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TRADITIONS

NATIONAL GATHERINGS ON INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE | RASSEMBLEMENTS NATIONAUX SUR LE SAVOIR AUTOCHTONE

TRADITIONS FINAL REPORT

Traditions: National Gatherings on Indigenous Knowledge - Final Report

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Disclaimer:

The contents of this report are a reflection of the discussions that took place throughout Traditions: National Gatherings on Indigenous Knowledge during May and June 2005. The opinions expressed herein are not intended to and nor do they necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Canadian Heritage or the Government of Canada.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 In Memoriam

2 Canadian Heritage and the National Gatherings

4 Indigenous Knowledge: Place, People and Protocol

7 Setting the Stage for the National Gatherings

9 The National Gatherings

- 1. Rankin Inlet, Nunavut 9
- 2. Edmonton, Alberta 11
- 3. Penticton, British Columbia 12
- 4. Saskatoon, Saskatchewan 14
- 5. Yellowknife, Northwest Territories 15
- 6. Wendake, Quebec 16
- 7. Eskasoni, Nova Scotia 17
- 8. Six Nations, Ontario 19

21 What Was Said

- Indigenous Knowledge and Languages and Cultures 21
- Indigenous Knowledge and Intellectual and Cultural Properties 30
- Indigenous Knowledge and Artistic Expression 39

46 Advisory Group’s Closing Remarks

47 Conclusion

APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Schedule 48**
- Appendix B: Proportional Representation at the Gatherings 49**
- Appendix C: Breakdown of Participation at the Gatherings 52**

IN MEMORIAM

Since the conclusion of *Traditions: National Gatherings on Indigenous Knowledge* in June 2005, we received the sad news that two delegates have passed away. Elder Peter Katorkra, who attended the Gathering in Rankin Inlet, Nunavut, and Grand Chief Archie Jack, who attended the Gathering in Penticton, British Columbia, provided valuable insights into the complexity of Indigenous Knowledge. We regret their passing.

Elder Peter Katorkra **1931-2005**

Elder Peter Katorkra devoted much of his life to *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* (Inuit Traditional Knowledge). Whenever he could, he would speak about the importance of language and its connection to culture. He sat on many committees dedicated to *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit*. Elder Katorkra also built the *Inukshuk* at Ottawa's International Airport. The National Gatherings gave many people the opportunity to listen and to learn from him. It was both an honour and a pleasure to have met him and to have heard his words.

Grand Chief Archie Jack **1934-2005**

Grand Chief Archie Jack spent most of his life helping his people. His accomplishments are many: he was Chief of the Penticton Indian Band for ten years, Chairman of the Okanagan Tribal Council and a founding member and leader of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs. He also held an honorary doctorate of the Nsyilxen language, was a saddle bronco champion and raised horses on his ranch with his wife Joyce. Throughout his life, Grand Chief Jack was a driving force for the revitalization of Indigenous language and culture and for preserving the history of the Okanagan Nation. In this capacity, he worked with the National Gatherings Secretariat in planning and implementing the Gathering in Penticton. Grand Chief Jack will be remembered with great respect.

CANADIAN HERITAGE AND THE NATIONAL GATHERINGS

An important part of the mission of the Department of Canadian Heritage is to assist Canadians to express and to share their diverse cultural experiences with each other and with the world. Several years ago it became clear that Canadian Heritage could do more to adequately recognize the many and diverse cultures of the original inhabitants of this land.

With this in mind it was decided to open a respectful dialogue with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples through a series of national Gatherings. The goal was to develop practical strategies for working together in areas where the mandate, expertise and experience of the Department of Canadian Heritage would coincide with the aspirations of Aboriginal peoples.

Expressions

The first Gathering, *Expressions: National Gathering on Aboriginal Artistic Expression*, focussed on Aboriginal artistic expression and was held in Ottawa over three days in June 2002. It brought Aboriginal artists, broadcasters, publishers and others active in the cultural sector together with government representatives to discuss opportunities and challenges for Aboriginal artistic expression and to find ways in which Canadian Heritage might help to address those challenges. The report of this Gathering may be found at www.expressions.gc.ca.

Destinations

This was followed by *Destinations: National Gathering on Aboriginal Cultures and Tourism* in December 2003. Aboriginal tourism operators, artists, academics, youth, Elders and government representatives gathered over three days in Whistler, BC. This Gathering had two goals. The first was to outline the type of support needed so that First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities could better control how their cultures are presented in the context of tourism. The second and related goal was to explore how tourism might be used to support the long-term well-being of Aboriginal communities and cultures. The report of this Gathering may be found at www.destinations.gc.ca.

Aboriginal Languages and Cultures

Meanwhile, Canadian Heritage was also sponsoring the work of the Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures to look into how best to preserve, revitalize and promote Aboriginal languages and cultures in Canada. Beginning in 2004 the Task Force commissioned research papers and undertook 16 focus-group consultation gatherings across Canada with Elders, Aboriginal language experts and community members. Its report, *Towards a New Beginning*, was delivered in June 2005 and may be found at <http://www.aboriginallanguagetestaskforce.ca>

These dialogues helped to inform Canadian Heritage how it might better acknowledge, celebrate and support the rich contributions of Aboriginal peoples across the country. They have also served to raise awareness of the need to take action now to ensure the continuing vitality of Aboriginal languages and cultures and to ensure that the artistic expressions of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples remain under their control. In addition, they have helped break down barriers to the resources available at Canadian Heritage and other federal government departments that might help Aboriginal people realize their artistic and related visions.

Traditions

Through these different Gatherings, it became evident that the topics discussed were inextricably linked to the all-encompassing bodies of knowledge referred to as Traditional or Indigenous Knowledge. Canadian Heritage recognized that efforts to address the challenges surrounding Aboriginal languages, cultures and artistic expression would be more effective if the broader context of Indigenous Knowledge were taken into account.

Thus began the process of working collaboratively with First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities to embark upon such a discussion. The result was *Traditions: National Gatherings on Indigenous Knowledge*, a series of eight discussions that took place in different locations across Canada in May and June, 2005. *Traditions* has provided Canadian Heritage with a greater understanding and appreciation of the importance of Indigenous Knowledge, and provided a context that enriches the earlier discussions on artistic expression, tourism and languages and cultures.

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE: PLACE, PEOPLE AND PROTOCOL

In recent decades there has been a growing awareness internationally and in Canada of the importance of Traditional or Indigenous Knowledge. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples focused part of its 1996 final report on Traditional Knowledge, describing it as the “cumulative body of knowledge and beliefs, handed down through generations by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and with their environment.”¹

Much of this recent interest has been generated by the fact that Indigenous peoples worldwide possess an unsurpassed knowledge of their physical environment and that it is therefore of crucial importance that this knowledge be preserved and shared. An example of this is article 8(j) of the international *Convention on Biodiversity* that refers to the need for signatory states to take measures to preserve, promote and encourage the equitable sharing of the “knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles...”²

However, Indigenous Knowledge is not confined to knowledge of the physical sciences. It is spiritual as well as ecological and embraces ways of knowing that are sometimes characterized as cultural or artistic. Viewing Indigenous Knowledge through categories such as art, science or culture, however, tends to fragment its inherent unity. As Greg Young-Ing describes it, the Traditional Knowledge of Indigenous peoples

*... encompasses a broad range of Indigenous knowledge ranging from: ancient stories, songs and dances; traditional architecture and agricultural; biodiversity-related and medicinal, herbal and plant knowledge; ancient motifs, crests and other artistic designs; various artistic mediums, styles, forms and techniques; spiritual and religious institutions and their symbols; and various other forms of Indigenous knowledge.*³

As Rosemarie Kuptana, Inuvialuk activist and environmentalist explains, Indigenous Knowledge always reflects unity rather than separation, and resists losing its connection to word and to sound. Thus, whenever something new is learned,

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- 1 Canada, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Vol. 4, *Perspectives and Realities* (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services 1996) at 454.
 - 2 1992 UNTS No. 30619. U.N.E.P. June 5. It can be found at www.biodiv.org/convention/default.shtml. Article 8(j) is discussed in Canada, Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures, *Towards A New Beginning: A Foundational Report for a Strategy to Revitalize First Nations, Inuit and Métis Languages and Cultures* (Ottawa: Department of Canadian Heritage, June 2005) at 72. The report deals with a variety of issues associated with Aboriginal languages and cultures and may be found at www.aboriginallanguagetestaskforce.ca.
 - 3 “Indigenous Knowledge and Intellectual Property Rights in Context” in Canada, Department of Canadian Heritage *Discussion Papers: Traditions National Gatherings on Indigenous Knowledge* (Ottawa, undated) at 47. The discussion papers may be found at www.traditions.gc.ca.

