Languages,” *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*, 4(2) (UNESCO, 2002).

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Dr. Marianne Ignace, unpublished paper prepared for the Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures (2004).

⁷⁷ Peter James Murphy, “A Comparative Analysis of International Indigenous Language,” paper prepared for the Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures, p. 31.

⁷⁸ “Language community” meaning any group of people that speak a common language and self-identify as belonging to that particular group.

to be finalized as part of the research and drafting of the proposed legislation.

Recommendation No. 3: Legislative Recognition, Protection and Promotion

We recommend:

That Canada enact legislation that recognizes, protects and promotes First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages as the First Languages of Canada. This legislation, to be developed in partnership with First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples, must recognize the constitutional status of our languages; affirm their place as one of the foundations of First Nation, Inuit and Métis nationhood; provide financial resources for their preservation, revitalization, promotion and protection; and establish the position of First Nation, Inuit and Métis Language Commissioner.

Recommendation No. 4: Equitable Resources for Language Support

We recommend:

That Canada provide funding for First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages which is, at a minimum, at the same level as that provided for the French and English languages.

Recommendation No. 5: Language Support from All Federal Departments

We recommend:

That funding for First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages not be limited to that provided by the Departments of Canadian Heritage, and Indian Affairs and Northern Development. All government departments, and particularly the Departments of Justice, Health, and Human Resources and Skills Development, need to adopt policies and provide funding sufficient to allow for delivery of services and programs which promote First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages, in the same manner as for the French and English languages.

Language Status and the Individual

Earlier we spoke of the need to recognize, on an individual level, that First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages have value. International experience in language planning indicates that shifts away from a language are caused in large part by the way members of the linguistic community perceive the language. The residential school system in Canada forced First Nation, Inuit and Métis children to turn away from their languages and cultures. In our view, this requires that Canada acknowledge fully its role in attempting to destroy the cultural identity of the children under its care. It also requires that Canada make amends to those harmed. We note that Canada has already expressed awareness of its involvement in the residential school system in its 1997 *Statement of Reconciliation*:

This system separated many children from their families and communities and prevented them from speaking their own languages and from learning about their heritage and cultures. In the worst cases, it left legacies of personal pain and distress that continue to reverberate in Aboriginal communities to this day. Tragically, some children were the victims of physical and sexual abuse.⁷⁹

Residential school survivors have filed thousands of actions in the courts, some of which seek damages for breach of fiduciary duty and treaty rights, as well as loss of language and culture. Seeking to resolve these claims out of court, Canada established a new federal Department of Indian Residential Schools Resolution in 2001. This department is charged with resolving sexual and physical abuse issues through alternative dispute resolution (ADR) techniques. As part of its ADR process, Canada signed compensation agreements with many, but not all, of the churches involved in running these schools.

Under the ADR process, as well as in out-of-court settlements, Canada and the churches offer compensation only for physical and sexual abuse and refuse to compensate claimants for loss of connection to family, to community, and to language and culture. Canada and the Churches have taken the position that the resulting psychological harm brought on by this loss of identity is a concept that is foreign to law. This position continues to cause survivors grief.

⁷⁹ Canada, *Statement of Reconciliation*, at <http://www.irs-rqpi.gc.ca/english/reconciliation.html>.

Canada has itself acknowledged in the *Statement of Reconciliation* passage cited above that the residential schools “prevented them from speaking their own languages and from learning about their heritage and cultures [and] ... left legacies of personal pain and distress that continue to reverberate in Aboriginal communities to this day.” As discussed earlier, many of our own Elders have confirmed Canada’s statement, sharing with us that the residential school experiences led many people to lose their languages, to be ashamed of who they are as First Nation, Inuit and Métis people, and to become reluctant or unable to pass their languages and cultures on to their children.

Other studies and reports, including that of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, attest to the accuracy of these statements and also discuss a wide range of general psychological harms attendant on the residential school experience.⁸⁰ Some of these are reduced self-esteem; isolation from family and loss of parental guidance; loss of spiritual values; loss of reasonable quality of education; and loss of kinship, community and traditional ways of being.⁸¹ These are lifelong harms that have had devastating effects on the persons concerned, as well as on their communities. Canada’s consistent refusal to address these harms simply adds to the pain and distress that residential school survivors experience. It is difficult for us to conceive how such a stance will assist in achieving the goals of reconciliation and renewal of the partnership between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians mentioned in other parts of the *Statement of Reconciliation*.

There have been many reasoned criticisms of Canada’s approach to these issues in the media, expert reports and academic studies, most of which have focused on the hugely disproportionate amount of money spent on processing compensation applications when compared with the amount actually paid out to survivors. Recently, the AFN, in its *Report on Canada’s Dispute Resolution Plan to Compensate for Abuses in Indian Residential Schools*, has called for a lump sum award for any person who attended an Indian residential school as compensation for harms suffered, whether or not such a person suffered sexual, physical or severe emotional abuse. The AFN recommendation reads as follows:

1. To ensure that the full range of harms are redressed, we recommend that a lump sum award be granted to any person who attended an Indian Residential School, irrespective of whether they suffered

separate harms generated by acts of sexual, physical or severe emotional abuse.⁸²

We support this recommendation and call on Canada to take action to implement this as soon as possible so that the many Elders who still survive may have their losses acknowledged. We believe that this acknowledgement of the great loss that individuals suffered, particularly the loss of connection to their languages and cultures, is vital. Further, they should not be made to follow arbitrary and program-oriented procedures to seek redress for the loss of the most vital attribute, aside from life itself, that a human being can have: his or her sense of identity, as conveyed through one’s own language, culture and spiritual beliefs.

We also support the recommendation on broader grounds. In our view, forcibly removing language and culture from individual First Nation, Inuit and Métis people is tantamount to a breach of Aboriginal and treaty rights, as well as a breach of the Crown’s fiduciary duty, and should therefore be compensable. It is also our view that Canada’s refusal to compensate individuals who continue to suffer the devastating effects of their loss of connection to their communities and their languages, cultures and spiritual beliefs fails to uphold the honour of the Crown. Further, this refusal has the effect of appearing to relegate First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages to the position of subjugated languages that can be forcibly removed from the memories of the people who spoke them, with impunity.

Canada has taken the view that while language is the collective right of a community or language group, compensation for loss of language will be a programmatic response to communities and language groups. We believe Canada’s position to be fundamentally wrong. Government funding of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages must be made on the basis of their constitutional status and should not be viewed as arising as part of the compensation for legitimate claims for damages that arise from wrongs committed against many individuals.

It is our view that while language is a collective right, it is equally a fundamental human right, as well as an individual right. The minority language right protection in section 25 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* is a precedent for recognizing that language rights attach to individuals. The courts have long held that when an individual has been harmed then there

⁸⁰ See chapter 10 of the *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (Ottawa: 1996).

⁸¹ Assembly of First Nations, *Report on Canada’s Dispute Resolution Plan to Compensate for Abuses in Indian Residential Schools*, p. 10, citing other expert studies and reports.

⁸² Assembly of First Nations, *Report on Canada’s Dispute Resolution Plan to Compensate for Abuses in Indian Residential Schools* (Ottawa: 2004), p. 18.

must be compensation for that harm. We believe that this should be the case for residential school survivors. Such compensation, in our view, will also affirm the inherent value of language to each individual and begin to remove the stigma that residential schools attached to First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages and cultures.

Recommendation No. 6: Restitution and Reconciliation

We recommend:

That Canada implement as soon as possible the recommendation of the Assembly of First Nations to pay a lump-sum award by way of compensation to any person who attended an Indian Residential School. Alternatively, Canada and the churches establish a restitution fund to pay a lump-sum award to any person who attended an Indian Residential School, as compensation for emotional and psychological trauma brought on by loss of connection to family and community and to language and culture.

Language Planning in First Nation, Inuit and Métis Communities

Earlier in our report we discussed the degree of endangerment that many First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages are facing. We also reported hearing from participants in the consultations about the difficulties faced by language personnel trying to implement measures to save their languages with very limited funding. First Nation, Inuit and Métis organizations have called for some time for resources to be made available to enable their communities to carry out long-term language planning.⁸³

As part of the language planning process, communities are able to carry out research and dialogue on goals and priorities by:

- assessing the state of their languages and the interest in protecting and promoting those languages and identifying available resources;

⁸³ Language planning generally involves *status planning*, whereby goals are set (e.g., making it the language of the workplace) and policies and programs are put in place to achieve those goals; *corpus planning*, which is the technical component of working with the language itself, for example, by creating vocabulary to support its use in the workplace; and *acquisition planning*, whereby programs and initiatives are developed to encourage development of new speakers. In the workplace, this may include providing employees the opportunity to receive training in the language.

- considering community views on language use and bilingualism and how language is used in the community and factors involved in language shift, language maintenance and revitalization;
- establishing realistic and reasonable goals and developing programs and (or) policies to achieve them; and
- arriving at consensus on priorities and methods to be used.⁸⁴

During the consultations, we heard many express the view that Aboriginal governments, particularly First Nation and Métis governments, should declare their language an official language within their communities and governments; and furthermore, that official language designation should be supported by concrete policies that demonstrate commitment to that language. During our consultations we also heard some express concern that their governments either passively accepted language loss or, while stating that language was important, did little to support it. Community discussions and planning would allow members to reach consensus and give direction to their governments on the part language should play in community life and the policies that should be adopted. Examples of policies provided in the consultations include requiring employees and members of government to either be fluent in the language or be willing to learn. Further, those employees who are fluent should be provided a salary bonus, similar to that provided to official language speakers in the federal public service.

It is our view that such planning is vital for the development, implementation and evaluation of language revitalization strategies implemented at the local, regional or national levels. As discussed earlier in this report, international experience confirms that community-based or “bottom-up” language planning is crucial to the success of a national language strategy.⁸⁵ It is the community, rather than outside agencies, that must be in charge of setting priorities and establishing policies to meet common objectives.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ E. A. Brandt and V. Ayoungman, “Language Renewal and Language Maintenance: A Practical Guide,” *Canadian Journal of Native Education* 16(2) (1989), p. 42–77.

⁸⁵ Joshua Fishman (ed.), *Can Threatened Languages Be Saved? Reversing Language Shift, Revisited: A 21st Century Perspective* (Clevedon, U.K.: Multilingual Matters Ltd., 2001); Sue Wright, *Language Policy and Language Planning: From Nationalism to Globalisation* (2004); Daniel Nettles and Suzanne Romaine, *Vanishing Voices: The Extinction of the World's Languages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁸⁶ See Marianne B. Ignace, *Handbook for Aboriginal Language Program Planning in British Columbia* (First Nations Education Steering Committee, April 1998), at <http://www.schoolnet.ca/aboriginal/fnesc/index-e.html> and Northwest Territories Literacy Council, *Languages of the Land: A Resource Manual for Aboriginal Language Activists* (Yellowknife: 1999), at <http://www.nwt.literacy.ca/aborig/land/cover.htm>.

Community-based language planning must involve a wide spectrum of the community, with participation from youth, young parents, adults and Elders, as well as administrative staff and members of government. The *Handbook for Aboriginal Language Program Planning in British Columbia* and the Northwest Territories' *Resource Manual for Aboriginal Language Activists* provide further information on the design and implementation of strategic language planning.

While the communities must take the lead in this process, we recognize that there are also roles for regional and national organizations in developing a long-term language strategy. As part of our mandate, we considered this in some detail and make recommendations on the role of a proposed national language organization in Part VIII of this report.

Recommendation No. 7: A National Language Strategy

We recommend:

That a National Language Strategy be developed through community-based planning by First Nation, Inuit and Métis language communities, as well as by their regional and national representative organizations, with coordination and technical support to be provided by the proposed national language organization.

As a first step in community language planning, a survey to assess the condition of the language should be carried out. In addition to other needs assessment and planning activities, personal interviews may be involved with all speakers, interested learners or community members. Such assessments may be done internally by the language group or may be done by an external agency. It is our view that an assessment of language vitality or endangerment must be carried out by each First Nation, Inuit and Métis community as part of its language planning. This baseline data would not only assist in developing achievable goals but also help in monitoring progress and evaluating whether approaches and methods are achieving desired results.

Importantly, by providing the resources necessary for this key initial activity on the part of affected First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities, Canada would begin to fulfill, in part, its international obligations to protect cultural heritage. For example, the *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* calls on member states to “safeguard

the linguistic heritage of humanity and giving support to expression, creation and dissemination in the greatest possible number of languages.” The *Action Plan for the Implementation of the Declaration on Cultural Diversity* also calls on member states to support and promote linguistic diversity and protect traditional knowledge.⁸⁷ We note also that this initiative is in keeping with UNESCO’s action plan for endangered languages outlined in Exhibit 2 below:

Exhibit 2 Action Plan for Endangered Languages UNESCO

1. *Suggest* to Member States that they
 - a) *Survey and profile* those languages which are found to be endangered;
 - b) *Actively promote* the recognition of endangered languages of their countries;
 - c) *Encourage* the documentation of endangered languages;
 - d) *Create* the conditions which facilitate the active use of and access to those languages, by, inter alia, assigning all relevant languages their rightful place in the educational system, media, and access to cyberspace, subject to the wishes of individual speech communities, respecting their commitments to linguistic human rights;
 - e) *Foster* speech communities’ pride in their own languages and cultures, as well as secure equal prestige for all languages of a state;
 - f) *Explore* the economic and social benefits of linguistic and cultural diversity as a stimulus for sustainable development;
 - g) *Also provide*, where feasible and with assistance from the international community, funding for documentation, revitalization, and strengthening programmes for endangered languages as specified in 2. a–c below;
2. *Establish* a financial and administrative mechanism
 - a) to support projects which document endangered languages, notably:
 - recording, collecting and publishing new materials;
 - safeguarding existing archives;
 - updating the UNESCO *Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger of Disappearing*;
 - b) to initialize projects which strengthen and revitalize endangered languages, notably language training programmes which ensure intergenerational transmission;
 - c) to produce and disseminate

⁸⁷ See Appendix H for the complete action plan.

- training manuals for community-based documentation, teaching and curriculum development;
- creative work in endangered languages;

Source: Recommendations to UNESCO for Action Plans on the Safeguarding of Endangered Languages, March 13, 2003.

Further, Article 11 of the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2003) directs state parties to, among other things, “identify and define, with the cultural communities, the various intangible cultural heritage present in its territory.”⁸⁸

We see this baseline survey and associated language planning at the community and regional levels as the foundation of a national long-term strategy. As this would involve input from more than 700 communities with 61 languages and an unknown number of dialects, we are of the view that this work would need to take place over at least three years.

Drawing from the statements of participants in the community consultations, an important aspect of a baseline survey would be the planning and coordination expected to be carried out by communities. Participants from the many consultation sessions expressed the desire for greater community input into the planning and implementation of any development that affects languages and cultures. There are many benefits that can be achieved from direct community input. Included here is a summary of some of these benefits:

- collaborative process in planning of community needs;
- strengths of partnership between community, regional and Aboriginal languages and cultures councils;
- ownership of data by the community;
- accurate language and cultural data that ultimately supports more effective planning at all levels;
- direct input of Elders, youth and parents from communities;
- data used for other community planning and development — resources for instructional and remedial purposes;
- data to support the 100-year national language strategy;
- strengthened community identity and sense of belonging;

- confidence in youth and families;
- increased language cognition and pride;
- increased healthy lifestyles through participation in traditional ceremonies, healing activities and learning opportunities;
- development of a better understanding by young people of their socioeconomic environments;
- increased understanding and knowledge among our people of their respective cultural world views — and in turn, this knowledge contributing directly to their becoming responsible members of the community and society as a whole; and
- culturally relevant language measurement tools and outcomes for First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages.

The community must be the primary place of focus for action. It is here where mobilization must take the lead role in planning, development and implementation. Stabilizing languages encompasses all aspects of the community.

Local language advocates should have a role in helping their communities to understand the fundamental issues related to the survival of a language. This is an essential component to “marketing” the idea of community mobilization for the survival and maintenance of a language. The ideal plan of action is for local communities to be directly involved in the planning, development and implementation of baseline surveys. One of the messages that participants reiterated in many sessions is that communities have the ability to determine the health of their languages and in doing so may have the means to determine with greater accuracy how critical their status is. Direct community involvement is the key to garnering support for any initiative. Participants felt that when grassroots people are empowered — given the opportunity for shared ownership and the necessary financial and capacity-building resources — they can contribute to solution-building. This is a critical factor for success.

We are aware that some communities and regions have already begun this process; however, we also recognize that this type of planning is an ongoing process that should be updated periodically.

⁸⁸ Article 2 of the Convention defines “intangible cultural heritage,” to include “(a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage; (b) performing arts; (c) social practices, rituals and festive events; (d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; (e) traditional craftsmanship.”

Recommendation No. 8: Baseline Language Survey

We recommend:

That as the first component of a national long-term strategy, the national language organization coordinate a baseline survey of language conditions. The baseline survey will be conducted by First Nation, Inuit and Métis people as part of community-based language planning and needs assessments. Further, we recommend that funding for this work be provided separately from current commitments.

