

**Memorandum of Understanding For a Collaborative Approach  
To Implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the NWT**

**AMONSGT:**

The Acho Dene Koe First Nation,  
The Akaitcho Dene First Nations,  
The Behdzl Ahda First Nation,  
The Dehcho First Nations,  
The Déljnę Got'jnę Government,  
The Gwich'in Tribal Council,  
The Inuvialuit Regional Corporation,  
The K'ahsho Got'ine of Fort Good Hope,  
The Kátl'odeeche First Nation,  
The Nahanni Butte Dene Band,  
The North Slave Métis Alliance,  
The Northwest Territory Métis Nation,  
The Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated,  
The Salt River First Nation,  
The Tłı̨chǫ Government,  
and  
The Government of the Northwest Territories

(together, the "Members")

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**WHEREAS:**

- A. Leadership from governments in the Northwest Territories (NWT) have developed this *Memorandum of Understanding* (MOU) for the *Northwest Territories Council of Leaders* (NWTCOL) for collaboration in governance where the Premier, Chiefs, Grand Chiefs, Ɂekw'ahtjé, Chairpersons, and Presidents can together review, discuss and determine common priorities and opportunities for collaboration as governments and Indigenous organizations, as they deem appropriate;
- B. The NWTCOL has approved a working group of officials (Working Group) to consider how the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) may be implemented cooperatively in the NWT;
- C. The NWTCOL has approved the Working Group on the UN Declaration to draft a law to implement the UN Declaration to be put before the NWT Legislature;

- D. The UN Declaration is a universal framework of minimum standards for Indigenous Peoples' self-determination, dignity, well-being and rights;
- E. The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) is committed to continuing to strengthen its relationship with the Members, and their beneficiaries, based on respect, recognition, responsibility, cooperation, and partnership as a path to the broader goal of reconciliation between the GNWT and Indigenous peoples in the NWT;
- F. Implementation of the UN Declaration in the NWT should be focused on improving the lives of Indigenous peoples in the NWT;
- G. The GNWT Mandate 2019-2023, includes the commitment to implement the UN Declaration, including identifying, prioritizing and strengthening key actions to further implement the UN Declaration in the NWT;

THEREFORE the Members understand as follows:

**I. PURPOSE**

- 1. This MOU amongst the Members governs the collaborative approach being taken to undertake the following work:
  - a. The co-development of a legislative framework for an NWT law to implement the UN Declaration in a way that meets the needs of the Members for consideration by the NWT COL for tabling with the Legislative Assembly that:
    - I. affirms the application of the UN Declaration to the laws of the NWT;
    - II. commits the GNWT, through collaboration and cooperation with Indigenous governments and organizations, to ensure its laws are consistent with the UN Declaration; and
    - III. commits the GNWT, in collaboration and cooperation with Indigenous governments and organizations, to prepare and implement an action plan for achieving the objectives of the UN Declaration.
  - b. The co-development of an initial five-year Action Plan to effectively implement the UN Declaration.
- 2. This MOU also enables and provides direction to the Working Group to explore, reach consensus upon, and make recommendations to the NWT COL regarding other options to support the collaborative and cooperative implementation of the UN Declaration in the NWT.

3. The purpose of this MOU is to confirm the continuation of the Working Group to support ongoing collaboration to implement the intentions of the Members, including but not limited to:
  - (a) having exploratory discussions, reaching consensus upon, and making recommendations to the NWTCOL regarding other options to support the cooperative implementation of the UN Declaration in the NWT;
  - (b) co-develop supplementary mechanisms for addressing themes and issues not directly covered in the NWT law implementing the UN Declaration. These supplementary mechanisms are intended to be additive to and supportive of such law and are not intended to delay the legislative framework proposal;
  - (c) co-develop processes to address issues concerning the implementation of the UN Declaration in the NWT and to clarify approval processes and the operationalization of consent-based decision-making;
  - (d) set out basic roles and responsibilities of Working Group members;
  - (e) co-develop measures to identify GNWT legislation that would benefit from an analysis focused on compliance with the principles of the UN Declaration; and
  - (f) co-develop recommendations for consideration by the NWTCOL to advance reconciliation through the sharing of ministerial statutory decision-making with Indigenous governments and organizations.
4. For greater certainty, no activity of the Working Group will serve to take the place of other discussions, forums, or consultation obligations between the Members.