... the new knowledge is incorporated into a holistic world view and becomes part of the explanation of the entire ecosystem as a whole, and explains the working of the ecosystem and not just an isolated particle. We believe that everything is interrelated and interconnected. Where western science values the written word, Inuit Indigenous Knowledge is an oral culture and cannot be written. To remove it from this oral context is to remove its meaning. Dynamic knowledge such as Inuit Indigenous Knowledge cannot be written down, as written information has a permanence that does not reflect the true nature of Indigenous Knowledge. Furthermore, Indigenous Knowledge is rarely communicated in a direct manner; instead, it is communicated in stories, events, dances, song and dreams.⁴

Indigenous Knowledge is tied to place and the people who live in that place. It takes living form through the many and diverse Aboriginal languages in concepts and linguistically-reinforced relationships reflective of the places where these languages arose. As Marie Battiste and Sa'ke'j Henderson put it: "We carry the mysteries of our ecologies and their diversity in our oral traditions, in our ceremonies, and in our art; we unite these mysteries in the structure of our languages and our ways of knowing."⁵

Indigenous Knowledge is more about understanding one's role and responsibility in the world than about classifying information. It is a form of consciousness intimately related to the ecological order, a response of a people to their responsibility to participate in maintaining that order. Although recorded and passed on by such means as art, song, myth, story and ceremony, Indigenous Knowledge is not cultural knowledge as such. The Mi'kmaq language, for example, has no single concept or word that captures what most Canadians would refer to as "culture". To the Mi'kmaq, aspects might be captured by *telilnuisink*, maintaining contact with tradition, or by *telilnuo'lti'k*, maintaining consciousness, or by *tlinuita'sim*, maintaining the Mi'kmaq language.

Nor is Indigenous Knowledge a uniform concept shared in the same way by all Indigenous peoples. It is diverse knowledge held by different people in different ways in their respective societies. It is therefore personal knowledge, and is so much a part of the identity of a person, clan, group or nation that it cannot easily be separated from that sense of identity. For this reason, Indigenous Knowledge must be approached with respect and discussed in its own context according to the appropriate protocols.⁶

4 "Relationship Between Traditional Knowledge and Intellectual Cultural Properties; An Inuit Perspective" *Discussion Papers*, *ibid* at 44.

5 Marie Battiste, James (Sa'ke'j) Youngblood Henderson, *Protecting Indigenous Knowledge and Heritage: A Global Challenge* (Saskatoon: Purich Publishing Ltd., 2000) at 9, paraphrasing Linda Hogan, *Power* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998) at 227. This theme is discussed in *Towards A New Beginning*, *supra* note 2 at 22-24.

6 *Protecting Indigenous Knowledge*, *ibid*, at 35-37. The Supreme Court of Canada seems to be aware that Aboriginal cultural practices embrace the identity of those who maintain the practices. The Court has stated that Aboriginal rights under s. 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* encompass customs, traditions and practices integral to the distinctive culture of the Aboriginal group in the sense that the "practice, tradition or custom was one of the things which made the culture distinctive – that it was one of the things that truly made the society what it was" (emphasis in the original): *Van der Peet v. The Queen* [1996] 4 C.N.L.R. 177 at 204.

Thus, as Canadian Heritage began its dialogue with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples about Indigenous Knowledge, it had to consider how to create a collaborative process that would respect these protocols.

Canadian Heritage appointed a twelve person Advisory Group made up of respected individuals drawn largely from Aboriginal communities across Canada:

- **Reg Crowshoe**, Piikani-Blackfoot Elder from the Piikani reserve in Alberta;
- **Marie Battiste**, Mi'kmaq education professional from the Potlo'tek First Nation of Cape Breton, Nova Scotia;
- **Madeleine Dion Stout**, Cree health professional from the Kehewin First Nation of Alberta;
- **Peter Irniq**, Inuk teacher and cultural activist from the Kivalliq region of Nunavut;
- **Roberta Jamieson**, Mohawk political leader from the Six Nations of the Grand River of Ontario;
- **Misel Joe**, Saqamaw (Chief) of the Miawpukek Mi'kamaway Mawi'omi of Newfoundland;
- **Jaime Koebel**, Métis Student/Researcher from Lac La Biche, Alberta;
- **Carrielynn Lamouche**, Métis health professional from Gift Lake, Alberta;
- **Rosa Mantla**, Dogrib language and cultural advisor from T'lichó, NWT;
- **René Tenasco**, Algonquin research coordinator from Kitigan Zibi Anishnabeg First Nation of Québec;
- **Greg Young-Ing**, writer and publisher, Opsakwayak Cree Nation of northern Manitoba;
- **Philippe Doré**, former Director-General of the Aboriginal Affairs Branch of Canadian Heritage of Ottawa, Ontario.

Biographies of the Advisory Group members may be found at www.traditions.gc.ca.

With the help of the Advisory Group, a unique blend of Indigenous and non-Indigenous discussion protocols was created on the basis of a traditional circle structure process. Called Venue, Action, Language and Song, or VALS for short, it was adapted with the help of an Elders Council to the local protocols of each of the locations across Canada selected as gathering places for *Traditions*. Further information on the Advisory Group, Elders Council and the VALS process may be found at www.traditions.gc.ca.⁷

⁷ The traditional circle structure process and VALS will be included in a separate National Gatherings on Indigenous Knowledge Engagement Report. Short descriptions of each may be found at www.traditions.ca.

SETTING THE STAGE FOR THE NATIONAL GATHERINGS

To facilitate dialogue at the *Traditions* Gatherings, Canadian Heritage commissioned discussion papers from authors drawn from a variety of Aboriginal communities. Caroline Anawak, Willie Ermine, Norman Fleury, Jaime Koebel, Rosemary Kuptana, Greg Young-Ing and Christle Wiebe were asked to write about artistic expression, intellectual and cultural property, languages and cultures, customary law and intellectual and cultural property, and ethical guidelines regarding Indigenous Knowledge. Each provided a unique perspective on these questions. In addition, Wayne Shinya, a Senior Officer in the Copyright Policy Branch of Canadian Heritage also provided a useful overview of intellectual property law and federal policy. These papers may be found at www.traditions.gc.ca.

The next step was to develop *Traditions* discussion topics that would engage departmental policy and program priorities and tie together some of the themes investigated in the prior National Gatherings. Three topics were selected:

1. *Indigenous Knowledge and Languages and Cultures*

This topic focused on the revitalization, preservation and promotion of First Nations, Inuit and Métis languages and cultures and the importance of language and culture to individuals and communities.

2. *Indigenous Knowledge and Intellectual and Cultural Properties*

This topic examined the relationship between existing intellectual property laws (legal rights that result from intellectual activity in the industrial, scientific, literary and artistic fields) and cultural property (the body of cultural expressions that have significance to a community).