We are aware that a language survey may establish that there are languages with no remaining living speakers. These languages, which have either no speakers left or speakers but no domain in which to use the language, are described in the literature as having fallen silent or asleep.⁸⁹ Certainly, at least one First Nation language, Huron Wendat, has not had any speakers for generations. These “sleeping languages” should be able to access funding if the community wishes to take steps to bring the language back to life.

There are cases of languages being reconstructed and revived from this state of language silence or sleep. The most notable international example is that of the revival of Hebrew as a language of daily communication, beginning in the late 19th century. Prior to 1880 no one spoke it as a mother tongue. Today, it is the official language of Israel and is taught and spoken in other countries within Jewish populations.⁹⁰ There are also examples of American Indian languages being revived. For instance, the Chochoyeno language of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe of the East Bay of California, which had been sleeping for more than 60 years, is being revived with the use of a dictionary and research compiled well over a half century ago: they’ve gone from knowing nothing to being able to carry on a short conversation, sing songs and play games. Now they’re starting to do some creative writing.⁹¹

The key to the ability to revive sleeping languages is careful archiving and documentation of the language — “banking” the language, as Kirkness called it.⁹² For languages in a critical state and facing extinction, documentation and archiving with the help of all modern media of audio and video recording is the most imminent and critical task. Given the number of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages that have few speakers left, we believe it is vitally important to significantly increase funding of language preservation efforts. Those languages that have only a small number of fluent speakers left (e.g., fewer than 20), most of whom are elderly, and that therefore can be classified as being critically endangered,⁹³ must receive intensive support to enable their communities to take steps to document their language and culture. This may include recording, transcribing, archiving, preparing lexicons, grammars and dictionaries, or transmitting the language through intensive training activities, such as master–apprentice programs.

Recommendation No. 9: Funding of Critically Endangered Languages

We recommend:

That Canada provide funding, in addition to what will be available under the current commitment, for those First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities whose languages are critically endangered, in order that they may undertake additional work to preserve their languages.

There are numerous strategies and approaches for reviving languages, many of which have been vetted on an international scale by other Indigenous groups. Joshua Fishman, a prominent sociologist in this area, has developed an eight-stage approach to reversing language shift through language planning. His work is often cited as a template for revitalizing declining and endangered languages. Exhibit 3 summarizes the types of intervention by means of the Fishman model that First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities with languages in various conditions have used and are continuing to use. We would expect that a national language program should provide support for these types of initiatives.

⁸⁹ Leanne Hinton, “Sleeping Languages: Can They Be Awakened?” in *The Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice*, ed. by L. Hinton and K. Hale (San Diego: Academic Press, 2001).

⁹⁰ A summary history of the revival of Hebrew is provided in Mark Abley, *Spoken Here: Travels Among Threatened Languages* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2003) p. 229–33.

⁹¹ Mike Anton, “John Peabody Harrington: The Clue to Lost Native American Languages,” *Foundation for Endangered Languages Newsletter* 24 (Summer 2004), at www.ogmios.org/247.htm.

⁹² Verna Kirkness, “The Preservation and Use of Our Languages: Respecting the Natural Order of the Creator,” in *Indigenous Languages Across the Community*, ed. by Barbara Burnaby and Jon Reyhner (Flagstaff, Ariz.: Northern Arizona University, 2002), at <http://jan.ucc.nau.edu>.

⁹³ Here, we speak of 20 or fewer speakers for the entire linguistic group, as opposed to speakers in a particular geographic community.

Exhibit 3
Suggested Interventions Based on Different Stages of Language Endangerment

Current Status of Language	Suggested Interventions to Strengthen Language
Stage 8: Only a few Elders speak the language.	Implement Hinton's (1994) "Language Apprentice" Model where fluent Elders are teamed one-on-one with young adults who want to learn the language. Dispersed, isolated Elders can be connected by phone to teach others the language...
Stage 7: Only adults beyond childbearing age speak the language.	Establish "Language Nests" after the Maori and Hawaiian, models where fluent older adults provide pre-school child-care where children are immersed in their Indigenous language...
Stage 6: Some intergenerational use of language.	Develop places in community where language is encouraged, protected, and used exclusively. Encourage more young parents to speak the Indigenous language in home with and around their young children.
Stage 5: Language is still very much alive and used in community.	Offer literacy in minority language. Promote voluntary programs in the schools and other community institutions to improve the prestige and use of the language. Use language in local government functions, especially social services. Give recognition to special local efforts through awards, etc.
Stage 4: Language is required in elementary schools.	Improve instructional methods utilizing TPR [total physical response]... TPR-Storytelling... and other immersion teaching techniques. Teach reading and writing and higher level language skills... Develop two-way bilingual programs where appropriate, where non-speaking elementary students learn the Indigenous language and speakers learn a national or international language. Need to develop Indigenous language text-books to teach literacy and academic subject matter content.
Stage 3: Language is used in places of business and by employees in less specialized work areas.	Promote language by making it the language of work used throughout the community... Develop vocabulary so that workers in an office could do their day-to-day work using their Indigenous language...
Stage 2: Language is used by local government and in the mass media in the minority community.	Promote use of written form of language for government and business dealings/records. Promote Indigenous language newsletters, newspapers, radio stations, and television stations.
Stage 1: Some language use by higher levels of government and in higher education.	Teach tribal college subject matter classes in the language. Develop an Indigenous language oral and written literature through dramatic presentations and publications. Give tribal/national awards for Indigenous language publications and other notable efforts to promote Indigenous languages.

Source: Adapted from Fishman's (1991, p. 88–109) Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale for Threatened Languages, in Jon Reyhner, "Some Basics of Indigenous Language Revitalization," in *Revitalizing Indigenous Languages*, ed. by Jon Reyhner, Gina Cantoni, Robert N. St. Clair and Evangeline Parsons Yazzie (Flagstaff, Ariz.: Northern Arizona University, 1999), at http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/RIL_Intro.html.

As stated earlier, it is clear that the affected communities must play a central role in language preservation and revitalization efforts. Without the involvement and commitment of community members, it will not be possible to reverse language shift. That being said, in the absence of adequate resources community efforts will be stop gap at best. The current level of funding provided by the federal, provincial and territorial governments to First Nation, Inuit and Métis for language protection, promotion and education is not adequate to meet even the most basic needs for language planning or programming.

In sum, it is our view that it is not possible to take concrete, lasting steps to reverse language shift with the limited funds provided by Canadian Heritage through the Aboriginal Languages Initiative (ALI), the program that accounts for almost all the funding currently available for language revitalization, according to the ALI evaluation. Exhibit 4, which sets out funding provided to First Nation and Inuit and to Francophones residing in Nunavut, highlights the severity of the problem and the systemic inequity built into existing federal language funding.

**Exhibit 4
Language Funding in Nunavut for 2001–2002**

	Total	Population	Per individual
First Nations	\$ 3,690,000 ¹	690,101	\$ 5.35 ²
Inuit	\$ 1,100,000	25,000	\$ 44.00
Inuit (ALI)	\$ 738,000	25,000	\$ 29.52
Francophone	\$ 1,600,000 ³	410	\$ 3,902.00

¹ All funding as reported in the ALI evaluation, population figures. Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Basic Departmental Data 2002 (Ottawa: DIAND, March 2003).

² If funds were distributed equally among all 644 First Nations communities, each community would have received funding of \$5,734.

³ Figures on Inuit and Francophone funding provided in a CBC radio interview by Anna Maria Temonte, with Minister Louis Tapardjuk, Minister of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth (The Current, Feb. 28, 2005).

Although funding will increase under the commitment of \$160 million over 10 years (\$16 million per year), this is not enough. In this scenario, funding for First Nations would increase to approximately \$12 per person or \$13,416 per community. Under the Task Force’s recommendation that the \$160 million be distributed over five years, funding would be the equivalent of \$26 per First Nation member, or \$26,832 per community. Funding for Inuit would be approximately \$68 per individual, or \$66,000 per community, over 10 years or \$136 per individual and \$133,000 per community over 5 years.

It is expected that funding of Métis communities will be at approximately the same level as that of First Nation

communities. Clearly, \$160 million, whether over 10 or 5 years, is inadequate, particularly in light of the costs associated with conducting a baseline survey and preparing community language plans as the basis of the long-term national strategy.

Language Education

We believe that language education can and should play a vital role in language revitalization. We note that Canada, in its paper for the Canada–Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable on Lifelong Learning, expressed the same view:

Culturally relevant and appropriate Aboriginal learning programs and services would help strengthen Aboriginal cultural identity and languages and facilitate the inclusion of Aboriginal people in a manner that recognizes their cultures and fosters their contribution to Canada. Language preservation is particularly critical since more than half of Canada’s Aboriginal languages will become extinct within two generations given current trends.⁹⁴

In this section, we discuss the role of language education in revitalization, in particular the benefits of language education in the overall educational system. We then consider the problems encountered and make recommendations on ways that government and a national language organization could assist in addressing them.

According to UNESCO, a language is considered endangered if it is not learned by the majority of children in the community.⁹⁵ Statistics on First Nation, Inuit and Métis mother tongue and language use in the home indicate that almost all languages do not meet this standard. Although studies confirm that learning language from parents or grandparents is the most preferable means of intergenerational transmission, educational institutions can and should play a role in language revitalization.

Need for Culturally Relevant Education

In a background paper prepared for the Canada–Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable on Lifelong Learning, the federal government, noting the difficulties

⁹⁴ Canada, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, *Canada–Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable Lifelong Learning Background Paper* (2004), at http://www.aboriginalroundtable.ca/sect/lrng/bckpr/goc_bgpr_e.html.

⁹⁵ See *Basic Issues: Language Facts*, at http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=16917&URL_DO=DO_PRINTPAGE&URL_SECTION=201.html#facts.

encountered in the school system by Aboriginal children and youth, reported that “51% of the First Nation population, 42% of Métis and 58% of Inuit have less than a high school graduation certificate compared to 31% of the total Canadian population.”⁹⁶ Going on, federal authorities also spoke of why the system has continued to fail so many of our youth:

Aboriginal young people are most likely to withdraw between Grades 9 and 10. Some reasons for withdrawal by Aboriginal youth at this stage have been identified: feelings of alienation after spending eight years in a school system that too often does not support their identity because of a lack of Aboriginal high school teachers; limited curriculum dealing with contemporary Aboriginal languages, cultures, history and political issues; lack of parental and community involvement, especially where there are no local high schools; encountering racist attitudes that undermine self-esteem; the current emphasis of the public school system on intellectual cognitive achievement at the expense of spiritual, social and physical development; and the marginalization of youth in decision making about their education.⁹⁷

In our consultations we heard both Elders and First Nation, Inuit and Métis educators express similar concerns and speak of the need to make language and culture one of the foundations of a child’s education.

Immersion Language Education

A great deal of psychological, psychosociological, cultural and educational research on the advantages of bilingualism for the learner has accumulated in the last 30 years. These studies indicate that bilingualism promotes creative thinking and development of greater metalinguistic skill and is positively related to concept formation, classification, creativity, analogical reasoning and visual–spatial skills.⁹⁸

In an address to a conference on language education, the Honourable Stéphane Dion, then President of the Privy Council and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, cited the following benefits as the rationale for Canada’s support of immersion language education:

- students fluent in two languages obtain higher scores in both verbal and non-verbal intelligence testing;
- second-language students obtain higher test scores in reading, language and mathematics;
- second-language education significantly strengthens first-language skills in areas of reading, vocabulary, grammar and communication skills;
- second-language students have superior cross-cultural skills and adapt better to varying cultural contexts.⁹⁹

Recent empirical research on the Inuktitut immersion program in the Kativik School District pointed to similar improvements in cognitive and language skills in children who were exposed in an early immersion program.¹⁰⁰ Anecdotal evidence and achievement tests administered to students in long-term Indigenous language immersion programs also verify that students who receive long-term intensive Indigenous language exposure and instruction also tend to fare better academically and socially than peers who are not exposed to their language.¹⁰¹

These benefits are also illustrated in a recent report on the Mohawk language immersion program. Modeled after French immersion programs in Quebec, the Mohawk program began in 1984 and is now a model for other Indigenous programs, both within North America and internationally. The positive effect that the immersion program has had on the students, as well as on the community as a whole, is demonstrated by the following findings:

- The program has a retention rate of at least 90 percent. This exceeds those of other school boards in the province.
- More than 85 percent of the immersion students passed either the grade 10 or grade 12 provincial English literacy test or courses. Some students took the initiative to enrol in extra English courses to ensure they met the provincial requirements.
- Graduates have fared well, with averages comparable to those of English-stream students in surrounding school boards.

⁹⁶ *Op. cit.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 16–17.

⁹⁸ Hinton and Hale (2001), p. 17.

⁹⁹ François Grosjean, *Life with Two Languages: An Introduction to Bilingualism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), cited in the notes to the Stéphane Dion address, “Why Immersion and Second Language Education Will Be Important in Our Action Plan,” speech delivered at Celebrating the Past, Reflecting on the Present, Cultivating the Future of CPE, October 18, 2002, Ottawa, at http://www.cpfnb.com/articles/stephane_dion.htm.

¹⁰⁰ Taylor, Donald, Stephen, Wright, et al., “Kativik Initiated Research: The Basis for Informed Decision Making” (Nunavik, Que.: Kativik School Board, 2001). For further educational research on bilingualism see Bibliography for August and Garcia (1988); Crawford (1989); Cummins (1981, 1989); Cummins and Swain (1986); Genesee (1987); Holm and Holm (1990); Skutnabb-Kangas (1988); Taylor (1990).

¹⁰¹ Ignace (2004); Greymorning (1997); Ayoungman (1995).

- Of 70 graduates since 1999, as few as four are now on social assistance, the rest having gone on to post-secondary education or entering the work force.
- Graduates are articulate and confident of who they are in the community and in Canadian society.
- Many of the graduates can conduct entire portions of the ceremonies of the Longhouse, of the medicine societies, of rites of passage, of name giving and of funerals, including full orations and music.
- Many are now equipped to speak to their children in the Mohawk language and thereby ensure intergenerational transmission.¹⁰²

The multiple benefits of bilingualism or multilingualism are also recognized in UNESCO's position paper, *Education in a Multilingual World*, in which support for mother-tongue instruction in the language of the parents or community is seen as an important means of improving educational quality by building on the knowledge and experience of the learners and teachers.¹⁰³ As well, *the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Declaration on Cultural Diversity* calls on member states to promote the use of traditional pedagogies in education and make full use of culturally appropriate methods of communication and transmission of knowledge.¹⁰⁴

Although many studies attest to the benefits of immersion and bilingual programs, very few such programs are available to First Nation, Inuit or Métis students. Despite widespread interest, there are very few immersion programs and this is for a variety of reasons, including lack of support from school boards or educational authorities, limited funding, and lack of teachers and materials.

In light of the clear educational and social benefits of immersion education, we believe that funding should be made available to enable First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities that wish to provide immersion education to offer these programs. It is our view that funding should be made available at the same levels as those of funding provided for French and English immersion education through the Development of Official-Language Communities Program. Currently, First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities struggle to provide language education programs for all ages, from nursery school to adult education, within a budget that is often less than \$5,000 per year. Whereas, financial

¹⁰² Taehowenhs Amos Key Jr., Woodlands Cultural Centre, "History of Cayuga and Mohawk Language Immersion," and at Sweetgrass First Nations Languages Council Inc., Raising Our Voices Language Conference, October 21–22, 2004, Brantford, Ontario.

¹⁰³ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Education in a Multilingual World* (Paris: UNESCO, Paris, 2003), at www.unesco.org/education.

¹⁰⁴ Section 8 (see Appendix H for the action plan).

support for official language minority education (that is, French outside of Quebec and English in Quebec) is projected to top \$1 billion over the next four years, with funding provided for all phases of educational programming, including planning, school construction, board development, teacher training and ongoing school operations.

Recommendation No. 10: Funding of Immersion Programs

We recommend:

That Canada provide additional funding for First Nation, Inuit and Métis language immersion programs, at a level equivalent to that provided for the French and English languages through the Minority-Language Education component of the Development of Official-Language Communities Program.

It is our view that immersion language education can play an important role in language revitalization. Immersion programs should be available outside of schools as well and include summer programs for youth and short-term programs for family groups, particularly young families of parenting age. We are particularly conscious of the importance of involving youth in their languages and culture. In the consultations, we heard many express grave concern that too many of our youth have lost their way, becoming involved in substance abuse, violence and gangs or, sadly, committing suicide. We have also heard how First Nation, Inuit and Métis youth benefit from the guidance and moral grounding that their language and culture can provide. Certainly, the many studies we refer to earlier confirm the intellectual and academic benefits of learning a second language. We believe it important that our youth be given the opportunity to learn their languages in the same way as youth who speak official minority languages.

Recommendation No. 11: Funding of Immersion Programs for Youth

We recommend:

That Canada make available bursaries to enable First Nation, Inuit and Métis youth to attend five-week immersion courses in their languages and cultures in the same manner as is provided to French and English youth in the Second-Language Learning component of the Enhancement of Official Languages Program.