## **II. INTENTIONS**

This MOU amongst the Members is intended to:

1. Ensure implementation of the UN Declaration in the NWT ensures the provision of basic human rights for Indigenous peoples in the NWT.
2. Contribute to the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and the Calls for Justice of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls by adopting the UN Declaration as a framework for reconciliation through the implementation of an NWT law implementing the UN Declaration and the development of an Action Plan to achieve the objectives of the UN Declaration.

## **III. PRINCIPLES**

1. The Members are committed to implementing the UN Declaration in the NWT;

2. Aboriginal and Treaty rights, Land Claims and Self-Government Agreements, must be respected and upheld. Their implementation is an important step toward reconciliation to build relationships with Indigenous Treaty partners, Indigenous governments and organizations. In recognition of this, the implementation of Aboriginal and Treaty rights, Land Claims and Self-Government Agreements must continue in a manner consistent with the honour of the Crown in continuing the work to build the GNWT's relationship with its Indigenous Treaty partners, and with Indigenous governments and organizations.

#### **IV. ROLES OF MEMBER REPRESENTATIVES**

To implement this MOU, the Working Group will operate in accordance with the following:

1. All the Members may participate in the Working Group, and be represented by their designated representatives;
2. Meetings will be held virtually or in person;
3. The Members will adopt a consensus approach to decision-making, procedural issues, document and records management, and other matters as necessary to achieve goals and objectives;
4. The Working Group will hold regular meetings at its discretion in order to make progress in accordance with its mandate to complete an NWT law for implementing the UN Declaration and to develop an Action Plan for achieving the objectives of the UN Declaration within such timelines as the Working Group may set;
5. The Members will bear participants costs. The GNWT may provide additional funding to the Members to participate in technical working groups where legal and/or subject matter expert advice is required to contribute input on draft UN Declaration implementation legislative proposals, bills, policy and action plan documents and processes. The Members may be required to provide cost estimates to support funding requests to the GNWT for participation;
6. Working Group members are responsible for informing their individual organizations of Working Group progress, seeking direction, and internal approvals as may be required, to undertake their work;
7. Working Group members may invite observers who are not Members to attend meetings with the agreement of the other Working Group members; and

8. The Working Group will provide regular updates to the NWTCOL regarding the status of its work.

#### **V. TERMS OF THIS MOU**

1. This MOU shall be in effect for a period of four (4) years from the date of signing.
2. This MOU may be periodically reviewed and, upon written consent of all the Members, may be renewed for a further term as agreed to by the Members.
3. This MOU may be reviewed and amended upon written notice being given to the other Members at least 60 days in advance with the mutual agreement of the Members.
4. Any Member may withdraw from this MOU at any time by providing written notice to the Members.

#### **VI. EFFECTIVE DATE**

1. *This Memorandum of Understanding for a Collaborative Approach to Implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the NWT shall come into effect on January 1, 2023.*

**The Memorandum of Understanding for the Northwest Territories  
Council of Leaders**

Signed in counterpart on September 27, 2023 at

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**For the Acho Dene Koe First Nation**

Breneta Berneault Maryjane Lumen  
Sub Chief Witness

**The Memorandum of Understanding for the Northwest Territories  
Council of Leaders**

Signed in counterpart on March 1, 2023, at

Nahanni Butte, NT.

For the **Nahanni Butte Dene Band**

  
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Steve Vital  
Chief

  
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Iqualiv Matou  
Witness

**The Memorandum of Understanding for the Northwest Territories  
Council of Leaders**

Signed in counterpart on December 22, 2022 at

K'áhbamítúé / Colville Lake, NT

For the Behdzi Ahda First Nation

Richard Kochon

Witness

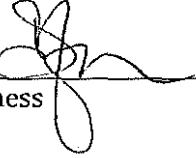
Chief



**The Memorandum of Understanding for the Northwest Territories  
Council of Leaders**

Signed in counterpart on December 19, 2022 at  
Yellowknife.