3. *Indigenous Knowledge and Artistic Expression*

This topic explored the relationship between Indigenous Knowledge, communities and various forms of artistic expression, including, but not limited to, dance, clothing and textiles, the visual arts, songs, stories, writing, architecture, designs and new media.

Within each of the three topics, delegates were asked to consider the following questions:

- What issues should be considered key priorities?
- What are the main vulnerabilities associated with these issues?
- What are possible strategies for action and the roles and responsibilities to address these issues in diverse communities?

Eight locations were selected as gathering sites: Rankin Inlet, Nunavut; Edmonton, Alberta; Penticton, British Columbia; Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; Yellowknife, Northwest Territories;

Wendake, Québec; Eskasoni, Nova Scotia; and Six Nations, Ontario. Each discussion at the *Traditions* Gatherings was designed to result in recommendations for action which, along with all notes, visual aids and other documents, were to be collected and formally transferred to Canadian Heritage for safekeeping using the appropriate processes.

As the goal was to bring together people of diverse backgrounds from the arts, education, language, the environment and politics, participation in the *Traditions* Gatherings was by invitation only. Potential delegates were proposed by the Advisory Group, by Canadian Heritage and other relevant federal departments, and by national Aboriginal organizations.*

In total over 400 representatives of First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities along with representatives from various levels of government participated. Each Gathering took place over three days and involved approximately 50 delegates who came together in plenary and in small break-out circles to discuss the issues.

* The Métis National Council officially declined endorsing the National Gatherings on Indigenous knowledge.

TRADITIONS: THE NATIONAL GATHERINGS

“Sacred medicinal traditional places need to be preserved as the land is connected to our oral traditions and teachings.” — Traditions delegate

The uniqueness of place permeated each of the eight Gatherings. The Canadian landscape is extremely varied, an immense expanse, with oceans and great lakes, mountains and plains, forests and tundra, badlands and deserts, rainforests and northern lights. Each meeting site, with its own environment, peoples, cultures and languages, gave its Gathering a unique context and flavour. Delegates gathered in tipis, on green grass under blue skies, inside cultural and community centres, as well as in hotels and conference rooms.

RANKIN INLET, NUNAVUT, MAY 3-5, 2005

“Our Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit is very important to us; I was born in an igloo and it was very cold. I am happy to be alive today, and am still learning today.” — Traditions delegate

On the northwest coast of Hudson Bay, set amidst snow, frozen ice and the midnight sun, Elder Mary Ann Tattaine lit the *kudluq*, a traditional Inuit lamp, to mark the beginning of the Gathering in Rankin Inlet, Nunavut, on May 2005. Nunavut – “Our Land” – has been the traditional territory of many Inuit groups for millennia and it was fitting that the *Traditions* National Gatherings begin here, in Canada’s newest, largest and most northerly territory.

This Gathering brought together 47 delegates from across Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, Québec and Labrador including Advisory Group members Peter Irniq and Reg Crowshoe. Government delegates included representatives from the Government of Nunavut and from several provinces, as well as from Canadian Heritage regional offices, Industry Canada, Parks Canada and the Canadian Heritage Information Network.

Opening comments by Elder Rhoda Karatek welcomed Elders and traditionalists, language specialists, teachers, community members and representatives from cultural institutions and government. She spoke of the importance of *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* (Inuit Traditional Knowledge) in maintaining cultural identity and connection to the land and was followed by Hamish Tatty, the Deputy Mayor of Rankin Inlet, who warmly welcomed delegates to the hamlet of Rankin Inlet. Tongola Sandy, President of the Kivalliq Inuit Association, underscored the importance of coming together to discuss these issues in a respectful and meaningful way when he spoke of “sharing ideas only if we work together.”

The structure of the Gathering in Rankin Inlet involved two breakout groups: one that was unilingual Inuktitut and one that was bilingual Inuktitut-English. A cultural evening organized for the second night of the Gathering included demonstrations of traditional drumming, throat singing and Inuit games. The Gathering concluded on the afternoon of the third day with the following resolution drawn up by the delegates: “We want Canadian Heritage, from what they heard and from what they understood, to be proud and to be responsible for what was being said during this meeting.”

Summary of Discussions

“When a high school graduate leaves school, they should know how to build an igloo.” — Traditions delegate

Discussions centered mainly on issues related to the continuation of strong and living Inuit cultures and the need for protection of Inuit intellectual and cultural property rights. Inuit Elders were concerned that Inuit Traditional Knowledge is no longer known to their grandchildren and that Inuit traditions like building sod houses, lighting the kudluq and making traditional items like pots and whips are becoming lost arts. Delegates felt that establishing a National Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun Language Commission (with representation from the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Nunavik and Labrador) would help to address many of the concerns Inuit have with respect to language and culture.

Of particular concern to delegates is the use of an *Inukshuk* as the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic Games emblem, as well as the misuse of Inuit words and the appropriation of Inuit cultural products such as the kayak and the anorak. Also of concern was the appropriation of the term *kamiks* (sealskin boots), which has been trademarked as a brand name for rubber boots. Cultural appropriation and the negative aspects of commercialization of *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* are issues that Inuit have been struggling against for many years and delegates stressed the need to identify mechanisms to collectively protect cultural property like traditional clothing designs, Inuktitut words and the *Inukshuk*, against cultural exploitation. Delegates felt it critical to establish a National Inuit Watchdog Committee that would create internal and external mechanisms to safeguard their culture from commercial exploitation and appropriation, and to establish an Elders’ Council to guide this process.

EDMONTON, ALBERTA, MAY 10-12, 2005

Coming Together

“We must cherish our inheritance. We must preserve our nationality for the youth of our future.” — Louis Riel

The second Gathering took place in Edmonton, Alberta at the Chateau Louis Hotel and Conference Centre. Sixty delegates attended, including 45 Métis persons and Advisory Group members Carrielynn Lamouche, Jaime Koebel, and Philippe Doré. Fifteen representatives from Canadian Heritage, Justice Canada, Crown corporations and universities also attended. Delegates came from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, and Newfoundland and Labrador.

Delegates included respected Elders, language experts, teachers, artists, youth and dancers. For many, this Gathering was an opportunity to discuss the important issues of Métis traditional knowledge with peers and respected Elders. The Director of the Manitoba Métis Federation’s Michif Language Program was present throughout the Gathering, as was the President of the Métis Settlements General Council.

Delegates were received on the first day by Elder Marge Fridel. On the second day the Honourable Pearl Calahasen, Alberta’s Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, addressed delegates and provided words of encouragement. Another highlight of the Gathering was the presentation of gifts to three representatives of Canadian Heritage. Pablo Sobrino, Emma Doucet and Philippe Doré received Métis sashes as gestures of goodwill and partnership. In addition, Métis Grandmothers honoured Val Kaufman from the Canadian Heritage Edmonton regional office in a traditional way by giving her a blanket in recognition of her dedication and work with Aboriginal communities.

On the evening of the second day, delegates were invited to the Amiskwaciy Academy for a traditional feast and cultural event. Delegates were treated to traditional Métis music and dancing led by master of ceremonies Leonard Gauthier. Delegates enjoyed performances from local talents Celeste L’Hirondelle, Stan Anderson and Cooper Williams, along with Métis fiddlers and dance groups of all ages. Among the honoured guests were members of the Métis veterans’ community in Edmonton.