Second-Language Programs

Second-language programs are important for linguistic communities that do not have the resources to implement immersion programs. Such programs have demonstrated success, particularly in Europe, where experience confirms that proficiency in a target language can be achieved with maximal curriculum resources, maximally trained teachers and opportunities for students to practise their skills outside of the classroom. However, First Nation, Inuit and Métis second-language programs do not meet this standard.

A large number of First Nation language programs exist as second-language programs throughout Canada. While some are offered by local school districts, it appears that the majority are offered in schools operated by First Nations. National surveys conducted by the AFN found that First Nations indicate that second-language programs are very limited in scope. Of the 267 language programs surveyed by the AFN, two thirds were at the preschool and elementary levels. Classes in First Nation languages were generally available only to grade 3. Almost 70 percent of these language programs did not have language education for the secondary level, and 80 percent did not have classes for adults.¹⁰⁵

Similar findings were reported in a survey of programs in British Columbia. The vast majority of programs are at the preschool or elementary level, and the programs tend to be on reserve in Band-operated schools. Language classes at the secondary level tend to be off reserve and operated by school districts.¹⁰⁶

According to language teachers, language programs at the primary and elementary levels often suffer from insufficient instructional time. This is owing to a variety of factors, including lack of funding, lack of respect and recognition of the language, lack of curriculum and instructional resources, and lack of trained teachers to carry longer blocks of instruction.

As a result of the many obstacles confronting them, most First Nation, Inuit and Métis language programs are unable to achieve their desired objective. The reality, by consensus of language teachers who teach in such programs, is that the existing programs lead to extremely low levels of proficiency. Thus, they tend to operate at the level of fostering appreciation and awareness of the language rather than producing

proficiency or fluency. Children typically learn the words for colours and numbers, the names of animals and a few terms of greeting and etiquette or mainly formulaic expressions. They do not tend to learn to communicate more broadly.¹⁰⁷

The limitations inherent in these second-language education programs are largely attributable to lack of financial and related support from the provincial, federal and territorial governments. That being said, we recognize that efforts are being made to make education more inclusive. One example is the Common Curriculum Framework for Aboriginal Language and Culture Programs: Kindergarten to Grade 12. However, despite worthwhile initiatives such as this, there is much to be done, particularly in the areas of funding and jurisdiction.¹⁰⁸

Despite the 1990 declaration that Inuktitut is an official language in the Northwest Territories, even the Inuit report that they are unable to provide an adequate level of education in that language.¹⁰⁹ Language education continues to be limited by the lack of funding from the territorial or federal governments to provide for teacher training or to develop learning materials to support Inuktitut and Inuvialuktun literacy. Even in Nunavut, Inuit hopes of being able to provide education to their children in their language have also not been realized because of a lack of funding.¹¹⁰

Little information is available on Métis languages in the school system. As the Métis National Council indicated in its presentation to the Canada–Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable on Lifelong Learning, Métis children are caught in a jurisdictional disagreement between the federal and provincial governments. Under existing federal and provincial funding agreements, there is no requirement to take into consideration the needs of, or be accountable

¹⁰⁷ Marie Battiste, unpublished paper prepared for the Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures (2004).

¹⁰⁸ Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education, Edmonton, Alberta, 2000.

¹⁰⁹ Designation as an official language will not necessarily result in increased funding for language education, as is the Inuit experience. The Maori also encounter this problem, as reported in Office of the Languages Commissioner of Nunavut, *Government Responses to Language Issues, 2007*. Despite the successes of *Kohanga Reo* and *Kura Kaupapa*, too few Maori students are able to access these programs for these programs to have a significant impact on Maori revitalization efforts. "Only half of Maori children receive any early childhood education, limiting the impact of *Kohanga Reo* to at most, 20 percent of Maori children under 5. Moreover, in 1999, only 14.7 percent of Maori students were enrolled in programmes where Maori was the language of instruction at least a third of the time. *Kura Kaupapa*, meanwhile account for barely 3 percent of total Maori enrolment. Perhaps an even greater hurdle to revitalization efforts is the very limited availability of Maori-intensive programmes beyond the primary level."

¹¹⁰ Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, "Backgrounder on Inuit and Education," discussion paper presented at the Life Long Learning Sectoral Meetings, October 2004, Ottawa.

¹⁰⁵ Assembly of First Nations, *Towards Linguistic Justice for First Nations* (Ottawa: AFN, 1990), p. ii.

¹⁰⁶ Marianne Ignace, Mercedes Hinkson and Mona Jules, *Aboriginal Language Teacher Education in B.C.: Education and Certification Needs* (Squamish, B.C.: First Nations Education Steering Committee, Aboriginal Languages Sub-committee, 1998).

to, Métis communities.¹¹¹ Given this stance, it can be expected that Métis experience the same difficulty with access to language programs as do the First Nations and Inuit. However, the Métis have expressed the resolve to work collaboratively with provincial schools to improve this situation and are interested in establishing pilot kindergarten to grade 3 schools in specific Métis communities, under the control of Métis community educational authorities.¹¹²

Among First Nations, funding for those living on reserve is provided under tuition agreements with the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND). However, these funding formulas do not make provision specifically for language education. Instead, they include it as one option among various curriculum enrichment activities. As a result, language education has been in competition for funds with other vital services, such as special needs programs or counseling.¹¹³

These same problems are also encountered in the federal sphere in connection with the 496 First Nation schools located on reserve. DIAND block funding for schools does not make particular provisions for language and cultural instruction in the allocation. First Nations are forced, therefore, to choose between offering language programs or providing urgently needed services, such as learning assistance. We view this as a significant problem, in light of the fact that 71,576 students — or approximately 60 percent of First Nation children for whom DIAND has responsibility under the *Indian Act* — are enrolled in First Nation schools.

Canada's failure to carry out its responsibility in First Nation education has been the subject of criticism by the Auditor General in her 2000 and 2004 reports.¹¹⁴ Recently, the federal government acknowledged some of the shortcomings in DIAND support for First Nations schools in its paper presented to Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable on Lifelong Learning:

Since the early 1970's, [DIAND] has devolved responsibility and control over day-to-day

administration of on-reserve elementary/secondary education to First Nations. Devolution of responsibility for elementary/secondary education to First Nations was not accompanied by support for the development of regionally-based structures to support schools operating in First Nations communities. Band operated schools, therefore, generally operate without the support mechanisms that are available to other Canadian education providers through provincial education ministries and school boards.¹¹⁵

First Nations, their school boards and the AFN are working to address these issues. A recent study sponsored by First Nations proposed that Canada address the problems related to insufficient resources by establishing a foundation:

...[that] the Minister develop legislation in full partnership with First Nations that acknowledges First Nations languages as the first languages of Canada and, in addition, create an endowed foundation to ensure adequate resources for delivery of quality First Nations language and culture programs at the community level for both on- and off-reserve students. This should include, at a minimum:

- teacher training; and,
- appropriate pedagogy, texts, finance, buildings, equipment and traditional and innovative technology.¹¹⁶

We support the recommendations of the Minister's National Working Group on Education. We caution, however, that federal funding for a foundation of this type should not take away from DIAND's responsibility, according to the provisions and spirit and intent of treaties and the *Indian Act*, to fund education that is the equal of that provided to other Canadian children. While DIAND's stated objective is parity with provincially funded schools, the actual levels of First Nation school funding falls well short of this. According to the British Columbia First Nations Education Steering Committee, present levels of funding need to be increased significantly if this objective is to be met:

¹¹¹ Métis National Council, background paper prepared for the Aboriginal Roundtable on Lifelong Learning, 2004, at http://www.aboriginalroundtable.ca/sect/lmg/index_e.html.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ The 2005–2006 federal budget provided for increased funding for special needs education; therefore, this problem has been alleviated to some extent.

¹¹⁴ Auditor General, "Indian and Northern Affairs Canada — Elementary and Secondary Education," chap. 4, *April 2000 Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the House of Commons* (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2004); "Indian and Northern Affairs Canada — Education Program and Post-Secondary Student Support," chap. 5, *April 2000 Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the House of Commons* (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2004).

¹¹⁵ Canada, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, *Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable Lifelong Learning Background Paper* (2004), at http://www.aboriginalroundtable.ca/sect/lmg/bckpr/goc_bgpr_e.html.

¹¹⁶ National Working Group on Education, *Final Report of the Minister's National Working Group on Education, Our Children — Keepers of the Sacred Knowledge* (Ottawa: DIAND, December 2002), p. 19.

Using 1999 allocation levels for an elementary/junior secondary school with 100 students... calculated provincial funding at \$1,129,152 and DIAND funding at \$663,517, 41% below the provincial level. A more recent study... examined 88 band-operated schools in BC and found that the funding provided by DIAND would have to be increased by 34% to match the amounts that local school districts would have provided for the 2002/2003 school year. While the disparity in funding seems to be slowly improving, federal educational funds available to band-operated schools remain substantially below provincial levels.

Assuming similar differentials in other provinces, the federal government through DIAND may be supplying only about 75% of the educational funding provided by provincial systems.¹¹⁷

More equitable levels of direct federal funding would better equip First Nation schools to provide comprehensive linguistic and cultural programs.

Recommendation No. 12: Equitable Funding for First Nation Schools

We recommend:

That funding of First Nation schools by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development be provided at the same level and standard as that provided to Ministries of Education through Master Tuition Agreements.

The Community's Role in Language Education

We believe Canada, as well as the provinces and territories, can and must play a role in providing the necessary support to First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples so that we can provide quality education to our youth and children and begin to restore our languages to their rightful places in our children's lives. By the same token, we also see First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities as full and active participants in the process of improving language education in the school system and encouraging children's and youth's interest in learning their language.

¹¹⁷ Bill Postl, *First Nations Schools/Provincial Schools Funding Analysis: 2002/2003 School Year* (Vancouver: First Nations Education Steering Committee, January 2004), cited in *Moving Forward: National Roundtable on Aboriginal Education*, at <http://www.saoe.ca/movingforward/supportD1.html>.

Support by adults and parents is crucial for school-based language education programs to play a role in language revitalization. According to Fishman, this requires that young adults of parenting age be instructed in parenting in the language so that children will arrive at school having acquired their mother tongue at home. Further, children must be exposed to out-of-school and post-school functions in the language so that the language continues to have relevance and value.¹¹⁸

Clearly, it is critical that the lessons taught in school become part of community and family life. Otherwise, we risk seeing language education become compartmentalized and isolated from broader community processes, with very little benefit to long-term language revitalization.

Success in language programming, whether in schools or in the community, also cannot be achieved without the support of the Elders and the community. In a review of language programs, Battiste found that in successful school language programs, strong grassroots activity is evident, and community members are actively involved in the planning, organization and implementation of the programs. Successful programs that engage the community and the parents are built on extending the educational experience beyond the school and into the daily lives of the students.¹¹⁹ As we stated earlier, community-based languages programs will be an important part of a long-term strategy to revitalize languages.

Language Education in Correctional Institutions

Another aspect of language education that merits comment is in connection with the many First Nation, Inuit and Métis people in Canada's correctional institutions. Since 1967 there have been many reports and studies documenting the massive overrepresentation of First Nation, Inuit and Métis people in the Canadian justice system.¹²⁰ Many of these prior reports are reviewed and summarized by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in its 1996 publication, *Bridging the Cultural Divide: A Report on Aboriginal People and Criminal Justice in Canada*.

¹¹⁸ Joshua Fishman, *Can Threatened Languages be Saved? Reversing Language Shift Revisited: A 21st Century Perspective* (Clevedon, U.K.: Multilingual Matters, 2000) p. 15. <http://www.saoe.ca/movingforward/supportD1.html>.

¹¹⁹ Marie Battiste, unpublished paper prepared for the Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures (2004).

¹²⁰ According to figures provided to the Task Force by Correctional Service Canada, First Nation, Inuit and Métis (FNIM) offenders make up nearly 20 percent of federally incarcerated persons, despite the fact that FNIM peoples as a whole make up less than 3 percent of the general Canadian population. For more statistics on incarcerated First Nation, Inuit and Métis persons, go to the Correctional Service Canada Web site, at www.csc-ccc.gc.ca.

On the basis of these reports and the other evidence before it, the Royal Commission concluded that the justice system had failed First Nation, Inuit and Métis people and that it showed no signs of being remedied in the short term.¹²¹ In its examination of the causes of this overrepresentation at the various stages of the justice system, from initial contact with the police through to incarceration and parole, the Royal Commission found three reasons for the disproportionate numbers of First Nation, Inuit and Métis people who find themselves entangled with the criminal law.¹²²

The first focused on the cultural inappropriateness of mainstream justice processes for First Nation, Inuit and Métis people, who tend to seek healing and social reintegration, rather than punishment and social isolation in their own approaches to criminal behaviour. The result is to leave First Nation, Inuit and Métis people alienated from what often appears to them to be a foreign and oppressive system that inspires fear and confusion but otherwise has little meaning.

The second reason for this overrepresentation focused on socioeconomic issues: that the marginalization of First Nation, Inuit and Métis people from mainstream society inevitably places them at a disadvantage in comparison with other Canadians. The apparent neutrality of the justice system tends to discriminate against First Nation, Inuit and Métis people by applying laws that have an adverse impact on people of less means in an overwhelmingly middle-class society. Overall First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples' lack of financial means attracts disproportionate police attention, leads to an inability to pay fines or meet the social stability criteria required to make bail, and creates the conditions for recurring rounds of remand and incarceration. As the Royal Commission put it, "Aboriginal people go to prison for being poor."¹²³

The third reason highlighted by the Royal Commission focused on the historical process of colonialism that has made First Nation, Inuit and Métis people "poor beyond poverty."¹²⁴ The social disintegration of their communities brought on by the severing of access to traditional territory, outlawing of spiritual practices, undermining of traditional governments and community institutions, removal of children from their homes and communities, and general disparaging of First Nation, Inuit and Métis

languages and cultures led inevitably to varying levels of social disorder that have fueled cycles of poverty, powerlessness and criminality.

In this regard, many First Nation, Inuit and Métis persons described to the Commission how their removal and placement in non-Aboriginal foster homes — where contacts with family, language and culture were severed — and their subsequent experiences in juvenile detention facilities virtually assured their eventual incarceration in a federal correctional institution.¹²⁵ One way in which First Nation, Inuit and Métis persons in federal institutions were addressing their incarceration, however, was by coming to terms with the causes of their alienation from their own families, communities and spiritual values by returning to their own social values and spiritual traditions.

This process in turn has led to a great revival in interest among prisoners in working with Elders and others to reverse the effects of their alienation from their own families, communities and nations. The federal government has tried to accommodate the initiative shown by them by giving their spirituality and spiritual leaders and Elders the same status and respect in the correctional system as that given to other religions and other religious leaders. Parliament has also formally authorized Correctional Service Canada to offer spiritual programs and to enlist the aid of local First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities in this effort through the following sections of the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act*:

- 80. Without limiting the generality of section 76, the Service shall provide programs designed particularly to address the needs of aboriginal offenders.
- 81. (1) The Minister or a person authorized by the Minister, may enter into an agreement with an aboriginal community for the provision of correctional services to aboriginal offenders and for payment by the Minister, or by a person authorized by the Minister, in respect of the provision of those services.
- (3) In accordance with any agreement entered into under subsection (1), the Commissioner may transfer an offender to the care and custody of an aboriginal community, with the consent of the offender and of the aboriginal community...

¹²¹ Canada, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *Bridging the Cultural Divide: A Report on Aboriginal People and Criminal Justice in Canada* (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1996), p. 26–27.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 39–53.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

83. (1) For greater certainty, aboriginal spirituality and aboriginal spiritual leaders and Elders have the same status as other religions and other religious leaders.
- (2) The Service shall take all reasonable steps to make available to aboriginal inmates the services of an aboriginal spiritual leader or elder ...
84. Where an inmate who is applying for parole has expressed an interest in being released to an aboriginal community, the Service shall, if the inmate consents, give the aboriginal community...
- (b) an opportunity to propose a plan for the inmate's release to, and integration into, the aboriginal community.

As a result of these and related provisions and given that normal correctional programs do not always work with First Nation, Inuit and Métis offenders, most federal correctional institutions offer a variety of programming delivered by Elders or other respected First Nation, Inuit and Métis spiritual advisors. For example, under section 81, a number of Healing Lodges have been established in western Canada. These lodges are an alternative to standard correctional facilities. They are run by the actual communities and offer traditional teachings and methods of healing offenders under the guidance of First Nation, Inuit and Métis staff.¹²⁶

Under section 84, a number of minimum-security institutions run by Correctional Service Canada, but in cooperation with the communities, have been built near those communities so that incarcerated persons may be gradually reintegrated into community social life.¹²⁷ Moreover, even in institutions run entirely by Correctional Service Canada, Pathways Units have been established where entire wings may be populated solely by First Nation, Inuit and Métis persons and where they

have regular access to Elders and are able to hold Sweats and other traditional practices.¹²⁸

What has been missing so far is any systematic attempt to provide language training to incarcerated First Nation, Inuit and Métis persons to enable them to participate more deeply and fully in their own traditions. As we have discussed earlier and as the Elders and other persons with whom we consulted have confirmed, the ability to speak one's own language is the gift that allows someone to properly participate in the sacred ceremonies and spiritual traditions of his or her own people.