For the **Déliné Got'iné Government**

  
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Danny Gaudet   
Witness  
?ekw'aht?d?e

**The Memorandum of Understanding for the Northwest Territories  
Council of Leaders**

Signed in counterpart on December 14, 2022 at Inuvik.

For the Gwich'in Tribal Council



Ken Kyikavichik

Grand Chief



Witness

**The Memorandum of Understanding for the Northwest Territories  
Council of Leaders**

Signed in counterpart on September 29, 2023 at

Inuvik, NT.

For the **Inuvialuit Regional Corporation**

  
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Duane Ningaqsik Smith

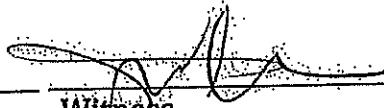
Chair and CEO

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness

The Memorandum of Understanding for the Northwest Territories  
Council of Leaders

Signed in counterpart on December 12, 2022 at Fort Good Hope,  
Northwest Territories

For the K'ahsho Got'ine of Fort Good Hope



\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness

*FFB*

Chief  
Fort Good Hope Dene Band

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
President

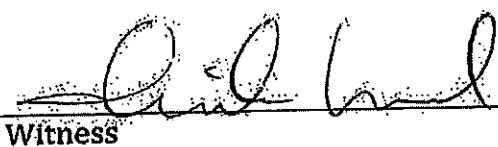
Fort Good Hope Metis Nation  
Local #54 Land Corporation



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Witness



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President



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Witness

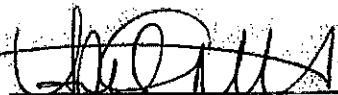
Yamoga Land Corporation

**The Memorandum of Understanding for the Northwest Territories  
Council of Leaders**

Signed in counterpart on March 16, 2023 at

Hay River Game Reserve  
V

For the Kátl'odeeche First Nation

  
April Martel

Chief

  
Witness

**The Memorandum of Understanding for the Northwest Territories  
Council of Leaders**

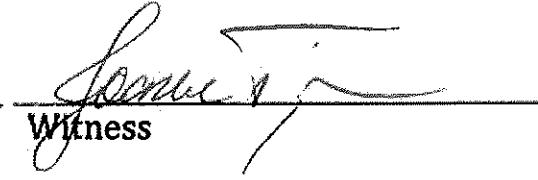
Signed in counterpart on December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at

Yellowknife, NWT.

For the North Slave Métis Alliance

  
Marc Whitford

A/President

  
Witness

**The Memorandum of Understanding for the Northwest Territories  
Council of Leaders**

Signed in counterpart on December 16, 2022 at

Edmonton, Alberta

For the Northwest Territory Métis Nation

Garry Bailey

Garry Bailey

President

Paul Whiteman

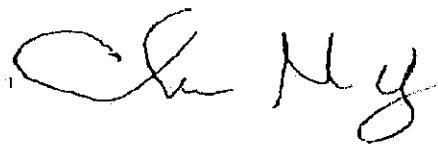
Witness

**The Memorandum of Understanding for the Northwest Territories  
Council of Leaders**

Signed in counterpart on May 16, 2023 at

Yellowknife, NT.

For the Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated



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Charles McNeely

Chair



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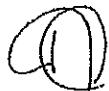
Witness

**The Memorandum of Understanding for the Northwest Territories  
Council of Leaders**

Signed in counterpart on December 16, 2022 at

Behchoko, NT.

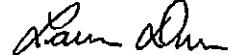
**For the Tłı̨chǫ Government**



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Jackson Lafferty

Grand Chief



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Witness

**The Memorandum of Understanding for the Northwest Territories  
Council of Leaders**

Signed in counterpart on January 18, 2023 at

Yellowknife, NT

**For the Government of the Northwest Territories**

Caroline Cochrane

Caroline Cochrane

Premier



Witness