Summary of Discussions

“It is very sad when you get older and realize that you have missed out on something by not learning the language.” — Traditions delegate

This Gathering highlighted the diversity of Métis culture across Canada and the unique history of the Métis as a people. Most discussions were less a reflection of regional diversity than a reflection of the cultural distinctiveness of the Métis people. There was strong emphasis on the need to recognize and value the Métis as an Aboriginal group

with distinctive languages, cultures and forms of artistic expression, and on the need to be aware of and take pride in Métis history and culture, including the Métis connection to the land. Delegates called for review of government policies and funding practices to allow for inclusion of the cultural distinctiveness of the Métis and to recognize the diversity of Métis languages and cultures. Legislative and other types of support, including dialogue between Métis leaders and various levels of government to advance recognition of Métis rights, were considered necessary to improve access to land and ability to live their Métis cultures. Delegates felt that inclusion of Métis in land and resource management planning and decision-making was therefore vital.

PENTICTON, BRITISH COLUMBIA, MAY 17-19, 2005

Coming Together

“The word En’owkin is an Okanagan conceptual metaphor which describes a process of clarification, conflict resolution, and group commitment, or coming to the best solutions possible through respectful dialogue – literally, consensus.” — En’owkin Centre Website

Set within the lush hills of the Okanagan territory, the En’owkin Centre was the site of the third Gathering. The late Grand Chief Archie Jack of the Okanagan Nation welcomed delegates with the traditional Okanagan greeting – “*Way’ kwetc~kitcx slaxt!*” (You have arrived friend).

A total of 54 delegates attended, including First Nations delegates from Alberta, British Columbia, the Northwest Territories and Yukon. Among them were Chiefs, Elders, artists, cultural workers and teachers of language and culture. Advisory Group members Greg Young-Ing, Madeleine Dion Stout and Philippe Doré provided support. Other delegates attended on behalf of the University of Calgary, the British Columbia Institute of Technology, Industry Canada, Canadian Heritage and Parks Canada.

Delegates included the late Grand Chief Archie Jack; Bill Mussell, President of the Native Mental Health Association; Chief Stewart Phillip of the Penticton Indian Band and President of the British Columbia Union of Indians; Chief Clarence Louie of the Osoyoos Indian Band; and Jeannette Armstrong, Executive Director of the En’owkin Centre. The President of the National Association of Friendship Centres, Vera Pawis Tabobondung, participated throughout the three days of the Gathering along with representatives from both the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples and the Native Women’s Association.

Following Okanagan tradition, under the guidance of host Jeannette Armstrong and the late Grand Chief Archie Jack, delegates came together on the first day to place a personal item at the circle's centre as their pledge to contribute to the discussions in a respectful way. On the final day delegates parted by reflecting and sharing about their personal pledge to the circle.

The En'owkin process was blended with the traditional circle structure process to facilitate discussions. In accordance with the En'owkin process, delegates identified themselves as belonging to one of four circles: mothers, fathers, youth or Elders. Each of these four groups represented how delegates felt they wished to discuss the issues over the course of the Gatherings.

On the second evening delegates enjoyed a feast prepared by the En'owkin Centre that was followed by a cultural show. Highlights of the evening included short film presentations by students of the En'owkin Centre, a traditional dance presentation, and a sharing of traditional songs. Delegates were also treated to an impromptu singing performance by Jeannette Armstrong and her sister Delphine Derickson.

At the conclusion of the Gathering, the late Grand Chief Jack offered a closing prayer.

Summary of Discussions

"Twenty-thirty years ago it was Git'san thought, Git'san action. Our universe was Git'san. I don't remember being aware of other people in the universe until I was ten. We have totem poles that tell the history of families and these are our corner posts to our historical rights." — Traditions delegate

With 32 languages, British Columbia is unique in housing the greatest diversity of language communities of all the provinces and territories of Canada. Accordingly, it was recommended that allocations for Aboriginal language funding take into account both regional population and the number of different language communities. Delegates also reflected on the nature of storytelling as a means of cultural transmission. While some felt that translating stories and legends into English would be a way to immediately engage youth who do not speak their language, others disagreed because they felt that something important is lost in translation. However, there was agreement that languages must be shared with youth so that they may understand and connect with the traditional telling of these stories. Delegates felt that this was an important means of relaying traditional teachings to youth and of building interest and enthusiasm about their cultures. Delegates were also concerned about non-Aboriginal publishers publishing the stories, legends and histories of First Nations as the content could be misrepresented or misinterpreted. They believed this could be avoided by increasing support for First Nations publishers.

SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN, MAY 25-27, 2005

Coming Together

“Language is a sacred message, conveying much more than the simple meaning of the words.” — Traditions delegate

The springtime winds blowing across the plains welcomed delegates to Wanuskewin Heritage Park. Located on the west bank of the South Saskatchewan River, the park has been a traditional gathering place for over 6,000 years. Two of the four discussion circles took place outside in tipis.

The 52 delegates came from Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta and included representatives of the Government of Saskatchewan and regional offices of Canadian Heritage and Justice Canada. A mix of urban and rural First Nations representatives as well as Elders, language experts and educators, artists, playwrights, curators and youth meant that the Gathering benefited from diverse perspectives. Madeleine Dion Stout and Marie Battiste represented the Advisory Group. The presidents of the Native Women’s Association and the Association of Native Friendship Centres were present throughout the Gathering.

Following an opening prayer by Elder Simon Kytwayhat, delegates were welcomed by Bill Balan, Canadian Heritage Regional Executive Director of the Prairies and Northern Region. A pipe ceremony opened the Gathering on the second day. That night delegates enjoyed a performance by the Wanuskewin International Dance Troupe who showcased Northern Plains dance styles accompanied by traditional drummers and singers.

Elder Jacob Sanderson closed the Gathering on the third day with a smudge and prayer, and expressed hope that these discussions would continue to move forward.

Summary of Discussions

“Respect for Indigenous Knowledge means having respect for one another. We have Dakota, Lakota, Nakota, Cree, Dene, Assiniboine Indigenous Knowledge – all are different Indigenous Knowledges.” — Traditions delegate

This Gathering produced unique themes related to what could broadly be called self-determination. Delegates pointed out that government should not look for ‘pan-Aboriginal’ approaches to issues related to Indigenous Knowledge, languages and cultures, intellectual and cultural properties and artistic expression. They stated that communities can and should set their own priorities because only they know their needs. Moreover, communities grow naturally, not as a result of external strategic decisions. Delegates repeatedly stressed that First Nations, Inuit and Métis languages, as indeed all languages, possess innate value. Similarly, delegates expressed frustration with the fact that Indigenous Knowledge and cultures are not regarded as legitimate and valuable in mainstream Canadian society.

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES, MAY 31-JUNE 2, 2005

Coming Together

“You made the journey from your minds to your hearts, so that we can all be one people, as our Elders taught us”. — Traditions delegate

On the shores of Great Slave Lake, 53 delegates came together to attend the fifth Gathering in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. This Gathering brought together Inuit, First Nations and Métis delegates from remote northern communities in the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Alberta. Rosa Mantla, Carrielynn Lamouche and Philippe Doré represented the Advisory Group. Also in attendance were government representatives from Canadian Heritage, Industry Canada and Parks Canada, as well as representatives of the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Elder Mary Rose Charlo opened with a prayer and was followed by a welcoming address from Dene National Chief Noeline Villebrun. The Honourable Charles Dent, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment for the Government of the Northwest Territories, also addressed the delegates, noting that “Aboriginal heritage, languages and Indigenous Knowledge have helped to shape our past, and they will also help to create the future of the North”. Throughout the three days, a modified version of the traditional circle structure process was used to bring together Elders, artists, youth and community leaders.

The presence of the land was profoundly felt at this Gathering. Delegates spoke at length about fostering opportunities for educational trips out on the land for students. As one Elder noted: “To protect the languages and cultures, you need to protect the land. You need to have access to the land. You cannot separate the language from the culture, and you cannot separate them from the experience on the land and spirituality.”