We urge Correctional Service Canada to take the next step and to fund language training in all federal correctional institutions. Ideally this would entail contracting with nearby First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities that have both speakers and trained language teachers, as well as training existing speakers among incarcerated persons. In cases where this is not possible, it may involve the next best alternative of providing facilities for distance learning of language, using the Internet or other technologies and providing training materials such as books and cassettes.

Recommendation No. 13: Language Education in Correctional Institutions

We recommend:

That the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness and the Commissioner of Corrections use their powers under the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* to provide federal funding for language programming and strengthen cultural programming to federally incarcerated First Nation, Inuit, and Métis persons.

Language Teacher Training

Language education programs require qualified language training instructors, as well as appropriate linguistic and cultural pedagogy. Many participants in our consultations called for greater investments in teacher training, particularly in immersion teacher training. We agree. Moreover, we see this is an urgent need. Instructors are required for second-language, bilingual and immersion programs, including core subjects. Language educators must also play key roles in community-based language

¹²⁶ Healing lodges are minimum-security facilities that are planned and monitored in partnership with a First Nation, Inuit or Métis (FNIM) community. Transfer to a healing lodge typically requires an offender to be rated at a minimum-security level and to be committed to following the FNIM path of healing. A holistic philosophy governs the approach, whereby individualized programming is delivered within a context of community interaction, with a focus on preparing for release. In the healing lodges, an emphasis is placed on spiritual leadership and on the value of the life experience of staff members, who act as role models.

¹²⁷ Correctional Service Canada (CSC) reported to the Task Force that CSC Aboriginal community development officers contacted approximately 165 First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities and 93 FNIM organizations and committees in connection with this initiative. The number of release plans developed with a community increased from 12 at the outset to 187 in 2003–2004. Of these, 65 were in urban areas.

¹²⁸ Elders and Native liaison officers play an integral role in shaping the Pathways environment, and offenders must commit to working with the Elders and staff to follow a healing path if they are to remain in the unit.

programs, an important part of a language revitalization strategy. In our consultations, a number of educators also pointed to the need for specialized training for language teachers, including bachelor and postgraduate degrees in First Nation, Inuit and Métis language education. We believe that post-secondary students should be encouraged to develop fluency in their language and urge the federal government to provide the same financial support to First Nation, Inuit and Métis students as is currently available through the Odyssey and Explore youth language training programs.¹²⁹

Recommendation No. 14: Training Opportunities for Post-secondary Students

We recommend:

That Canada, and the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada establish, as part of their Action Plan on Aboriginal Education, a program to encourage First Nation, Inuit and Métis university students entering the teaching profession, particularly in language education, to become proficient in their languages by entering into master-apprentice programs or undertaking other cultural education in their communities. Specifically, that summer bursaries or employment programs be made available in the same manner as is provided for French and English youth language training programs.

Across Canada, a number of teacher training programs have been operating for some time, and others are being developed. However, it is clear that the pressing need for First Nation, Métis and Inuit language teachers remains and, in our view, has not yet been addressed. We recognize that efforts to increase the number of First Nation, Inuit and Métis teachers have been made for some time. As well, Canada's ministers of education recently announced an action plan to address First Nation, Inuit and Métis education, including teacher training and recruitment, in collaboration with First Nation, Inuit and Métis representatives and stakeholders.¹³⁰

Eight years ago, in its final report, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples considered the need for First Nation, Inuit and Métis teachers and made a number of specific recommendations in this regard:

¹²⁹ See http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/lo-ol/be/index_e.cfm for further information on the Odyssey and Explore programs.

¹³⁰ Canadian Council of Education Ministers, press release, March 8, 2005, at <http://www.cmec.ca/releases/press.en.stm?id=25>.

- 3.5.15 Canadian governments, Aboriginal education authorities, post-secondary institutions and teacher education programs adopt multiple strategies to increase substantially the number of Aboriginal secondary school teachers, including
 - (a) promoting secondary school teaching careers for Aboriginal people;
 - (b) increasing access to professional training in secondary education, for example, community-based delivery of courses and concurrent programs;
 - (c) offering financial incentives to students.
- 3.5.16 Federal, provincial and territorial governments provide support to increase the number of Aboriginal people trained as teachers by
 - (a) expanding the number of teacher education programs delivered directly in communities; and
 - (b) ensuring that students in each province and territory have access to such programs.
- 3.5.17 Teacher education programs, in collaboration with Aboriginal organizations and government agencies that sponsor professional and para-professional training, adopt a comprehensive approach to educator training, developing career paths from para-professional training to professional certification in education careers that
 - (a) prepare Aboriginal students for the variety of roles required to operate Aboriginal education systems; and
 - (b) open opportunities for careers in provincial education systems.
- 3.5.18 Provinces and territories require that teacher education programs
 - (a) in pre-service training leading to certification include at least one component on teaching Aboriginal subject matter to all students, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal;
 - (b) develop options for pre-service training and professional development of teachers, focused on teaching Aboriginal students and addressing Aboriginal education issues; and
 - (c) collaborate with Aboriginal organizations or community representatives in developing Aboriginal-specific components of their programs.

We believe that a review of teacher training should cover progress made towards implementing these recommendations. However, we believe that a review should be expanded to include:

- *Recruitment and retention of First Nation, Inuit and Métis teachers, as well as language teachers* — We are aware of concerns that First Nation schools are at a disadvantage in recruiting teachers, as salary and benefits offered, job security and working conditions are generally not on par with their counterparts in the public system. However, we also heard educators express concern that language instructors often do not receive enough support from the administration in the provincial and territorial school systems.
- *The roles that First Nation, Inuit and Métis post-secondary institutions will play in development of teachers, particularly language teachers* — We consider that the pedagogy and First Nation, Inuit and Métis post-secondary educational institutions should play a central role in training for immersion language instructors.

Recommendation No. 15: First Nation, Inuit and Métis Teacher Training

We recommend:

That First Nation, Inuit and Métis organizations and the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada conduct a review of progress made on First Nation, Inuit and Métis teacher and language teacher training initiatives relevant to recruitment and retention. Further, as part of this review, that the role of First Nation, Inuit and Métis post-secondary institutions in delivering language teacher training be reviewed, particularly with respect to immersion language teacher training.

Recommendation No. 16: First Nation, Inuit and Métis Post-secondary Institutions

We recommend:

That the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development provide additional resources to First Nation, Inuit and Métis post-secondary and existing institutions to enable them to establish language teacher training programs and, more specifically, immersion language teacher training programs.



PART VIII:
A NATIONAL LANGUAGE
ORGANIZATION

What is done to the land is done to the people, and what is done to the people, is done to the land. The Creator gave us all that we need: the forest, the people, the animals; all that grows; and, most important the language – so it is imperative that we take care of it.

PART VIII: A National Language Organization

Our mandate required that we consider alternative governance and financial management structures to support language revitalization, preservation and maintenance efforts. The following section discusses how a Languages and Cultures Council (LCC) may provide leadership in the planning and administration of a long-term national strategy. We discuss how we see the vision, mission statement, mandate, organizational structure and principles of operations. We then discuss finances, and our view of an endowment fund.

When considering how a national language organization could be structured, we took into account the views of the communities, the Circle of Experts and the national organizations. We were also mindful of the unique and distinct characteristics, interests and needs of First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples, as well as the importance of having an organization that will be accountable and transparent. We are also conscious of the further work required to develop a long-term national strategy. In particular, it is important that discussions be held with all government departments, and particularly the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, as well as the provinces and territories, so that there will be a coordinated effort to protect, promote and revitalize First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages. We therefore recommend that the LCC continue the work that the Task Force was unable to complete in the timeframe given to us.

Languages and Cultures Council

Recommendation No. 17: A National Language Organization

We recommend:

That a permanent body of First Nation, Inuit and Métis representatives (Aboriginal Languages and Cultures Council or “LCC”) be established.

Principles

The following principles would guide the development and implementation of the LCC.

- There is equality of access by all language and community groups.
- Each region will establish priorities in consultations with linguistic communities.
- The LCC will be managed in a fiscally responsible and transparent manner, with

accountability to the Canadian, First Nation, Inuit and Métis governments.

- Elders should be appropriately recognized and fairly compensated for their expertise and traditional knowledge.

First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages and cultural practices and expressions would be the foundations of the LCC national language strategy. Information created, gathered, recorded, interpreted or published by the LCC would conform to the guiding principles for respectful treatment of Indigenous and First Nation, Inuit and Métis knowledge. We recommend that the LCC adopt *Protocols and Guiding Principles for Conducting and for the Implementation of Research Using First Nation, Inuit and Métis Knowledge*.¹³¹

Vision

First Nation, Inuit and Métis language revitalization efforts will be child-centred, Elder focused and community-driven.

Mission Statement

Supporting and advocating for the preservation, maintenance and revitalization of our languages and cultures.

Mandate

The mandate of the LCC is to oversee the implementation and management of the national strategy for the preservation, revitalization and promotion of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages and cultures by addressing the immediate and long-term strategic issues, priorities, resources and directions. This includes but is not limited to the following areas:

1. Establishing a program operations function that will:
 - (a) distribute funds to First Nation, Inuit and Métis national organizations for the preservation, revitalization and promotion of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages;
 - (b) assist in the development of policies and strategies through research and support in preservation, revitalization and promotion efforts, including:

¹³¹ See Appendix D. The protocol is a lengthy document and not all of it has been reproduced. Appendix D is the part that pertains to the mandate of the proposed LCC and supports the discussion on traditional knowledge. The portions that have not been reproduced deal with programming issues of less relevance for present purposes.

- (i) providing technical support for a baseline study and needs assessment to be implemented by First Nation, Inuit and Métis linguistic communities,
 - (ii) working in collaboration with communities, regions and national organizations to develop a long-term national strategy, and
 - (iii) supporting legislative recognition of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages by carrying out necessary research and policy development, in cooperation with the communities, regions and national organizations; and
- (c) assist financially and technically in the development of regional clearing houses and communications centres for information related to the preservation, revitalization and promotion of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages and cultures, including:
- (i) disseminating information, such as best practices, curriculum and resources,
 - (ii) developing a communications strategy, including networking, public relations, newsletters, a Web site and conferences, and
 - (iii) assisting and supporting the development of a national Web site database for information access and software sharing across First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities.
2. Continuing the work of the Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures, including consulting with government departments to examine effective approaches and improve coordination to maximize the impact of existing federal policies and programs directly or indirectly supporting Aboriginal languages and cultures — this would include linkages with self-government, comprehensive claims — and territorial languages agreements.
 3. Consulting with provincial governments and agencies, including ministries of education, to encourage collaboration and to advance an integrated agenda on language revitalization.
 4. Making recommendations to the Minister responsible and stakeholders on program planning and administration, including funding and evaluation criteria.
 5. Promoting the creation of the position of a national language commissioner to take responsibility for monitoring implementation of a long-term national strategy.

Structure

The LCC would be an independent and apolitical First Nation, Inuit and Métis-controlled entity. We propose that the entity be governed by a council of representatives, with the representation as follows:

- six members representing First Nations;
- two members representing the Inuit;
- two members representing the Métis;
- one member representing an endangered language group;
- two *ex officio* Elders (one male and one female) on a rotational basis from First Nation, Inuit and Métis cultures;
- one youth on a rotational basis from First Nation, Inuit and Métis cultures; and
- one *ex officio* member appointed by the federal government.

The Council would select one of its members to act as chairperson. The chair would hold office for a period of four years and would not have a vote.

Each member of the Council (with the exception of the chair) would hold office for three years from the effective date of their appointment. Appointments would be staggered to ensure continuity and retain experience among Council members. A Council member failing, without just cause, to attend three or more meetings consecutively would be considered to have vacated the appointment. Should a Council member be unwilling or unable to complete a term, the LCC should seek an alternate appointee to serve the balance of the term.

Further planning and refinement of the governance and corporate structure would be required. The short timeframe and other limitations on the work of the Task Force, discussed earlier, prevented us from fully addressing these matters in our terms of reference. We propose that current Task Force members continue as the interim Council for one year, to take advantage of our acquired corporate memory and collective wisdom, which would expedite the planning and refinement of the LCC governance and corporate structure.

Recommendation No. 18: Establishment of the LCC

We recommend:

That current Task Force members be named as the Interim Council members and have the responsibility of establishing the LCC. The Interim Council members will act for a period of one year and carry out the following duties:

- **finalize the governance structure of the LCC;**
- **develop a three-year strategic plan;**
- **establish operations by preparing operating budgets, identifying staffing requirements and recruiting staff;**
- **negotiate transfer of Aboriginal language funds from Canadian Heritage;**
- **develop terms of reference and oversee a planning study for a language clearing house;**
- **plan and carry out the necessary research for implementation of a baseline survey and community-based language planning;**
- **seek nominations for the LCC; and**
- **shortlist candidates and provide the list to the national First Nation, Inuit and Métis organizations for final selection.**

Roles and Responsibilities of the Council

Candidates being considered for the council of representatives should possess the following qualifications:

- experienced in First Nation, Inuit or Métis language planning, programming or education;
- knowledgeable about First Nation, Inuit or Métis communities and government structures;
- experienced in non-profit governance, financial management and program administration; and
- fluent in a First Nation, Inuit or Métis language (in the case of candidates from critically endangered languages, he or she must be learning the language).

The Council would have the following roles and responsibilities:

- overseeing the development, implementation and management of the national language strategy;

- identifying and managing emerging priorities for action and implementing a plan, based on the community priorities identified in community language plans;
- developing and implementing processes for allocating funding under the strategy, based on the guidelines agreed to by the stakeholders;
- identifying and (or) developing linkages at the national, provincial or territorial, municipal and local levels to support the implementation of the national language strategy;
- identifying processes within the government to facilitate the successful implementation of the national language strategy;
- promoting languages as an integral part of Canadian and First Nation, Inuit and Métis identity;
- developing accountability frameworks to ensure program and financial accountability;
- disseminating information and communications on the implementation and performance of the national language strategy to First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities, government and the public, including through distribution of a Web-based newsletter;
- developing effective means for evaluation, based on multi-year measurement and assessment methods, aimed at the preservation, revitalization and promotion of the languages;
- sharing with the regions the responsibility for conducting evaluations;
- receiving reports from the participating organizations and providing an annual report to the First Nation, Inuit and Métis leadership and communities and Canada on funds spent, programs funded by the organization and, location, services delivered and results achieved;
- implementing a dispute resolution process; and
- establishing and implementing a conflict-of-interest policy and a code of ethics.

Accountability

It is crucial, in our view, that the LCC be committed to helping ensure successful outcomes linked to accountability measures. The ALI evaluation refers to the need for evaluative measures to assess whether projects achieve their objectives. In this regard, the “creation of more formal, measurable outcome and output measures to facilitate future evaluations” was recommended. The vast majority of projects are likely to identify either the objective of increasing fluency in speakers or of increasing the number of speakers.

We are aware of the difficulties this raises. As we discussed in “Part V — Where We Are Now,” there is no agreement on what constitutes fluency. Therefore, evaluation will be difficult. We note as well that the Official Languages in Education Program, which provides an annual budget of approximately \$164 million to the ministries of education, also encounters the same difficulty. A recent evaluation of this program made the following observation:

there is not currently any tool for consistently and on a national level measuring students at the end of their core or immersion second-language program. While New Brunswick has a system for evaluating students’ ability at the end of the secondary cycle, this is an exception. Most of the provinces and territories do not measure students’ command of the second language when they finish their schooling.¹³²

In collaboration with regions and communities, the LCC would seek to overcome these difficulties by establishing measures for determining outcomes and developing instruments for effective project evaluation. We recommend that the LCC put in place an evaluation process that, at a minimum, provides for the same standards as in the current ALI program funding agreement. A clear set of objectives and expected outcomes, with reporting mechanisms and other evaluative measures, would be developed in consultation with the communities and regions. Further, the LCC would regularly consult First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities to ensure that resources are applied and programming is directed towards assisting the achievement of language-planning objectives. As part of this process, the LCC must develop funding applications and reporting forms that both reflect and accommodate the diversity of perspectives and the needs of communities while they allow for accurate information gathering and the provision of meaningful information for community-based decision making.

Finances

In the following section we discuss funding under the ALI program and consider the level of funding required in the interim, until a long-term national strategy has been completed. We also discuss the principles that

should govern long-term funding of First Nation, Inuit and Métis language programs.

Current: Aboriginal Languages Initiative

The ALI was established in 1998 in response to the commitment made by the federal government in *Gathering Strength — Canada’s Aboriginal Action Plan* to preserve, protect and revitalize Aboriginal languages. The long-term goals and objectives of ALI were to increase the number of Aboriginal language speakers by expanding the domains in which First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages are spoken and increasing intergenerational language transmission.

The immediate objectives of the ALI are as follows:

- to increase the number and quality of Aboriginal language projects in Aboriginal communities;
- to increase the number of communities involved in Aboriginal language activities;
- to support the development of long-term strategies to revitalize and maintain Aboriginal languages; and
- to focus on early language learning.