A cultural event took place on the evening of the second day. Delegates were treated to traditional storytelling and Métis fiddling and invited to learn and to participate in a traditional Dene dance. At the end of the third day, delegates came together to share their thoughts and concerns regarding the issues. The Gathering closed with a prayer by Elder Percy Henry.

Summary of Discussions

“We have Dogrib teachers in our schools. When developing programs, Elders found that spirituality was something that was missing. We speak the language, and can reinforce that in our education system. However, it is not the same in all regions.” — Traditions delegate

One challenge delegates noted is that, although bush trips are seen as an important component of student education, many parents are worried about children’s safety when they are out on the land. Delegates were also concerned about the lack of cultural supports

for northern First Nations, Inuit and Métis people who are incarcerated or are homeless and disadvantaged, particularly those who live “down South” in large urban centres. Addressing these issues will require a collaborative effort from communities and governments. One particular concern facing delegates was that mining, pipelines and other economic development issues rather than the preservation and promotion of languages and cultures are at the top of the political agenda. An important issue to artists, entrepreneurs and other professionals was the shortage of northern Indigenous media designers, producers and other specialists required to meet increasing market demands for culturally appropriate products and services.

WENDAKE, QUÉBEC, JUNE 7-9, 2005

Coming Together

“Each nation has a distinctiveness that needs to be recognized.”
— Traditions delegate

The sixth Gathering took place at the Salle Kondiaronk in Wendake, Québec, 15 kilometres north of Québec City in the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat people. It was the largest gathering of French-speaking First Nations representatives and included 35 delegates who had travelled from across Québec and Labrador. They were joined by representatives of Parks Canada, Justice Canada, Industry Canada, the Law Commission of Canada, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and Canadian Heritage.

Delegates from First Nations included members of the Huron-Wendat, Algonquin, Maliseet, Mohawk, Abenaki, Atikamek, Cree and Innu nations. Konrad Sioui and Philippe Doré attended on behalf of the Advisory Group. The Assembly of First Nations of Québec and Labrador and the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples were also represented. Jocelyne Gros-Louis, President of le Regroupement des Centres d’Amitié Autochtone du Québec addressed delegates on the final day of discussion.

Using stories and illustrations, Jean-Pierre Ashini of Sheshatsiu, Labrador highlighted the impact of Traditional Knowledge and of reconnecting to the land in stemming youth suicide. His numerous examples emphasized the importance of nurturing a connection to culture as a basis for healthy self-identity and community survival. Many delegates commented that his images and remarks underscored the urgency of taking action to preserve and share Indigenous Knowledge between generations.

Over the three days of the Gathering, delegates addressed the three topics in four smaller circles, facilitated by Raymonde Rock, Katherine Webster, Konrad Sioui and Jean-Louis Fontaine in French, English, in both French and English and in Innu/Montagnais respectively. Although the VALS process was not used, facilitators were briefed on the principles of the traditional circle structure process and used discussion circles to allow each participant to be heard.

On the evening of the second day, delegates were treated to the acoustic melodies of accomplished blues guitarist Gilles Sioui of the Huron-Wendat Nation. Joining him in song were Bryan André and Philippe Boivin, also on guitar.

Summary of Discussions

“Everything is connected to the land. Land is very much affected by all kinds of abuse. Access to our lands for hunting and other traditional exercises is still very difficult.” — Traditions delegate

One of the unique elements of this Gathering was its location. Independent suburban municipalities surrounded the Wendake First Nation until recently when they were swallowed up in the amalgamation of the Greater Québec City area. This means that Wendake is now legally and politically surrounded by the city. Issues of connection to the land, authority and control, identity and diversity were stressed in the discussion circles. The continuous movement of Indigenous populations back and forth between urban and rural areas was also raised as an issue. Several references were made to the holistic world view that sees the physical, social, economic and spiritual environments as mutually inclusive, inseparable entities. Similar to other Gatherings, the importance of transmitting language to future generations was also stressed. The difficulty of fostering Indigenous Knowledge in the modern mainstream environment was also repeatedly cited as an issue.

ESKASONI, NOVA SCOTIA, JUNE 14-16, 2005

Coming Together

“We do not have to assimilate to survive. We need to be strong in language, culture and Indigenous tradition to survive.” — Traditions delegate

The seventh Gathering was held at the Sara Denny Memorial Cultural Centre on the Eskasoni Reserve in Nova Scotia. The centre is dedicated to the memory of Sara Denny, a Mi’kmaq Elder who was instrumental in preserving key aspects of Mi’kmaq culture during the period when it was being actively suppressed.

Fifty-three delegates from across Atlantic Canada – from Lennox Island, Prince Edward Island, to Port-de-Port, Newfoundland, and to Red Bank, New Brunswick participated at this Gathering. Advisory Group members Marie Battiste, Misel Joe, Reg Crowshoe, Philippe Doré and Greg Young-Ing were present. Delegates included Elders, youth, artists, teachers, linguists and representatives from cultural centers and communities. Government representatives from across the Canadian Heritage Portfolio, including regional offices, Parks Canada and Environment Canada also attended. Also contributing

towards the discussions were six Advisory Group members and a representative from the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples.

On the first evening, Elder Murdena Marshall began the Gathering with a Mi'kmaq prayer. This was followed by a round of introductions and welcoming remarks from each of the delegates present. The next morning, Cathy Martin honoured delegates with a traditional drum song to create the right spirit for the circle discussions.

Joel Denny and his family warmly hosted the delegation in the Sara Denny Memorial Cultural Centre with daily meals. A cultural event on the second day of the Gathering featuring the Denny family – led by Joel Denny – captivated the audience with Mi'kmaq traditional drumming, singing, dancing and storytelling.

Sara Denny's words, "Just don't look over my shoulder" inspired the three days of discussion. On the final day, Elder Eleanor Johnson and host Marie Battiste brought everyone back together to a full circle for group presentations and closing comments. Mi'kmaq Grand Council Keptin John Joe Sark and Elder Peter Jadis closed the Gathering with a prayer and a smudge.

Summary of Discussions

"The language is still there. It has been kept for us, but now it is our turn to save it." — Traditions delegate

Atlantic Canada is distinguished from the rest of Canada in that First Nations living on the East Coast were the first to have contact with Europeans. This legacy has had a significant impact on the languages, cultures and peoples of this territory. Delegates noted that, while there is a Mi'kmaq immersion program in Eskasoni, Mi'kmaq language loss is a significant concern for the community because it is not used enough in everyday life. They pointed out that languages are maps for cultural perspectives and world views. Delegates felt the English language is linear compared with the Mi'kmaq language and its very different, non-linear perspective. Delegates also discussed the petroglyphs, the historical records that document the histories of the peoples, including the history of first contact with Europeans. They expressed concern about the lack of appreciation and value given to them as a means of recording and telling history.

There was agreement that traditions like ceremonies and storytelling have to be revived through local initiatives, community by community, before the Elders pass on. Recommendations were made to support local initiatives, including a proposal to develop something similar to the Museums Assistance Program to support community arts and cultural centres that could link developmental programs, individual artists, and communities. Regional language centres were proposed as a way to provide an accessible venue for youth and adults to connect with Elders, to learn about language and to engage in cultural activities. Delegates also envisioned First Nations, Inuit and Métis artists playing a stronger role both domestically and internationally to reverse negative stereotypes of Aboriginal people. Finally, delegates recommended creating opportunities to showcase other dimensions of Aboriginal peoples and cultures such as contemporary fashion design.

SIX NATIONS, ONTARIO, JUNE 22-24, 2005

Coming Together

“The relationship goes both ways: it must be one of respect. That is the relationship our ancestors said we should have.” — Traditions delegate

Hosts Grand Chief David General and Advisory Group member Roberta Jamieson welcomed delegates to the eighth and final Gathering at the Woodland Cultural Centre in Brantford, Ontario. Advisory Group members Carrielynn Lamouche and Reg Crowshoe provided support. This was the largest of the Gatherings, with 66 First Nations, Métis and government representatives coming from across Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Québec and Yukon.

Government delegates included representatives of the Ontario regional offices of Canadian Heritage and other sectors from the Canadian Heritage Portfolio, including the Canada Council for the Arts, the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, Copyright Policy Branch, the Canadian Museum of Civilization, the Museum of Science and Technology, the Museum of Nature and Sport Canada. Other federal departments and agencies represented were Health Canada, Industry Canada, the Law Commission of Canada and the Privy Council Office.

The participation of Elders and traditionalists, youth, visual artists, fashion designers, dancers, musicians, linguists, teachers, professors and representatives from cultural and educational institutions and communities contributed to the variety of perspectives at this Gathering. Also present was the President of the Native Women’s Association.

Elder Hubert Skye opened with a prayer and encouraged delegates to discuss the issues with open eyes, open ears and open hearts. Using a modified version of the traditional circle structure process, delegates formed four circles for discussion. On the second evening, the people of Six Nations generously hosted delegates in the community centre for a traditional meal. Highlights from the cultural evening included a smoke dance demonstration, a short comedy sketch, presentations and declarations by Six Nations youth and round-dancing in which all delegates were invited to participate.

On the third day of the Gathering, two special audio-visual presentations were made to the plenary session. Carol Geddes from Teslin, Yukon, shared her animated film called *Two Winters: A Tale from Above the Earth*. Dr. Dawn Martin-Hill of Six Nations presented a montage of footage filmed at the International Indigenous Elders Summit held at Six Nations in August 2004. Elder Hubert Skye closed the Gathering.

Summary of Discussions

“The two-row wampum belt relates to themes of peace, friendship and the desire to do well by one another, but it preserves our identity as well. The relationship is the beginning. Fundamentally, it should be on a nation-to-nation basis. It should be government-to-government and nation-to-nation if we are to talk about how we can co exist.” — Traditions delegate

One of the issues of particular interest to delegates was Microsoft’s development of software that would allow people to use Windows in Mohawk. Delegates were concerned that Microsoft would profit from Mohawk culture without the appropriate consent and involvement of the Mohawk community. Delegates felt that innovative projects and ideas, reinforced by positive words and perspectives, are needed to support communities and to generate awareness among the Canadian public about First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

It was suggested that the federal government consider strategies to better promote National Aboriginal Day by increasing publicity and by increasing funding for celebrations showcasing both contemporary and traditional aspects of Aboriginal languages and cultures. Rich discussions surrounding authenticity, appropriation and stereotyping took place during the sessions on artistic expression. It was noted that representations of Aboriginal peoples in art, movies and tourism are limited and often stereotypical. Delegates recommended creating opportunities to showcase other dimensions of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples and cultures such as contemporary fashion design.

WHAT WAS SAID

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

ISSUES

“The continuance of our language is the survival of our people, the survival of our unique world view that can only be expressed through the language. It expresses all: relationships with people, with all living things on Earth, with heavenly bodies.” — Traditions delegate

The most consistent message heard throughout each of the Gatherings was that First Nations, Inuit and Métis languages are cornerstones of culture and are intimately connected to each of the three discussion topics.

According to the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Aboriginal languages in Canada are among the most endangered in the world.⁸ The 2001 Canadian Census noted that the number of First Nations, Inuit and Métis persons who spoke an Aboriginal language as their mother tongue was down 3.5 percent from the 1996 Census.⁹ According to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, the threat of disappearance of these languages “means that Aboriginal people’s distinctive world view, the wisdom of their ancestors and their ways of being human could vanish as well.”¹⁰

The issues around First Nations, Inuit and Métis languages and cultures discussed at the Gatherings were accented by the reality that these languages are in a critical state. Many delegates pointed out that it only takes two generations of non-speakers for a language to be lost. A sense of urgency was felt deeply throughout each Gathering and resonated profoundly on a national level. Accordingly, delegates identified the following issues and vulnerabilities related to languages and cultures.

Strong and Living Cultures

- *Reconciliation and Healing*
 - Policies of assimilation, displacement and the persistent marginalization of Aboriginal peoples have caused acute language and cultural loss and social disintegration that need to be reversed. The resilience of communities in keeping their languages and cultures alive in spite of tremendous obstacles must also be acknowledged.

8 UNESCO, *Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger of Disappearing*, Stephen A. Wurm, ed. (Paris: 1996) at 2.

9 Statistics Canada. *2001 Census: Analysis Series, Aboriginal Peoples of Canada: A Demographic Profile*, at 9.

10 Canada, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Vol. 3, Gathering Strength* (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services 1996) at 603.

- *Languages and Cultures Are Dynamic*
 - First Nations, Inuit and Métis languages, cultures and knowledge are dynamic and exist in contemporary contexts. There is a need to preserve and protect traditions while acknowledging and honouring the dynamic changes in Aboriginal languages and cultures.
- *Loss of Language Means Erosion of Culture*
 - Culture is passed on through the language. Losing particular words means losing part of the unique cultures and identities of Aboriginal peoples, while losing languages entirely changes the relationships with Elders and the knowledge that comes through those relationships.

Revitalization of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Languages

- *Constitutional Protections*
 - Although First Nations, Inuit and Métis languages are protected by s.35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, they have yet to be formally recognized or protected through legislation, as has been done for English and French through the *Official Languages Act*.
- *Language Use in the Communities*
 - Although some Aboriginal languages are taught in schools, communities feel that they are not used enough in everyday community life. There are additional challenges for people away from their home communities who do not have the opportunity to speak their languages, to continue relationships with Elders and community or to engage in their ceremonies and customs. New technologies and concepts may also contribute to the continual expansion and evolution of languages.
- *Role of Parents in Transmitting Culture*
 - Many people are caught between two worlds. Through assimilative measures like the residential schools, people were taught not to value their languages and cultures. Therefore, many people did not pass these on to their children. Without ongoing conversation at home, languages learned in school will not flourish or become integrated into daily life.
- *First Nations, Inuit and Métis Language Immersion Programs*
 - First Nations, Inuit and Métis languages are rarely integrated across the curriculum, and many language immersion programs are based on non-Aboriginal education models that lack a cultural and land-based context. There is an overall lack of immersion programs. Existing programs operate with inadequate funding and resources and, at times, a lack of support from governments and some community members.
- *Language Education Materials and Resources*
 - Teaching tools available to Aboriginal language teachers are deficient. Current immersion and second-language books and resources are often based on English

or French stories translated into Indigenous languages and therefore lack an appropriate cultural perspective. Differences in regional dialects also present a challenge in developing teaching tools.

- *Teachers*
 - There is a lack of accredited First Nations, Inuit and Métis language teachers. The perception that all language speakers are potential teachers hurts the quality of language education.
- *Outreach and Education in Non-Aboriginal Schools*
 - Often artistic expression is the only aspect of Aboriginal cultures taught in public schools. Moreover, historical perspectives are not presented and this contributes to stereotypes.
- *Continuing Education and Support*
 - Failure to recognize those with Traditional Knowledge, particularly Elders, results in universities hiring non-Aboriginal people to teach courses that should be taught by Traditional Knowledge-holders. There is a shortage of post-secondary language programs and an overall lack of support for adult education and family language learning programs, both on and off reserve.