Funding of \$20 million (\$5 million a year) was administered by the Assembly of First Nations, the Métis National Council and the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. Funding of First Nations is provided by way of a contribution agreement with the Assembly of First Nations, while the Métis and Inuit submit specific proposals. An evaluation of the ALI (see also Exhibit 5) reported the following:¹³³

- Since most provinces (with the exception of British Columbia and Quebec) do not fund Aboriginal languages, ALI is the only source of funding available for language planning, preservation and revitalization for the vast majority of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages.
- In light of the critical state of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages, the amount of funding available is negligible. This is confirmed by a parallel evaluation carried out by First Nations Confederacy of Cultural Education Centres (FNCCEC), which reported that in the first year of the ALI program, Saskatchewan communities received \$2,200 per year for their languages.¹³⁴

¹³² Prairie Research Associates Inc., *Evaluation of the Official Languages in Education Program* (Ottawa: Department of Canadian Heritage, June 25, 2003). Available from http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/em-cr/eval/2003/2003_09/index_e.cfm.

¹³³ Consilium, *Evaluation of the Aboriginal Language Initiative: Final Report* (Ottawa: Department of Canadian Heritage, February 26, 2003).

¹³⁴ FNCCEC Web site at www.fnccec.com.

- While the lack of baseline data and evaluative measures made it difficult to assess how well ALI was able to achieve the long-term objective of increasing the number of First Nation, Inuit and Métis language speakers, the evaluation was able to confirm that short-term objectives of increasing the number of language programs (1,200 over four years) was achieved.

Thus, while there was general agreement with how the ALI funds were being administered, concern was expressed in the following areas:

- Since funding does not reach communities until February, this means that projects must borrow funds to operate or expend funds intended for the year over a two-month period.
- Despite the fact that multi-year funding is needed to allow communities to carry out major initiatives, funding is short-term and usually project-specific.
- As discussed in the FNCCEC report and as illustrated by the funding summary in Exhibit 5, inequities exist in ALI regional allocations.
- Costs for administration, particularly by the three national organizations, should be contained so that funds not be taken up before reaching the communities.
- Funding for endangered languages should not be administered on a national basis by one organization but should be administered by the regions, which are in a better position to respond to local needs.
- French-speaking First Nations expressed concern that they were unable to receive services in French, and the committee reviewing proposals was not French-speaking.
- Urban-based Aboriginal peoples do not have adequate access to ALI funds.
- Individuals and informal groups also do not have adequate access to funds under the current administration.

Exhibit 5

ALI Funding Allocations, 1998–1999 to 2001–2002

ALI Funding Allocations (\$)	1998–1999	1999–2000	2000–2001	2001–2002	Totals
<i>First Nations</i>					
Assembly of First Nations	110,250	222,000	214,500	184,500	731,250
Critical Languages	628,425	1,265,400	1,222,650	1,051,650	4,168,125
Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey	146,632.5	295,260	285,285	245,385	972,562.5
Assembly of First Nations for New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island	146,632.5	295,260	285,285	245,385	972,562.5
Assembly of First Nations for Quebec and Labrador	146,632.5	295,260	285,285	245,385	972,562.5
Sweetgrass First Nations Language Council	146,632.5	295,260	285,285	245,385	972,562.5
Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs	146,632.5	295,260	285,285	245,385	972,562.5
Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre	146,632.5	295,260	285,285	245,385	972,562.5
Assembly of First Nations for Alberta	146,632.5	295,260	285,285	245,385	972,562.5
First Peoples Cultural Foundation	146,632.5	295,260	285,285	245,385	972,562.5
Council of Yukon First Nations	146,632.5	295,260	285,285	245,385	972,562.5
Dene Nation	146,632.5	295,260	285,285	245,385	972,562.5
Total (\$)	2,205,000	4,440,000	4,290,000	3,690,000	14,625,000
<i>Michif</i>					
Métis National Council	60,000	57,000	55,000	47,000	219,000
Métis Nation of Saskatchewan	49,600	150,000	145,000	125,000	469,600
Métis Provincial Council of British Columbia	40,000	28,711	53,500	45,250	167,461
Métis Nation of Ontario	40,000	55,000	53,500	45,250	145,600
Métis Nation of Alberta	40,000	125,000	120,000	105,000	390,000
Manitoba Métis Federation	64,000	150,000	145,000	175,000	534,000
Total (\$)	293,600	565,711	572,000	542,500	1,973,811
<i>Inuktitut</i>					
Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami	63,000	70,000	70,000	70,000	273,000
Inuvialuit Regional Corporation	63,000	158,277	152,493	129,253	503,023
Kitimeot Inuit Association	8,372	0	0	99,755	108,127
Kivalliq Inuit Association	63,000	123,018	118,506	100,460	404,984
Torngasok Cultural Centre	63,000	100,000	153,139	129,818	445,957
Avataq Cultural Institute	63,000	121,300	116,851	99,056	400,207
Qikiqtani Inuit Association	63,000	0	0	109,658	172,658
Total (\$)	386,372	572,595	610,989	738,000	2,307,956
<i>Canadian Heritage (Admin.)</i>	60,000	80,000	280,000	80,000	500,000
Yearly Total (\$)	2,944,972	5,658,306	5,752,989	5,050,500	
ALI Total (\$)					19,406,767

Sources: Annual and interim ALI reports collected from Department of Canadian Heritage, Assembly of First Nations, Métis National Council and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami; Consilium, *Evaluation of the Aboriginal Language Initiative: Final Report* (Ottawa: Canadian Heritage, February 26, 2003).

Notes: Cells in which there are zero funds indicate that the groups did not use their allocated funds for that year. The discrepancy between the funding allocation total quoted above and the original \$20 million allocated is due to the lapsing of funds amounting to over \$600,000 by the regional delivery organizations. The funds allocated to Canadian Heritage for the 2000–2001 year cover the cost of the program officer and the program evaluation, which the department is mandated to carry out.

Recommendations for improving the ALI program administration included:

ALI should continue to focus on community-level projects, but also provide opportunities for regional and national projects, including language research and strategic planning at the community, regional and national level; highly innovative projects; capacity building for regional and local language personnel; and resource development.

The Department of Canadian Heritage should take the lead in facilitating a national dialogue to advance Aboriginal languages revitalization. Measures should be explored to better coordinate efforts and to share information. PCH [Department of Canadian Heritage] could begin this process by sponsoring a national Aboriginal languages conference.

Improvements to ALI administration and delivery should include:

- multi-year funding arrangements to enable better planning;
- ensuring that program funds are made available to Aboriginal language groups now unable to access them;
- exploration of standardized, easy-to-use reporting systems for projects, and on-line or alternative data recording and collection systems for PCH and delivery organizations in order to facilitate application, reporting, and performance tracking;
- creation of more formal, measurable outcome and output measures to facilitate future evaluations and greater involvement by PCH and delivery organizations in on-going project monitoring;
- earlier distribution of program information, and targeted information to identified groups now not accessing the program;
- web-based site not only for the dissemination of program and project information but also for the collection of program and project information into a national web-based database; and
- research and baseline data collection on Aboriginal languages.

A program audit conducted on the performance of the ALI during the 2002–2003 fiscal year identified a number of program and financial management issues that required addressing, including:¹³⁵

- lack of baseline data to evaluate performance and achievement of objectives;

¹³⁵ Canada, Department of Canadian Heritage, *Corporate Review Branch, Program Audit of the Aboriginal Languages Initiative* (Ottawa: Canadian Heritage, October 20, 2004).

- information provided by the service delivery agencies for decision making was frequently incomplete, late or both;
- some regional First Nation delivery agencies did not meet program requirements or encountered difficulty in coordinating projects, for example, when their own funding and resources were cut back; and
- administrative costs during 2002–2003 exceeded the 15 percent provided for in program terms and conditions, for example, the Assembly of First Nations (12.5 percent at the national level and 10 percent at the regional level) and three Métis organizations.

Further, it is our view that two areas of funding administration should be examined carefully. First, we have heard many express concern that the timing of the release of funds results in projects having only weeks to spend funds that should have been accessible throughout the year. Further, funds for critical languages were not released, thereby resulting in program surpluses. Given the serious threats to the survival of many languages, every effort must be made to correct these problems. All parties should address this on a priority basis.

Second, the regional allocations for First Nation languages do not adequately take into consideration the variations in populations and languages. A funding formula could allow a baseline or core amount for each region, with adjustments made for population and number of languages. For example, right now British Columbia, which has some 32 languages in 192 communities, and Ontario, which has a large population, receive the same amount of funding as other regions with much smaller populations and fewer communities and languages.

We are confident that these issues can be addressed by working cooperatively with First Nation, Inuit and Métis organizations. We also propose guidelines and operating principles that would assist in this area. Delivery organizations have asked that reporting requirements be streamlined and that online reporting be considered. A funding formula should be developed that reflects these variations in conditions.

Interim: Over the Next Five Years

In the February 2003 Speech from the Throne, the federal government committed \$172.5 million over 11 years for the preservation, revitalization and promotion of Aboriginal languages and cultures.¹³⁶

¹³⁶ This figure was decreased to \$160 million to allow for an allocation of \$2.5 million for the Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures, and \$10 million for a two-year extension to ALL.

While we recognize the importance of this commitment, we are also aware that First Nation, Inuit and Métis national organizations and community groups do not think this is enough — they are calling on government to recognize the importance of protecting and promoting their languages. Further, they insist that this recognition be supported by a significant increase in funding. We agree that increased funding for First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages is warranted and urgently needed.

Translation Services for French-Speaking First Nation, Inuit and Métis

In carrying out its mandate, the LCC must ensure that all First Nations, Inuit and Métis receive equitable treatment. This would require, in our view, a commitment to provide equivalent services to French-speaking First Nations and Métis. Concern had been expressed in the ALI evaluation that services to French speakers was not adequate and prevented full participation. We are aware that limited funding (up to \$5,000 per annum) is available to community organizations through the Department of Canadian Heritage. However, these funds are not adequate, given the level of services required for all facets of program delivery and governance.¹³⁷

Recommendation No. 19: Provision of Services to French-Language Speakers

We recommend:

That funding be provided under the Official Languages Support programs to enable the LCC to provide a full range of services to French language speaking First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

Recommendation No. 20: Use of Short-Term Funding

We recommend:

That the existing commitment of \$160 million be provided on an urgent basis to First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities for language preservation and revitalization efforts over a five-year period, rather than the proposed 10-year timeframe, taking into consideration the critical state of languages and the needs identified by the communities.

¹³⁷ We are aware that a number of First Nations also wish to receive translation services for their own languages; however, our objective here is to provide equity in services between English- and French-speaking First Nations.

The funding required to ensure that all First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages again take their rightful place in their communities and in the broader Canadian community is unknown. It is expected that community-based planning and needs assessments will provide information on the financial and other resources required. However, we have heard submissions from many First Nation, Inuit and Métis groups and individuals that funding of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages should be at the same level as that provided for the French language. There are also calls to establish an endowment of at least \$500 million to \$750 million to assist in achieving equity in government support for languages and culture.

Endowment Fund

In keeping with our mandate, the Task Force considered the issue of an endowment fund. Two alternative structures for the financial management of such a fund were examined. Options to establish an endowment fund include incorporating a charitable organization, either as a foundation or as a public charity, or by way of a trust agreement.

In selecting an organizational structure, consideration must be given to tax consequences. It is critical that the endowment fund's income not be reduced by taxation. Generally, tax-exempt status is obtained by establishing an entity as a registered charity. Registered charities under the *Income Tax Act* include charitable organizations, public foundations and private foundations. They are distinguished from one another by the purposes or activities they are empowered or plan to undertake, with the determination being made by the Canada Revenue Agency, as part of the application and approval process.

The vast majority of registered charities in Canada have been designated as charitable organizations. For the most part, these are direct-service groups, rather than those that fund others. The technical requirements for a charitable organization are as follows:

- i. It must devote all of its resources to charitable activities which it carries on itself.
- ii. It must not pay any of its income to the personal benefit of an interested person.
- iii. More than half of its officials must be at "arm's length," in other words, unrelated.
- iv. It can not have received more than half of its capital from a single person or group, other than governments, other charitable organizations, public foundations and certain other non-profit organizations.

A charitable organization is prohibited from carrying on any business, other than a “related business,” which is not defined. The *Income Tax Act* permits an organization to operate an essentially unrelated business so long as it is carried on by volunteers. A charitable organization must meet a “disbursement quota” test over five years, where for each year on average the amount it spends on its charitable activities plus the amount it gives to other charities is not less than 80 percent of the gifts for which it has given receipts in the previous year (subject, of course, to certain exceptions). Gifts to other charities (except those designated as associated charities) cannot exceed half of the organization’s income.

Under the *Income Tax Act*, a charitable organization is permitted certain political activities, specifically those that are ancillary and incidental to its charitable activities and that do not directly or indirectly support or oppose political parties or candidates, so long as “substantially all” (interpreted by the Canada Revenue Agency to mean 90 percent or more) of its resources are devoted to its charitable activities. Political activities are included so as not to disqualify an organization with a limited amount of political activity, on the basis that it is not devoting all of its assets to charitable activity. Political activity is excluded in calculating the disbursement quota for the organization.

A public foundation must:

- i. be constituted and operated exclusively for charitable purposes;
- ii. be a corporation or trust;
- iii. not pay any of its income to the personal benefit of an interested person;
- iv. not be a charitable organization;
- v. have more than half of its officials who are unrelated; and
- vi. not have received more than half of its capital from a single person or group, other than governments, charitable organizations, other public foundations and certain other non-profit organizations (or 75 percent in the case of older foundations without exceptions).

Public foundations have the same restrictions on unrelated businesses as do charitable organizations and similar provisions with respect to political activities. They are also prohibited from acquiring control of any corporation and from incurring debt, except for certain purposes.

The disbursement quota rules for public foundations include the same requirement as for charitable organizations to spend 80 percent of gifts for which

receipts are given. However, they are also subject to a complex formula, the effect of which is to require every foundation in each year to spend part of its capital and the gifts it has received from other charities on charitable activities and gifts to qualified donees.

Should a charitable organizational structure be used for the LCC, the ongoing requirements for maintaining status as a public or charitable organization must be considered in light of the fact that few First Nation, Inuit or Métis community organizations are currently able to meet the criteria for “qualified donee” status. They would therefore not qualify for funding. Consideration should also be given to the types of ancillary “political” activities that may be undertaken by the Council of representatives, so as to avoid any potential difficulty arising out of carrying out necessary work on behalf of First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages.¹³⁸

Further consideration of the corporate structure to administer a language endowment would be necessary. Large sums of money would require more complex systems, whereas a smaller fund may be administered to take economies of scale into account in management and investment. In this latter case, a trust agreement may be most suitable. However, if a language organization with a mandate to establish an endowment fund was established under legislation as a Crown corporation and declared an Agent of the Crown in whole or in part for the purposes of fundraising, the issue of complying with the charitable organizations provisions of the *Income Tax Act* will not arise.¹³⁹

We note that interest in a language endowment fund was not uniform among the First Nation, Inuit and Métis people with whom we consulted. In consultations with the national political organizations, for instance, we heard the AFN call for the establishment of a foundation that would include such an endowment fund. We also heard in community consultations that First Nations in British Columbia, Manitoba and Ontario currently operate or are planning to establish charitable organizations to support language revitalization efforts. However, we are particularly mindful that from all the consultations we heard, communities urgently need funds, now, to address the imminent loss of their languages.

In short, almost all those whom we consulted did not wish to see funds placed in an endowment. Instead, they preferred that available funds be directed immediately to

¹³⁸ It is also possible to establish an organization by way of federal legislation, with designation or partial designation as an Agent of the Crown.

¹³⁹ Treasury Board of Canada, *Agent Status and Crown Corporations* (Ottawa: Treasury Board of Canada), at http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/ccpi-pise/agent_e.asp.

the important task of saving languages. Certainly, information from primary and secondary research also supports the need for immediate action.

That being said, we nonetheless believe that an endowment fund or funds can play an important role in a long-term language revitalization strategy. We therefore recommend that the LCC continue to investigate and consult with First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples on how this may be achieved.

Given the magnitude of the task ahead, we recognize the importance of seeking assistance and support from a variety of sources, in addition to the federal government. We are aware that many First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples have successfully forged relationships with private donors, school boards and universities, as well as with federal and provincial departments. An endowed fund would assist in generating funding other than that from government sources. We support the establishment of such a fund. However, we believe that it should be capitalized through means other than the existing commitment of funds by Canadian Heritage. Further, we believe that the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, as lead department responsible for First Nations, and as their fiduciary, should play a significant role in capitalizing a First Nation fund.

Recommendation No. 21: Establishing a Language Endowment Fund

We recommend:

That Canada provide funding to establish an endowment fund to finance community-based language programs in perpetuity.

Short-Term Program Delivery

We recognize that First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples have diverse languages and cultures and that they have inherent rights strengthened by their relationship to the land and reflected historically in their treaties and nation-to-nation relationships with the Crown. We also recognize that regional program delivery structures are established facts of life and that First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities and organizations may wish to see these structures maintained.

We are also conscious that decisions about language must be made at the community level. We therefore recommend that the majority of the \$160 million be decentralized to the regions. While the LCC would oversee development and implementation of the national strategy, First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples can best

determine their particular language preservation, revitalization and promotion needs. Existing First Nation, Inuit and Métis language initiative delivery mechanisms should not be displaced in the interim or in the long-term national strategy.

Recommendation No. 22: Administration of Short-Term Funding

We recommend:

That the majority of funds committed by Canada be decentralized to allow existing First Nation, Inuit and Métis language decision-making structures to continue with their work. The current national allocation of funding under the Aboriginal Languages Initiative, that is, 75 percent to First Nation languages, 15 percent to Inuit languages and 10 percent to Métis languages, should be maintained until a long-term national language strategy is developed and implemented within the next five years.

The experiences and, in particular, the successful approaches of the ALI, should be incorporated into ongoing administrative planning. To address concerns raised in the ALI evaluation, we propose that the following principles form part of the criteria for regional allocations of funds:

- Regions may take up to a maximum of 10 percent of their annual budget for administration purposes.
- There may be equality of access by all languages and cultural communities, with access available to individuals and family groups, as well as to communities and language organizations.
- Local communities may be given the opportunity to designate individual local or regional organizations to deliver language programming on their behalf.
- Provision may be made for language programming for First Nation, Inuit and Métis people living away from their home communities and particular consideration should be given to urban areas with large First Nation, Inuit and Métis populations.
- Funding should be disbursed in a timely manner and provisions be made to allow communities to carry access funds for multi-year programs.
- Regional allocations must take into consideration variations in populations, number of communities and languages.

With regard to regional allocations, we are mindful of concerns expressed that the existing distribution of ALI funds does not adequately take into account significant

differences in populations and languages in the regions. We therefore recommend that funding beyond that currently available be distributed taking into account these factors.

Recommendation No. 23: Allocation of Interim Funding to First Nation Languages

We recommend:

That regional funding allocations for First Nation languages take into account varying populations and languages. Funding formulas should be developed which provides for base funding at the current level, with additional funding adjustments made for regions having large populations and many language communities.

National Projects Fund

In the consultations, we heard many participants call for a coordinated approach to language revitalization efforts so that strategies and lessons learned in other regions can be applied as quickly as possible in their own areas. In our deliberations on a national strategy and the mandate of the LCC, we were conscious of the number of issues, concerns and strategies that are broader in scope than one particular region or language group. For example, many called for a national database on language education resources and a clearing house or network of regional clearing houses.

There are a number of First Nation, Inuit and Métis language organizations currently providing services; these organizations should be supported and their work should not be duplicated. We envision a virtual clearing house with a central node connecting regional custodians holding collections for their constituents. Roles of the coordinating body (the LCC) and regional custodians would be similar to those of other national and international clearing houses. For example, the international Biodiversity Information Clearing House distinguishes between the roles of the custodian of information and the coordinating body as follows:

The responsibilities of a custodian include the following:

- to define and maintain quality standards
- to organise the building of the database
- to update the dataset
- to ensure the continued integrity of the data
- to ensure appropriate access to the dataset
- to maintain documentation of the dataset
- to advise on appropriate uses of the dataset

The coordinating node will be engaged in the following as a minimum:

- managing the technology of information retrieval and exchange
- soliciting cooperation from a network of clearing houses
- managing and controlling thesauri and meta-databases
- providing advice and instruction on how to access information through the network
- negotiating custodial agreements
- drafting terms and conditions or a protocol for cooperation
- assisting with legal issues¹⁴⁰

As part of initial planning for the clearing house, the LCC should examine delivery models and structures of other education and language education clearing houses, for example, the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition, which is one of the U.S. Department of Education's National Language Resource Centers.

A national projects fund could also provide funding for research and analysis for the proposed language legislation and provide support for national language conferences.

Another important task involves national coordination of the baseline survey. Technical support for the baseline survey, as well as for community-based language planning and needs assessment, is required. Ongoing research and policy development is also an important function. We therefore recommend that a small portion of the interim funds be held at the national level to enable the LCC to carry out or coordinate these types of projects.

¹⁴⁰ Ian Crain, *Biodiversity Information Clearing House: Concepts and Challenges* (Cambridge, U.K.: World Conservation Monitoring Centre), at http://www.unep-wcmc.org/resources/publications/2_clearing_house/chm.html#5.

Recommendation No. 24: National Projects Fund

We recommend:

That ten percent (10%) of the annual budget allocation from the \$160-million commitment be set aside to establish a National Projects Fund to be administered by the LCC, in partnership with the national First Nation, Inuit and Métis political organizations.

Innovative Projects Fund

In our consultations, we heard many express the view that new technology and innovative approaches be applied to language education and revitalization efforts. In our view, such projects should be encouraged, and those demonstrating potential should be made known to First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities so that lessons learned may be applied as quickly as possible. Funding of national demonstration or research projects would be cost-effective, since many communities could apply best practices as they are developed. We recommend that such a fund be established to promote development, testing, evaluation and integration of new pedagogical methods.

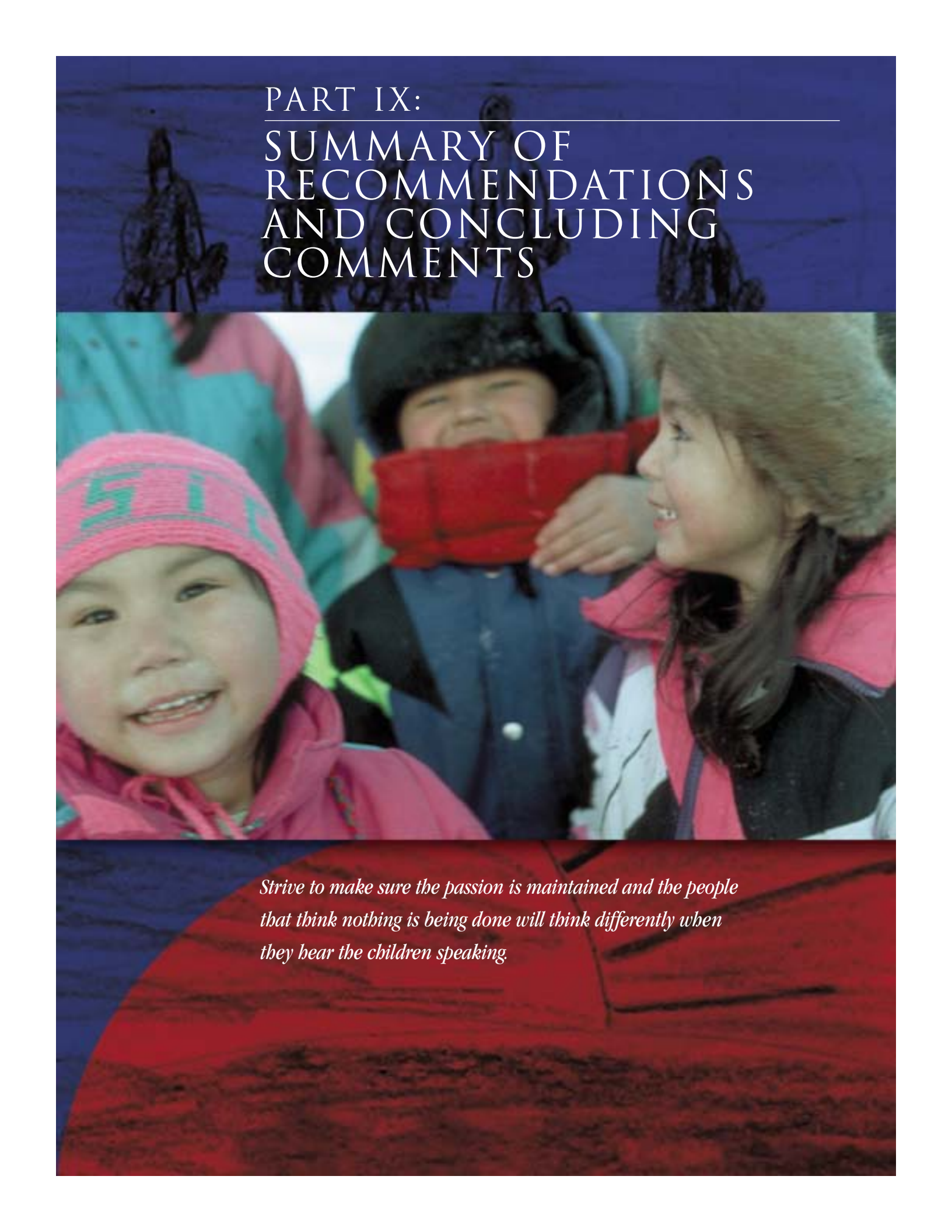
Projects funded should be required to demonstrate excellence in planning, methodology and project administration, with proposals being vetted by specialists in the field.

While this type of program has the potential to assist in First Nation, Inuit and Métis language revitalization efforts, we recognize that funds are urgently needed in the communities to prevent further irretrievable loss of some languages. We therefore recommend that the federal government support this initiative by contributing the needed funds.

Recommendation No. 25: Innovative Projects Fund

We recommend:

That Canada provide funding to the LCC for the creation of an Innovative Projects Fund that will support innovative projects, research and the use of new technology in language education and revitalization efforts. The Innovative Projects Fund is to be established with funding separate from the \$160-million dollar commitment and should reflect participation and support by all federal government ministries.



PART IX:
SUMMARY OF
RECOMMENDATIONS
AND CONCLUDING
COMMENTS

Strive to make sure the passion is maintained and the people that think nothing is being done will think differently when they hear the children speaking.

PART IX: Thematic Summary of Recommendations and Concluding Comments

Thematic Summary of Recommendations

Language Status

Legislative Recognition, Protection and Promotion

That Canada enact legislation that recognizes, protects and promotes First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages as the First Languages of Canada. This legislation, to be developed in partnership with First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples, must recognize the constitutional status of our languages; affirm their place as one of the foundations of First Nation, Inuit and Métis nationhood; provide financial resources for their preservation, revitalization, promotion and protection; and establish the position of First Nation, Inuit and Métis Language Commissioner. **(Recommendation 3)**

Restitution and Reconciliation

That Canada implement as soon as possible the recommendation of the Assembly of First Nations to pay a lump-sum award by way of compensation to any person who attended an Indian Residential School. Alternatively, Canada and the churches establish a restitution fund to pay a lump-sum award to any person who attended an Indian Residential School, as compensation for emotional and psychological trauma brought on by loss of connection to family and community and to language and culture. **(Recommendation 6)**

Language Planning

The Link between Languages and the Land

That First Nation, Inuit and Métis governments and the federal, provincial and territorial governments enter into government-to-government agreements or accords on natural resources, environmental sustainability and traditional knowledge. The agreements or accords should recognize the importance for First Nation, Inuit and Métis people of maintaining a close connection to the land in their traditional territories, particularly wilderness areas, heritage and spiritual or sacred sites, and should provide for their meaningful participation in stewardship, management, co-management or co-jurisdiction arrangements. **(Recommendation 1)**

Protection of Traditional Knowledge

That Canada take a more comprehensive approach to the protection, use and benefits arising from traditional knowledge under the international *Convention on Biological Diversity* and that greater recognition be accorded to First Nation, Inuit and Métis people, particularly the Elders, in the collaborative planning process under the Convention. **(Recommendation 2)**

A National Language Strategy

That a National Language Strategy be developed through community-based planning by First Nation, Inuit and Métis language communities, as well as by their regional and national representative organizations, with coordination and technical support to be provided by the proposed national language organization. **(Recommendation 7)**

Baseline Language Survey

That as the first component of a national long-term strategy, the national language organization coordinate a baseline survey of language conditions. The baseline survey will be conducted by First Nation, Inuit and Métis people as part of community-based language planning and needs assessments. Further, we recommend that funding for this work be provided separately from current commitments. **(Recommendation 8)**

Language Equity

Equitable Resources for Language Support

That Canada provide funding for First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages which is, at a minimum, at the same level as that provided for the French and English languages. **(Recommendation 4)**

Language Support from All Federal Departments

That funding for First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages not be limited to that provided by the Departments of Canadian Heritage, and Indian Affairs and Northern Development. All government departments, and particularly the Departments of Justice, Health, and Human Resources and Skills Development, need to adopt policies and provide funding sufficient to allow for delivery of services

and programs which promote First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages, in the same manner as for the French and English languages.

(Recommendation 5)

Funding of Immersion Programs

That Canada provide additional funding for First Nation, Inuit and Métis language immersion programs, at a level equivalent to that provided for the French and English languages through the Minority-Language Education component of the Development of Official-Language Communities Program. **(Recommendation 10)**

Equitable Funding for First Nation Schools

That funding of First Nation schools by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development be provided at the same level and standard as that provided to Ministries of Education through Master Tuition Agreements.

(Recommendation 12)

Language Education

Language Teacher Training

That First Nation, Inuit and Métis organizations and the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada conduct a review of progress made on First Nation, Inuit and Métis teacher and language teacher training initiatives relevant to recruitment and retention. Further, as part of this review, that the role of First Nation, Inuit and Métis post-secondary institutions in delivering language teacher training be reviewed, particularly with respect to immersion language teacher training. **(Recommendation 15)**

First Nation, Inuit and Métis Post-secondary Institutions

That the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development provide additional resources to First Nation, Inuit and Métis post-secondary and existing institutions to enable them to establish language teacher training programs and, more specifically, immersion language teacher training programs. **(Recommendation 16)**

Language Education in Correctional Institutions

That the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness and the Commissioner of Corrections use their powers under the *Corrections and Conditional*

Release Act to provide federal funding for language programming and strengthen cultural programming to federally incarcerated First Nation, Inuit and Métis persons. **(Recommendation 13)**

Training Opportunities for Post-secondary Students

That Canada, and the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada establish, as part of their Action Plan on Aboriginal Education, a program to encourage First Nation, Inuit and Métis university students entering the teaching profession, particularly in language education, to become proficient in their languages by entering into master–apprentice programs or undertaking other cultural education in their communities. Specifically, that summer bursaries or employment programs be made available in the same manner as is provided for French and English youth language training programs.

(Recommendation 14)

Funding of Immersion Programs for Youth

That Canada make available bursaries to enable First Nation, Inuit and Métis youth to attend five-week immersion courses in their languages and cultures in the same manner as is provided to French and English youth in the Second-Language Learning component of the Enhancement of Official Languages Program. **(Recommendation 11)**

Langauges and Cultures Council

A National Language Organization

That a permanent body of First Nation, Inuit and Métis representatives (Aboriginal Languages and Cultures Council or “LCC”) be established.

(Recommendation 17)

Establishment of the LCC

That current Task Force members be named as Interim Council members and have the responsibility of establishing the LCC. The Interim Council members will act for a period of one year and carry out the following duties:

- finalize the governance structure of the LCC;
- develop a three-year strategic plan;
- establish operations by preparing operating budgets, identifying staffing requirements and recruiting staff;
- negotiate transfer of Aboriginal language funds from Canadian Heritage;

- develop terms of reference and oversee a planning study for a language clearing house;
- plan and carry out the necessary research for implementation of a baseline survey and community-based language planning;
- seek nominations for the LCC; and
- shortlist candidates and provide list to national First Nation, Inuit and Métis organizations for final selection. **(Recommendation 18)**

Provision of Services to French-Language Speakers

That funding be provided under the Official Languages Support programs to enable the LCC to provide a full range of services to French-speaking First Nations, Inuit and Métis. **(Recommendation 19)**

Funding

Funding of Critically Endangered Languages

That Canada provide funding, in addition to what will be available under the current commitment, for those First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities whose languages are critically endangered, in order that they may undertake additional work to preserve their languages. **(Recommendation 9)**

Use of Short-Term Funding

That the existing commitment of \$160 million be provided on an urgent basis to First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities for language preservation and revitalization efforts over a five-year period, rather than the proposed 10-year timeframe, taking into consideration the critical state of languages and the needs identified by the communities. **(Recommendation 20)**

Administration of Short-Term Funding

That the majority of funds committed by Canada be decentralized to allow existing First Nation, Inuit and Métis language decision-making structures to continue with their work. The current national allocation of funding under the Aboriginal Languages Initiative, that is, 75 percent to First Nation languages, 15 percent to Inuit languages and 10 percent to Métis languages, should be maintained until a long-term national language strategy is developed and implemented within the next five years. **(Recommendation 22)**

Establishing a Language Endowment Fund

That Canada provide funding to establish an endowment fund to finance community-based language programs in perpetuity. **(Recommendation 21)**

Allocation of Interim Funding to First Nation Languages

That regional funding allocations for First Nation languages take into account varying populations and languages. Funding formulas should be developed which provides for base funding at the current level, with additional funding adjustments made for regions having large populations and many language communities. **(Recommendation 23)**

National Projects Fund

That ten percent (10%) of the annual budget allocation from the \$160-million commitment be set aside to establish a National Projects Fund to be administered by the LCC, in partnership with the national First Nation, Inuit and Métis political organizations. **(Recommendation 24)**

Innovative Projects Fund

That Canada provide funding to the LCC for the creation of an Innovative Projects Fund that will support innovative projects, research and the use of new technology in language education and revitalization efforts. The Innovative Projects Fund is to be established with funding separate from the \$160-million dollar commitment and should reflect participation and support by all federal government ministries. **(Recommendation 25)**

Concluding Comments

We have now completed the findings and recommendations of the consultations process as the Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures. However, we recognize that there is much to be done in developing the Aboriginal Languages and Cultures Council structure. We view this foundational report as a new beginning, the first step of what many described as being a 100-year journey to the revitalization of our languages and cultures.