Elders and Youth

- *Knowledge Transmission*
 - The transmission of knowledge from Elders to youth is crucial to the survival of Indigenous languages and cultures. This is threatened by lack of connection within the extended family, lack of time due to other responsibilities and pressures, and the passing away of the keepers of languages and cultures before they are able to transfer their knowledge.
 - Many youth lack interest in learning their languages and cultures, especially in areas where traditional cultures and values have been lost. First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities must develop strategies to instill language and culture into the everyday lives of young people.
- *Identity*
 - Some Aboriginal youth live uncomfortably between the distinctive Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal world views. Many young people are exploring their unique heritage and identity to discover who they are. Youth at the Gatherings felt that there is a lack of First Nations, Inuit and Métis role models.
- *Suicide*
 - Suicide is a critical issue for many Aboriginal peoples and is related to the disconnection from language and culture.

Awareness and Recognition, Funding and Programming

- *Government*
 - Federal government policies and programs do not always acknowledge the diversity of communities and their respective protocols.
 - Sustainable, long-term relationships between government and Aboriginal peoples need to be nurtured.
- *Community*
 - First Nations, Inuit and Métis languages and cultures need to be valued within Aboriginal communities, and community responsibilities need to be acknowledged, including the responsibility to begin language and cultural education in the home.
 - Some Aboriginal communities are beginning to adopt other Indigenous influences outside of their own cultures and should be aware of the danger of watering down their own traditions.
- *General Public*
 - Racism towards Aboriginal peoples results in the devaluation of First Nations, Inuit and Métis cultures and languages and a lack of respect for traditional lifestyles.
- *Language Programs*
 - Funding for Aboriginal language programs is too low and application processes are too long and complicated. Strict funding criteria and cumbersome reporting processes do not reflect community perspectives, needs or cultural contexts. For example, immersion programs at daycare centres have restricted access to language program funding.
- *Infrastructure and Technology*
 - There is a lack of infrastructure and funding for development of language and cultural archives and educational tools. Resources could be used to support off-reserve language learning or new technologies could be used to record and document cultural information before it is lost. The number of appropriate community facilities to house language and program activities is limited

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION

“Culture and language are interconnected and inseparable, including with the environment and the world around us. Languages and cultures are the foundation for understanding everything else.” — Traditions delegate

Delegates identified three types of recommendations for action: those that are the responsibility of First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities; those that are a shared responsibility between governments and communities; and those that are the responsibility of federal, provincial and territorial governments.

PART I

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND LANGUAGES AND CULTURES SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION

| Community Responsibilities | Shared Responsibilities | Government Responsibilities |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|

Strong and Living Cultures

| | | |
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| Use First Nations, Inuit and Métis languages at home because families are the primary means of affirming culture and identity. | Address generation gaps in Indigenous Knowledge and languages due to residential schools, especially for children and future generations. | Fund cultural language programs (e.g. on-the-land programs, culture camps, and basket-making) for children, youth and other community members. |
| Support innovative ways to integrate language and culture into community life. For example, restore cultural events such as feasts and drum dances and/or make a speakers’ pact to create a supportive environment in which to speak and learn language. | Acknowledge that languages and cultures are key to strong, healthy communities and that Indigenous Knowledge is linked to the health and well-being of individuals. | Fund the production and distribution of an Exemplary Practices Resource Guide for the preservation and revitalization of languages and cultures. |

Elders and Youth

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| Support Elders so that they may provide guidance to youth on and off reserve and in cities. This is essential to assisting youth to be proud of their ancestry and identity and to develop self-esteem. | Support opportunities to bring Elders and youth together. Develop an inventory of best practices for the transmission of Indigenous Knowledge and language. | Establish a National Elders Council for Knowledge to recognize and support First Nations, Inuit and Métis Elders. |
| | Publicly recognize Elders’ knowledge, work and contributions. | Create an Elders Fund to support Elders to speak to youth on and off reserve and in cities. |
| | Encourage youth to participate in all gatherings, workshops or conferences. | Designate Elders as National Treasures at the local, regional, national and international levels. |

Revitalization of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Languages

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| Value and use languages and cultures in the family to support the assertion of rights over lands and sacred sites. Participate in grassroots discussions about revitalizing languages and cultures. | Explore the use of contemporary tools (e.g. video games, computer fonts, the Internet, rap music) to keep languages alive in the workplace and among youth. | Declare First Nations, Inuit and Métis languages official languages in Canada and protect them through a rights framework, supportive language policies and adequate resources. |
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PART I

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND LANGUAGES AND CULTURES SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION

| Community Responsibilities | Shared Responsibilities | Government Responsibilities |
|--|---|---|
| Language and culture educators should use holistic approaches to teach language and culture to youth. | Government must provide support to local communities to take local action to revitalize languages and cultures both on and off reserve, as well as in cities. | Support access to technology and training for the recording of Traditional Knowledge and language. |
| Develop language and culture curricula that reflect First Nations, Inuit and Métis histories and cultures and that use culturally appropriate tools. | Support the creation of community-based language recovery centres. | Sponsor events to promote language use and the development of language dictionaries. |
| | Educate non-Aboriginal students about Indigenous perspectives on history using a balanced curriculum developed in collaboration with Indigenous peoples. | Champion the historical analysis of First Nations, Inuit and Métis languages and customs. |
| | Keep language education resources in their original form based on culturally specific stories and references and not translated from French or English. Work with Elders to develop curriculum materials on literacy and culture to encourage appropriate use of Traditional Knowledge. | Enhance support for language education at every level – at home, in schools and universities – for children and adults, alike. Accredite teachers and publish learning materials. |
| | Permit educators who produce Indigenous language resources to apply their work toward course credits for additional certification. | Support First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples in their discussions with the provinces and territories on language instruction, curricula and other related issues. |

PART I

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND LANGUAGES AND CULTURES SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION

| Community Responsibilities | Shared Responsibilities | Government Responsibilities |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| | <p>Explore respectful ways to bring Traditional Knowledge into universities, high schools and colleges. Encourage universities to recognize Elders and other holders of Traditional Knowledge as qualified and on par with an honorary doctorate (e.g. Elders’ knowledge is equivalent to graduate-level university education).</p> | <p>Explore opportunities to integrate language learning and cultural programs on and off reserve through cultural exchanges, on-the-land programs etc.</p> |
| | <p>Use traditional values and methods to validate and accredit teachers of Traditional Knowledge and languages. Train teachers and speakers in a traditional way outside non-Aboriginal reading and writing models. Support the establishment of traditional schools in communities.</p> | |

Awareness, Recognition, Funding and Programming

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|---|--|--|
| <p>Strengthen awareness in communities about issues related to language use, preservation and learning.</p> | <p>Create regional cultural centers with trained staff to promote public awareness and recognition of languages and cultures in each region.</p> | <p>Recognize that First Nations, Inuit and Métis language recovery is a right, not a privilege. Acknowledge the role of government in language loss and respect the legitimacy of the grieving process for this loss.</p> |
| <p>Recognize and value fluent speakers as role models within communities.</p> | <p>Explore New Zealand Maori teaching and language learning practices as a model.</p> | <p>Support the creation of public monuments, the writing, production and distribution of Indigenous philosophies, histories, literatures and traditions, and the compensation of former students of residential schools in acknowledgement of responsibility for loss of languages and cultures.</p> |