During our consultations with First Nation, Inuit and Métis, we heard many speak of the importance of rebuilding and strengthening relations so that our

languages can again take their rightful place in our homes and communities. We are also conscious of Canada's commitment to rebuild relations with Aboriginal peoples and truly bring First Nations, Inuit and Métis into the circle of confederation. We believe this report and recommendations are an important step towards achieving that goal.

We are confident, as are the First Nation, Inuit and Métis people we consulted, that our languages can be revitalized and strengthened. With the support of government and the collective will of First Nation, Inuit and Métis individuals, families and communities, we believe we can reverse the harm caused by past policies that were designed to remove our identities from us.

Canada must play an important role in language revitalization. Official language legislation, policies and enormous amounts of funding for the French and English languages over the past 40 years, ever since the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism tabled its report, are testimony to the role a government can take in protecting and promoting language and identity. Canadian identity is described by the Commissioner of Official Languages as a fabric woven of many threads, a joining of English and French speakers to make up Canada's social fabric. We believe it is time for Canada to recognize that Canada's linguistic heritage runs deeper than the French and English languages. It is, in fact, the oral histories, the stories of creation that explain how First Peoples came to be on

this land, millennia before the French or English, and the songs and dances that speak of our connection with the land that give this fabric the unique texture and vibrancy that make it unlike any other fabric in the world. These national treasures must be protected for future generations. Therefore, we now call on Canada to recognize First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages as Canada's first languages and to provide the necessary resources for protecting, maintaining and promoting them.

We also call on First Nation, Inuit and Métis to take action to save our languages, to keep them alive and thriving for future generations. This will require commitment from all people, from the children, the youth, adults and Elders. We therefore urge communities to enter into dialogue and to identify actions and develop strategies to promote language revitalization. It will also require the support of First Nation, Inuit and Métis governments to devise policies that truly affirm language and culture as the foundation of nationhood.

It is through this kind of action that the vision expressed to us by many Elders can become a reality. By such actions, our grandchildren and their grandchildren, to the seventh generation, may truly come to know their history and their connection to the land, to their people and to the Creator. We conclude our report with the hope that it will help us, as the First Nation, Inuit and Métis people of Canada, to remain strong nations, secure in our identities for as long the sun shines, the grass grows and the river flows.



APPENDICES

*When we hear teachings we hear ancient words and they
should be protected and given to our children.*

Appendix A: Members of the Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures



Bruce Flamont

Bruce Flamont's support for language development over the years involves curriculum development for young learners, as well as lecturing at universities, high schools and Métis functions in Saskatchewan. He is proficient in Michif. Raised by grandparents Alexandre and Marie-Adèle Flamont (born 1876) he learned of his Métis and Canadian history and culture from their perspective.



Ron Ignace

Ron Ignace is a member of the Secwepemc Nation. Elected in 1982, he was chief of the Skeetchestn Band until 2003 and served as chair of the Shuswap Tribal Council for several years. From 1997 to 2003, he was chair of the Assembly of First Nations Chiefs Committee on Languages. Between 1987 and 2002, he served as president of the Secwepemc Cultural Education Society and cochaired the Aboriginal university partnership between the Secwepemc Nation and Simon Fraser University, where he has taught courses in the Secwepemc language and First Nation studies.



Mary Jane Jim

She is "Kajit", raven/crow clan. Born, raised and educated in Yukon, her primary mentors are her grandmother Annie Ned, and parents Stella and Paddy Jim. She has always been a strong advocate of First Nation languages, culture, heritage and rights. She served as a member of the executive to the Assembly of First Nations for two terms. Prior to that, she served as a member of the executive to the Council for Yukon First Nations and the Yukon Indian Women's Association. Today, she owns and operates a consulting company, Duu Chuu Management, along with her husband Timothy Cant. She is a proud mother to Jason and Ian and grandmother to Justine, Jordana, Jurnee Winter and Giles.



Amos Key Jr.

Amos Key Jr., Turtle Clan of the Mohawk Nation, was raised in the Cayuga language. Currently, he is executive director of the First Nations Languages Department at the Woodland Cultural Centre, in Brantford. He chairs the Canadian Aboriginal Festival Pow Wow and the Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards, and is a producer at CKRZ 100.3 FM. His achievements include establishing the Gawenniyo Cayuga and Mohawk language immersion schools and private school board and the regional Sweetgrass First Nations Language Council Inc., which currently administers the Aboriginal Languages Initiative for the Ontario Region.



Helen Klengenberg

Helen Kimnik Klengenberg was born and raised on the land. Land and her language are extremely important to her; she sees all her dealings to be for the protection of the land and its resources, including its people. She has worked extensively with territorial and municipal governments, including the land claims organization, on issues of social and cultural development. Helen holds a master's degree in business administration and a bachelor of arts in political science. She presently owns and operates her own business, in Iqaluit, Nunavut.



Alexina Kublu

Alexina Kublu, a certified Inuktitut-English interpreter, has taught Inuktitut in various Nunavut communities, including the Nunavut Arctic College, and has contributed to the development of Inuktitut training materials. Her involvement with various boards and committees includes the Nunavut Kamatsiaqtut Help Line, the Nunatta Sunakkutaangit Museum, the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention and the Akitsiraq Law School Society; she also has membership on the Canadian Interpreters and Translators Council. She is currently a senior justice of the peace for the Nunavut Justices of the Peace Program.



Rosemarie McPherson

Rosemarie McPherson received her grade 12 in Cranberry Portage and her diploma in adult education from Brandon University. Currently, she serves as a member for non-profit organizations and has assisted in the establishment of the Metis Child and Family Services system for Manitoba. Fluent in English, Michif, Sauteaux, Plains Cree and Swampy Cree, she was involved in implementing the Manitoba Métis Federation's Michif Language Program. She is currently employed by the Manitoba Department of Justice in Dauphin.



Ruth Norton

Ruth Norton is a member of the Sagkeeng First Nation in Manitoba. She is an avid believer in the importance of First Nation languages and a fluent speaker of Ojibwe and Algonquin. She obtained her master's degree in Canadian studies from Carleton University in 1994. Her background includes the development of an Aboriginal school curriculum, and she currently works with the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre in the development of immersion language programs. She has 7 children, 16 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren.



Frank Parnell

Frank Parnell has more than 25 years of executive management experience in First Nation communities in northern British Columbia. He is the current president of the Prince Rupert Friendship Centre and is the founding chief executive officer of the Tribal Resources Investment Corporation, which provides small business loans to Aboriginal entrepreneurs. He continues to work tirelessly on various committees supporting the development of Aboriginal education, language and cultural programs in the provinces, believing that "each time an Aboriginal language dies, a piece of Canada dies."



Linda Pelly-Landrie

Linda Pelly-Landrie has more than 20 years of experience in working for First Nation governments, particularly in the field of Aboriginal languages. She is the former president of the First Nations Confederacy of Cultural Education Centres and is a former member of the Heritage Advisory Group to the Minister of Canadian Heritage. She served as president of the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre from 1989 to 2004. She holds a master's degree in education and is currently completing her doctorate in education, specializing in curriculum development.

Appendix B: Circle of Experts

The following are the members of the Circle of Experts: Catharyn Andersen is the director of the Torngâsok Cultural Centre in Nain, Labrador and is completing work on a master's thesis in linguistics at Memorial University.

Marie Battiste is a Mi'kmaq educator, a professor at the University of Saskatchewan and a United Nations technical expert on guidelines for protecting indigenous knowledge and heritage.

Elizabeth Biscaye, executive director of the Native Communications Society, is also the regional Chipewyan language coordinator for the Akaitcho Territory government.

Peter Christmas is the executive director for the Mi'kmaw Association for Cultural Studies and cochair of the Culture and Heritage Committee of the Nova Scotia Tripartite Forum.

Irene Collins is director of Métis governance and intergovernmental relations with the Métis Nation of Alberta and serves as a committee member of the Michif Working Group.

Norman Edward Fleury is a Métis Elder and currently the director of the Michif Language Program of the Manitoba Metis Federation.

Mark Kalluak is a cultural and heritage advisor for the Government of Nunavut, who has received numerous awards for his dedication to literacy, language and culture.

John Medicine Horse Kelly is an associate professor of journalism and communications and director of the Centre for Indigenous Research, Culture, Learning and Education at Carleton University.

Verna Kirkness has been a pioneer in First Nation education and the cause of Aboriginal language renewal. She was the founding director of the First Nations House of Learning, at the University of British Columbia.

Carrielynn Lamouche is a Métis from Gift Lake, Alberta. She serves on the board of directors of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation and is very involved in issues affecting persons with disabilities.

Jamie Lewis is an Ojibway and a member of the Batchewana First Nation near Sault Ste. Marie. She works for the Aboriginal Healing Foundation in Ottawa, Ontario.

Alicie Nalukturuk is from Inukjuak and her first language is Inuttitut. She is a commissioner of the Kativik School Board and a freelance translator.

The Honourable Louis Tapardjuk, Sr., is from Igloolik, where he works closely with community Elders and is actively involved in the field of Inuit cultural and Inuktitut language retention. He is the Nunavut Minister of Language, Culture, Elders and Youth and Minister of Human Resources.

Judi Tutcho is fluent in North Slavey and acts as a strong advocate for the preservation and promotion of Aboriginal languages in the Northwest Territories.

Gilbert Whiteduck is director of the Kitigan Zibi Education Council and president of the First Nations Confederacy of Cultural Education Centres.

Appendix C: Elders

Steven Anavilok

Mary Avalak

Peter Avalak

Alice Hitkoak Ayalik

Rose Ballantyne

Ted Ballantyne

David Bearskin

Ellen Bearskin

Margaret Bearskin

Samuel Bearskin

Florence Carrier

Ted Chartrand

Bess Cooley

George Courchene

Julianne Courchene

Elijah Cox

Marion Cox

Alex Crowchild

Verna Demontigny

Anne Desjarlais

Cecile Desjarlais

Bruce Dumont

Lizzie Hall

Mary Hall

Percy Henry

Ollie Itinnuar

Edith Josie

Mona Jules

Mark Kalluak

Senator Morris Kenequon

Tobasonakwut Kineu

William Lathlin

Margaret Liske

Doreen Madden

Helen Maksagak

Shirley Morven

Alice Nalukturuk

Mary Pangaman

Michel Paper

Edith Pearl Papequash

Joseph Peepabano

Mary Peepabano

Harvey Pelletier

Mervin Pelletier

Theo Sanderson

Clara Schinkel

David Shem

Hubert Skye

Shirley Williams

Margaret Workman

Grace Zoldy

Appendix D: Excerpt from *Protocols and Guiding Principles for Conducting and for the Implementation of Research Using First Nation, Inuit and Métis Knowledge*

Expected Protocol

This protocol has been adopted to ensure that, in all research sponsored by the Task Force on Aboriginal Language and Culture or involving First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples is conducted with the appropriate respect to all cultures, languages, knowledge and values of FNIM peoples and to the standards used by FNIM peoples to validate tradition.

Such research may include populations pertaining to First Nation, Inuit and Métis people, research involving FNIM respondents, or collaborative research involving any aspect of FNIM intellectual property.

Protocols and principles for conducting research in a First Nation, Inuit or Métis context are to be addressed by the researchers who are conducting research on language and culture, whether directly or indirectly, and regardless of whether the researcher is First Nation, Inuit, Métis or non-Aboriginal. The researchers must be cognizant that First Nation, Inuit or Métis research in any context is determined by traditions of thought and the experiences of FNIM peoples, which include a way of thinking, social gatherings, stories and values specific to FNIM cultures and traditions.

Research in First Nation, Inuit and Métis studies must benefit FNIM peoples at a local level.

The outcomes of research must include results specific to the needs of the researched community.

Among the tangible benefits that a community should be able to expect from a research project is the provision of research results in a form that is useful and accessible to the community.

Ethical Considerations

The people participating will have control over the results of the research process and, as such, have the absolute right to exercise control over the information from research findings. This includes the right to exercise it, to restrict access to it or to withdraw part or all of the information from the actual research project findings.

The rights, interests and sensitivities of the people being researched are paramount and acknowledged and protected. Included is the protection of any intellectual cultural property rights pertaining to traditional medicines, ceremonies, songs, rituals and other sacred cultural traditions.

Research tools and techniques that are open, direct and transparent will be used at all times. Secret or covert work will not be acceptable or tolerated. All participants will be fully informed that they are involved in a research study prior to the study process.

The consent of the First Nation, Inuit and Métis people involved in the research will be sought and confirmed before the research commences. With regard to informed consent, the researcher will need to establish who speaks for the community and what the conditions of the informed consent will be. Appropriate institutional advice will be made available to guide the consultation process.

The aims of the research, as well as the expected outcomes of such an investigation, will be conveyed to the people involved in the research in a clear, concise and appropriate way.

The researchers will exercise the principle of honesty and will accurately represent their skills and experience to those who are asked to become involved in the research.

Researchers will not exploit informants or the information gathered from the research for personal gain or aggrandizement. Where possible and appropriate, fair return should be accorded to participants for their services, and they shall also be acknowledged in the final research output.

First Nation, Inuit and Métis values must be acknowledged and incorporated into the research design and methodology. Ways to acknowledge and incorporate these values include, but are not limited to, ensuring that:

- First Nation, Inuit and Métis values are upheld at all times;

- First Nation, Inuit and Métis people are consulted and have given clear direction on research activity before, during and after research;
- appropriate aspects of First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples are understood, acknowledged and upheld;
- First Nation, Inuit and Métis culture is strictly upheld and observed; and
- there are no traditional protocols breached in the application of program development.

All individuals or groups involved in the research process will be given a copy of the research to ensure accountability to the First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples.

Protection

Protection goes beyond the requirement to obtain informed consent from the participant. As a general rule, consultation should occur if First Nation, Inuit and Métis people are to be involved as participants in the project or when the research project relates to issues of importance to those FNIM people. Sharing of information on the linguistic and cultural components should involve providing guidance to researchers on what needs to be protected and how this protection will be exercised.

Participatory Approach

The terms of the research, as well as the research methodology, will be designed in consultation with the Task Force members. First Nation, Inuit and Métis people will have the right to participate in, and enjoy, the benefits that will result from research and FNIM involvement in this research. The rationale for including, or excluding, First Nation, Inuit and Métis participants in the research needs to be examined, and appropriate rationales are provided for conducting community-based research. First Nation, Inuit and Métis knowledge systems and processes must be respected. The people involved in the research will be considered as having an equal interest in the project.

Intellectual Property Rights of the Research

It will be necessary to establish ownership of the research, where the ownership of the end result of the research will reside, and how it will be shared.

Respect for First Nation, Inuit and Métis Knowledge Systems and Processes

Acknowledging and respecting First Nation, Inuit and Métis knowledge systems and processes is a matter of protocol and the traditional knowledge is a major component in the research process.

Researchers must respect the cultural property rights of First Nation, Inuit and Métis, whether it is tangible or intangible, in relation to knowledge, ideas, cultural expressions and cultural materials.

Where the knowledge of an individual or a group forms the basis of, or contributes significantly to, the research, the importance of that contribution should be reflected in the reporting process and properly cited. The ways of doing this are, but are not limited to, the following:

- recognizing the value of traditional knowledge and its contribution to the research;
- using research that has traditional qualitative experiences as its subject matter with great diligence, as ownership of information resides with persons or community;
- incorporating relevant First Nation, Inuit and Métis knowledge, learning and research processes into all stages of research, including project design and methodology;
- ensuring research design and methods protect the privacy, integrity and well-being of the participants; and
- respecting First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples' rights to maintain the secrecy of FNIM knowledge and practices.

There must be recognition of the diversity and uniqueness of peoples, as well as of individuals.

Research in First Nation, Inuit and Métis studies must show an appreciation of the diversity of FNIM peoples, who have different languages, cultures, histories and perspectives.

Researchers should recognize the diversity of First Nation, Inuit and Métis individual groups and communities and the implications in planning, carrying out and reporting their research. Reporting on research is sensitive when dealing with traditional knowledge. Researchers must be cognizant of the following:

- When extrapolating from research, do not generalize from understandings of one First Nation, Inuit and Métis community to others or to all FNIM peoples.
- Do not apply stereotypes to communities and individuals when undertaking research.
- Identify diversity within a researched community, for example, on the basis of gender, age, religion and community interest.
- Do not presume that the view of one group represents the collective view of the community.
- Differentiate between individual, group and collective rights, responsibilities and ownership.
- Undertake research only if it does not conflict with individuals' rights, wishes or freedom.
- Respect individual rights to participate in research and in the disposal of research material.

The intellectual and cultural property rights of First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples should be respected and preserved.

First Nation, Inuit and Métis cultural and intellectual property rights are part of the heritage that exists in the cultural practices, resources and knowledge systems of FNIM peoples and are passed on by their expression of cultural identity.

First Nation, Inuit and Métis intellectual property is not static but extends to things that may be created based on that heritage.

It is a fundamental principle of research to acknowledge the sources of information and those who have contributed to the research.

Continuing First Nation, Inuit and Métis ownership of the cultural and intellectual property rights in the materials on which the research is based should be recognized and acknowledged in the design of a research project. To respect this ownership, researchers must:

- Identify appropriate persons — traditional owners, custodians, Elders, etc. — who are responsible for the knowledge sought or the practices to be studied. They must be involved and give informed consent to the research and any resulting publications.
- Allow First Nation, Inuit and Métis owners of knowledge to determine the intellectual property that they are contributing to the research.

- Recognize that the knowledge and resources First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples bring to the project remain their intellectual property.
- Negotiate by prior agreement joint ownership or allocation of the results of the project.
- Agree in writing on the apportionment of intellectual property rights.
- Agree about identification or otherwise of individuals involved in the research and whether those who took part in research should be acknowledged in any publication.
- Refer to informed consent and community participation, where obtained, in any research publication.
- Acknowledge the source of information obtained from First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples (including any flora or fauna identified or studied with the assistance of FNIM peoples) in any publication or report.
- Consider whether joint authorship with community members is appropriate, that is, where the contribution has been significant.
- Show or distribute restricted material only with the express permission of those who provided the information or are responsible for it.

Traditional Guidelines for Research

Consultation involves an honest exchange of information about aims, methods and potential outcomes (for all parties). Consultation should not be considered merely an opportunity for researchers to tell the community what they, the researchers, may want:

- Being properly and fully informed about the aims and methods of a research project, its implications and potential outcomes allows groups to decide for themselves whether to oppose or to embrace the project.
- It is ethical practice in any research on First Nation, Inuit and Métis issues to include consultation with those who may be directly affected by the research or research outcomes, whether or not the research involved field work.

- Acknowledging and respecting First Nation, Inuit and Métis knowledge systems and processes is not only a matter of courtesy but also a recognition that such knowledge can make a significant contribution to the research process.
- Research must respect the cultural property rights of First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples in relation to knowledge, ideas, cultural expressions and cultural materials.
- Research in First Nation, Inuit and Métis studies must show an appreciation of the diversity of FNIM peoples, who have different languages, cultures, histories and perspectives.
- There must be recognition of the diversity and uniqueness of peoples, as well as individuals.
- The intellectual and cultural property rights of First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples must be respected and preserved.
- First Nation, Inuit and Métis cultural and intellectual property are part of the heritage that exists in the cultural practices, resources and knowledge systems of FNIM peoples and that are passed on by them in expressing their cultural identity.
- First Nation, Inuit and Métis intellectual property is not static but extends to things that may be created based on heritage.
- It is a fundamental principle of research to acknowledge the sources of information and those who have contributed to the research.
- First Nation, Inuit and Métis researchers, individuals and communities should be involved in research as collaborators.
- First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities and individuals have a right to be involved in any research project focused on them and their culture.
- Participants have the right to withdraw from a project at any time.
- Research on First Nation, Inuit and Métis issues should also incorporate FNIM perspectives. This is often most effectively achieved by facilitating more direct involvement in the research.

Appendix E: Speakers of Aboriginal Languages

Aboriginal Languages	Mother Tongue	Index of Continuity	Percent of Children in Linguistically Mixed Marriages	Index of Ability	Average Age of Population with:			Viability Status of Language
					Knowledge of Aboriginal Language	Aboriginal Mother Tongue	Aboriginal Home Language	
Algonquian Family	146,635	70	34	117				
Cree	87,555	72	31	117	30.5	30.9	28.8	Mostly viable
Ojibwe	25,885	55	47	122	299	30.2	27.9	Viable large
Montagnais-Naskapi	9,070	94	19	104	34.9	36.2	34.4	Viable large
Mi'kmaq	7,310	72	43	111	25.1	25.2	24.8	Viable small
Ojib-Cree	5,400	80	27	114	29.5	29.9	29.2	Viable small
Arikamekw	3,995	97	7	103	25.7	26.3	26.8	Viable small
Blackfoot	4,145	61	50	135	21.8	21.9	21.5	Viable small
Algonquian	2,275	58	50	119	36.4	39.7	40.6	Viable small
Malecite	655	37	83	148	29.8	30.7	31.4	Viable small
Algonquian NIE	350	40	75	159	40.5	44.0	44.8	Viable small
					47.2	52.2	46.7	Uncertain
Inuktitut Family	27,780	86	19	109	23.9	23.9	23.3	Viable large
Athapaskan Family	20,090	68	41	117	31.4	32.5	30.0	Mostly viable
Dene	9,000	86	28	107	24.4	24.8	24.1	Viable small
South Slave	2,620	55	45	124	35.6	37.8	38.4	Viable small
Dogrib	2,085	72	29	118	28.3	29.8	30.6	Viable small
Carrier	2,190	51	70	130	37.5	41.4	40.5	Viable small
Chipewyan	1,455	44	82	128	39.4	40.2	40.7	Viable small
Athapaskan, NIE	1,310	37	70	129	41.6	44.7	44.2	Uncertain
Chilcotin	705	65	55	130	32.2	37.0	36.9	Viable small
Kutchin-Gwich'in (Loucheux)	430	24	67	114	53.0	53.1	56.8	Endangered
North Slave (Hare)	290	60	36	116	38.3	39.1	39.8	Endangered
(Dakota) Siouan NIE	4,295	67	49	111	31.0	31.9	28.0	Viable small
Family								
Salish Family	3,200	25	79	132	42.0	48.7	47.2	Endangered
Salish NIE	1,850	24	80	130	43.0	49.7	48.5	Endangered
Shuswap	745	25	80	134	38.7	46.3	42.9	Endangered
Thompson	595	31	80	135	43.1	48.6	48.3	Endangered
Tsimshian Family	2,460	31	71	132	43.2	48.0	49.6	Mostly endangered
Gitksan	1,200	39	76	123	41.4	45.2	45.7	Viable small
Nisga'a	795	23	70	146	41.8	47.5	57.6	Endangered
Tsimshian	465	24	83	132	50.5	55.9	52.7	Endangered
Wakashan Family	1,650	27	79	118	47.3	51.3	51.1	Endangered
Wakashan	1,070	24	88	129	47.7	53.0	53.2	Endangered
Nootka	590	31	69	99	46.5	48.1	48.4	Endangered
Iroquoian Family	590	13	88	160	36.4	46.5	52.0	Uncertain
Mohawk	350	10	100	184	36.6	46.1	60.5	Uncertain
Iroquoian NIE	235	13	80	128	35.8	47.0	41.4	Uncertain
Haida Isolate	240	6	100	144	46.7	50.4	64.6	Endangered
Tlingit Isolate	145	21	100	128	45.5	49.3	41.6	Endangered
Kutenai Isolate	120	17	67	200	37.1	52.3	41.2	Endangered
Aboriginal Languages NIE	1,405	28	68	176	43.0	47.0	45.8	Endangered
Total Aboriginal Languages	208,610	70	34	117	30.4	31.0	28.3	Mix of viable and endangered

Source: Adapted from Mary Jane Norris, "Canada's Aboriginal Languages," *Canadian Social Trends* (Winter 1998), 8–16, based on the 1996 Census data.

Notes:

NIE = Not included elsewhere

The indicators — index of continuity, index of ability and average age with mother tongue and home language — are based on single and multiple responses (of mother tongue and home language) combined. The index of continuity is a ratio of the number of persons with a given home language to the number with that particular mother tongue, times 100. The index of ability is a ratio of the number of persons reporting knowledge of a given language to the number with that particular mother tongue, times 100.

The viability "status" of the individual languages is based on a classification from M. Dale Kinkade's "The Decline of Native Languages in Canada," in *Endangered Languages*, ed. by R.H. Robins and E.M. Uhlenbeck (Oxford: Berg Publishers 1991).

Data for the Iroquoian family is not particularly representative due to the significant impact of incomplete enumeration of reserves for this language family. Other languages such as those in the Algonquian family may be affected to some extent by incomplete enumeration.

Appendix F: International Conventions

The specific declarations and covenants that are of relevance for the connection between international human rights and indigenous culture and language include:

- The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 1948, states the basic principle against discrimination on the grounds of language: “Article 2. Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as ... language ...”
- The rights of persons belonging to minorities are furthermore established by the 1966 *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* and the 1992 *Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities*.
- The *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, which entered into force in 1976, states that “In those states in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of the group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language.”
- The 1989 ILO *Convention 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries* states as follows:
Article 5
In applying the provisions of this Convention:
(a) the social, cultural, religious and spiritual values and practices of these peoples shall be recognized and protected, and due account shall be taken of the nature of the problems which face them both as groups and as individuals;
(b) the integrity of the values, practices and institutions of these peoples shall be respected;
(c) policies aimed at mitigating the difficulties experienced by these peoples in facing new conditions of life and work shall be adopted, with the participation and co-operation of the peoples affected.
- Article 28 of ILO *Convention 169* requires that “children belonging to the peoples concerned shall, wherever practicable, be taught to read and write in their own indigenous language or in the language most commonly used by the group to which they belong” and that “adequate measures shall be taken to ensure that these peoples have the opportunity to attain fluency in the national language or in one of the official languages of the country.” The article provides at the same time that “measures shall be taken to preserve and promote the development and practice of the indigenous languages of the peoples concerned.”
- The 1989 *Convention on the Rights of the Child* sheds light on another aspect of the language issue in education. It emphasizes that language also has to be considered as an educational value. Article 29 sets up that “the education of the child shall be directed to ... the development of respect for the child’s ... cultural identity, language and values.”
- Article 8(j) of the 1992 *Convention on Biological Diversity* requires member states to take action to protect and preserve traditional knowledge and encourage equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of such knowledge and practices.
- Article 14 of the 1994 United Nations *Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* states, “Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons ... States shall take effective measures, whenever any right of indigenous peoples may be threatened, to ensure this right is protected.”
- The *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity*, adopted in 2001, recognizes the relationship between cultural and linguistic diversity and biodiversity and calls on governments to take steps to promote cultural diversity.
- Article 2 of the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (October 2003), at its 32nd session, defines “intangible cultural heritage” as including “(a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage; (b) performing arts; (c) social practices, rituals and festive events; (d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; (e) traditional craftsmanship.”

Appendix G: Financial Commitments of the Action Plan for Official Languages

Canadian Heritage

• Education	
Targeted Funding – minority language	\$ 2090 M
Targeted Funding – second language	\$ 1370 M
Summer Language Bursary Program	\$ 240 M
Official Language Monitor Program	\$ 11.5 M
Total over five years	\$ 381.5 M
• Support to communities	
Support to minority communities	\$ 190 M
Intergovernmental cooperation	\$ 14.5 M
Total over five years	\$ 33.5 M

Treasury Board Secretariat

• Investing in Innovation	\$ 140 M
Centre of Excellence	\$ 12.0 M
Rebuilding Capacity (Public Service Commission)	\$ 38.6 M
Total over five years	\$ 64.6 M

Health Canada

• Support to communities	
Networking	\$ 140 M
Training and Retention	\$ 75.0 M
Primary Health Care Transition Fund (2000 Agreement on Health)	\$ 30.0 M
Total over five years	\$ 119.0 M

Human Resources [and Skills] Development Canada

• Support to communities	
Literacy	\$ 74 M
Pilot Projects for Child Care	\$ 10.8 M
Develop NGO Capacity	\$ 3.8 M
Total over five years	\$ 22.0 M
• Economic Development	
Internships	\$ 7.3 M
Total over five years	\$ 7.3 M

Industry Canada

• Economic Development	
Outreach and Counselling	\$ 8.0 M
Internships	\$ 2.0 M
Pilot Projects (Tele-Training and Tele-Learning)	\$ 10.0 M
Francommunautés virtuelles	\$ 13.0 M
Total over five years	\$ 33.0 M
• Language Industry	
Canadian Network of Languages Industries (Coordination and Governance)	\$ 5.0 M
Marketing and Branding	\$ 5.0 M
Research Centre for Language Technologies	\$ 10.0 M
Total over five years	\$ 20.0 M

Justice Canada

- Accountability and Coordination Framework \$ 2.5 M
- Total over five years \$ 2.5 M**

- Support to communities
- Legal Obligations \$ 270 M
- Access to Justice \$ 18.5 M
- Total over five years \$ 45.5 M**

Citizenship and Immigration Canada

- Support to communities
- Recruitment and Integration of Immigrants \$ 90 M
- Total over five years \$ 90 M**

Privy Council Office, Intergovernmental Affairs

- Implementation of the Action Plan for Official Languages, including the accountability and coordination framework \$ 13.5 M
- Total over five years \$ 13.5 M**

Total for the Action Plan over five years \$751.3 million

Appendix H: Action Plan for Cultural Diversity

MAIN LINES OF AN ACTION PLAN FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNESCO UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON CULTURAL DIVERSITY

The Member States commit themselves to taking appropriate steps to disseminate widely the “UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity” and to encourage its effective application, in particular by cooperating with a view to achieving the following objectives:

1. Deepening the international debate on questions relating to cultural diversity, particularly in respect of its links with development and its impact on policy-making, at both national and international level; taking forward notably consideration of the opportunity of an international legal instrument on cultural diversity.
2. Advancing in the definition of principles, standards and practices, on both the national and the international levels, as well as of awareness-raising modalities and patterns of cooperation, that are most conducive to the safeguarding and promotion of cultural diversity.
3. Fostering the exchange of knowledge and best practices in regard to cultural pluralism with a view to facilitating, in diversified societies, the inclusion and participation of persons and groups from varied cultural backgrounds.
4. Making further headway in understanding and clarifying the content of cultural rights as an integral part of human rights.
5. Safeguarding the linguistic heritage of humanity and giving support to expression, creation and dissemination in the greatest possible number of languages.
6. Encouraging linguistic diversity — while respecting the mother tongue — at all levels of education, wherever possible, and fostering the learning of several languages from the youngest age.
7. Promoting through education an awareness of the positive value of cultural diversity and improving to this end both curriculum design and teacher education.
8. Incorporating, where appropriate, traditional pedagogies into the education process with a view to preserving and making full use of culturally appropriate methods of communication and transmission of knowledge.
9. Encouraging “digital literacy” and ensuring greater mastery of the new information and communication technologies, which should be seen both as educational discipline and as pedagogical tools capable of enhancing the effectiveness of educational services.
10. Promoting linguistic diversity in cyberspace and encouraging universal access through the global network to all information in the public domain.
11. Countering the digital divide, in close cooperation in relevant United Nations system organizations, by fostering access by the developing countries to the new technologies, by helping them to master information technologies and by facilitating the digital dissemination of endogenous cultural products and access by those countries to the educational, cultural and scientific digital resources available worldwide.
12. Encouraging the production, safeguarding and dissemination of diversified contents in the media and global information networks and, to that end, promoting the role of public radio and television services in the development of audiovisual productions of good quality, in particular by fostering the establishment of cooperative mechanisms to facilitate their distribution.
13. Formulating policies and strategies for the preservation and enhancement of the cultural and natural heritage, notably the oral and intangible cultural heritage, and combating illicit traffic in cultural goods and services.
14. Respecting and protecting traditional knowledge, in particular that of indigenous peoples; recognizing the contribution of traditional knowledge, particularly with regard to environmental protection and the management of natural resources, and fostering synergies between modern science and local knowledge.
15. Fostering the mobility of creators, artists, researchers, scientists and intellectuals and the development of international research programmes and partnerships, while striving to preserve and enhance the creative capacity of developing countries and countries in transition.

16. Ensuring protection of copyright and related rights in the interest of the development of contemporary creativity and fair remuneration for creative work, while at the same time upholding a public right of access to culture, in accordance with Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
17. Assisting in the emergence or consolidation of cultural industries in the developing countries and countries in transition and, to this end, cooperating in the development of the necessary infrastructures and skills, fostering the emergence of viable local markets, and facilitating access for the cultural products of those countries to the global market and international distribution networks.
18. Developing cultural policies, including operational support arrangements and/or appropriate regulatory frameworks, designed to promote the principles enshrined in this Declaration, in accordance with the international obligations incumbent upon each State.
19. Involving civil society closely in framing of public policies aimed at safeguarding and promoting cultural diversity.
20. Recognizing and encouraging the contribution that the private sector can make to enhancing cultural diversity and facilitating to that end the establishment of forums for dialogue between the public sector and the private sector.

The Member States recommend that the Director-General take the objectives set forth in this Action Plan into account in the implementation of UNESCO's programmes and communicate the latter to institutions of the United Nations system and to other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned with a view to enhancing the synergy of actions in favour of cultural diversity.¹⁴¹

¹⁴¹ The Declaration was regarded by member states as an inadequate response to specific threats to cultural diversity in the era of globalization. For this reason, a binding standard-setting instrument on the Protection of the Diversity of Cultural Contents and Artistic Expressions is being drafted. The *Draft International Convention on the Protection of the Diversity of Cultural Contents and Artistic Expressions* (Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, n.d.), Resolution 32C/34, will be considered at UNESCO's next session in October 2005.

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