PART I

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND LANGUAGES AND CULTURES SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION

| Community Responsibilities | Shared Responsibilities | Government Responsibilities |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Make languages more accessible by using youth-friendly media such as rap music, song, drumming, etc.</p> | <p>Research the foundations of oral histories, traditions, philosophies and spiritual and artistic expressions.</p> | <p>Understand the urgency of addressing language issues and the direct relationship between languages and the health and well-being of communities and individuals.</p> |
| <p>Encourage First Nations, Inuit and Métis governments to equitably distribute funding to a wide variety of communities and organizations.</p> | <p>Government should provide funding support to communities to use resources and programming to promote local community centres as spaces where Indigenous languages are used and cultures are valued, shared and honoured.</p> | <p>The federal government should rally support from the Council of Ministers of Education for the implementation of mandatory courses at Canadian universities and colleges on First Nations, Inuit and Métis languages, histories and perspectives.</p> |
| | <p>Support and use documentary film and life histories as tools to preserve and transmit cultural knowledge.</p> | <p>Canadian Heritage should lead an interdepartmental strategy and working group on First Nations, Inuit and Métis languages.</p> |
| | | <p>Include the environment in a definition of culture. Canadian Heritage, Parks Canada and Environment Canada should raise awareness of the importance to all Canadians of Indigenous Ecological knowledge.</p> |
| | | <p>Encourage public servants who work with Aboriginal people and communities to have cross-cultural training (e.g. through on-the-land programs with Elders). Provide public servants the opportunity to learn a First Nations, Inuit or Métis language.</p> |

PART I

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND LANGUAGES AND CULTURES SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION

| Community Responsibilities | Shared Responsibilities | Government Responsibilities |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| | | Simplify funding application processes and criteria to make them more flexible and accessible, more respectful of cultural contexts, and more open to diverse, community-based initiatives. |
| | | Raise awareness of available federal funding sources and their criteria. Create regional positions to assist communities and individuals to write and submit proposals. |
| | | Inform communities about the status and processes of language funding activities. Verify with communities the accuracy of reports on funding. |
| | | Within Canadian Heritage, create a separate funding stream for Traditional Knowledge to support its revitalization within First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities. |
| | | Provide full funding for early childhood Indigenous language education programs (e.g. pre-school immersion, mentorship programs, language nests), and for the development of adult immersion programs at all levels. |

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL PROPERTIES

ISSUES

“The issue is not the use of cultural properties, but rather the misuse of these cultural properties and the lack of connection back to the communities.”
— Traditions delegate

In some Gathering circles, discussions about Indigenous Knowledge and intellectual and cultural property were rich and complex, while in others delegates struggled to achieve a common understanding of this topic. Discussions were shaped by how familiar delegates were with western-based intellectual property laws, customary laws and Indigenous Knowledge.

First Nations, Inuit and Métis perspectives on Indigenous Knowledge illustrate the extent to which Aboriginal notions of cultural property conflict with current intellectual property laws. As stated by Christle Wiebe in a discussion paper prepared for *Traditions*:

...names, songs and stories are being used in ways that fail to respect their cultural origins. The message that is being sent to members of our community and members of the world is that cultural prerogatives can be used at any time and there is no 'real' meaning to them... the need for protection has grown incredibly over recent years.¹¹

As the Tulalip Tribes of Washington have stated, it makes “no sense to talk about rights without talking about obligations for the use of knowledge and resources: this view [is] common, if not universal, among Indigenous peoples.”¹² Accordingly, delegates identified the following issues and vulnerabilities related to Indigenous Knowledge and intellectual and cultural property.

Vulnerabilities of Indigenous Knowledge

- *Exploitation and Appropriation of Indigenous Knowledge*
 - While the practice of sharing knowledge is a rich tradition in First Nations, Inuit and Métis cultures, Indigenous Knowledge is often co-opted without any benefits returning back to the communities in which it originated.
 - Globalization and modern technologies can undermine attempts to protect Indigenous Knowledge from both appropriation and misuse and make it difficult to control what is shared and how it is used.

11 “Customary Law and Cultural & Intellectual Properties”, *Discussion Papers*, *supra* note 3 at 73.

12 World Intellectual Property Organization, Statement by the Tulalip Tribes of Washington on Folklore, Indigenous Knowledge, and the Public Domain, Report of the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore, Fifth Session, July 7 to 15, 2003, (Geneva, Switzerland: August 4, 2003) at 27 [WIPO/GRTKF/IC/5/15].

- There is a need to protect Indigenous Knowledge concerning medicines, ceremonies, songs and symbols from mass production, appropriation and commercialization, because such treatment of Indigenous Knowledge takes away from its meaning and significance. Many delegates expressed concern that such misuse of Indigenous Knowledge causes spiritual harm.
- *Research*
 - Research raises ethical concerns about the misuse of Aboriginal cultures. For example, research is often done without the control and consent of the people. Aboriginal communities feel robbed of their knowledge and disempowered when research done on their communities is not brought back to them by the researchers to be vetted for community approval.
 - Particular ethical concerns also arise around genetic material being used without prior informed consent.
- *Stewardship of Indigenous Knowledge*
 - Western-based intellectual property systems reflect notions of individual ownership and authorship that are incongruous with First Nations, Inuit and Métis values of stewardship and concepts of collectively held knowledge. Many Aboriginal artists do not feel they have a right to claim ownership or authorship of creations inspired by Indigenous Knowledge.
 - Although intellectual property laws differ from traditional values based on collectivity, there is a need to protect Indigenous Knowledge from misuse both within and outside communities. More specifically, who “owns” the right to produce cultural items and what type of systems and/or laws are needed to determine and regulate those rights?
- *Gaps in Policy Formation*
 - Due to differences between Indigenous Knowledge and the mainstream intellectual property regime, functional cultural items such as clothing are difficult to protect. Delegates asked: “Is it possible to reconcile Aboriginal customary laws with Euro-Canadian intellectual property laws and regulations? Is such a reconciliation desirable?”
 - There have been instances in which intellectual property laws have been used to protect those who have appropriated Indigenous Knowledge.
 - Concepts like “time-sensitive” and “public domain” are difficult to apply to Aboriginal intellectual and cultural property because much of it needs an indefinite time period for protection and can never enter the public domain.
- *Collective and Individual Rights*
 - Community stewardship of cultural knowledge creates a delicate balance between collective rights and individual creativity/entrepreneurial spirit that is difficult to reconcile with current intellectual property laws and regulations.

- *Customary Law*
 - It is important to recognize that First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples have their own systems, laws and tools for protecting Indigenous Knowledge and intellectual and cultural property rights.
 - Indigenous Knowledge is closely linked to oral traditions. Sacred sites, ceremonies and medicines are protected through transmission of knowledge to others in the community such as Elders, pipe carriers and sacred bundle holders who receive the responsibility and authority to perform the appropriate rites.
 - The Supreme Court of Canada has affirmed that oral evidence is admissible in court in the context of claims for Aboriginal rights.¹³ Jurists in the intellectual property field are now struggling to find an appropriate place for First Nations, Inuit and Métis customary laws and protocol based on oral traditions.
 - Within Aboriginal communities some Elders have lost confidence in their traditional role and violations of customary laws and/or protocols often arise from lack of traditional teachings.
- *Knowledge and Responsibility*
 - Indigenous Knowledge is passed along through an internal system of transferred obligations. With this knowledge come responsibilities.
 - Proper protocols must be understood when passing on Indigenous Knowledge. For example, songs and stories that are not generic have a purpose, function and obligations. There are certain times and places for them that require that they be honoured within those specific contexts.
 - It is possible to learn ceremonies and knowledge by reading a book. However, simply reading about a ceremony does not give a person the transferred right(s) to perform it. There are specific and necessary stages to go through to acquire the appropriate levels of knowledge. People need to respect local protocols and ways of doing things.
 - Cultural stories that are heard by anthropologists are often misinterpreted, thereby becoming misrepresentative.

Access to Cultural Property in Institutions

- First Nations, Inuit and Métis cultural property was intended to be used by the people in a culturally relevant manner, rather than be displayed.
- Sacred objects have been removed from Aboriginal communities and many of these objects have yet to be returned to them.

¹³ *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia* [1998] 1 C.N.L.R. 14.

- While museums have a mandate to share information with the public, they also have responsibility for protecting sacred knowledge and cultural property while it is in the process of being repatriated.
- *Recognition of Cultural Objects*
 - It is imperative to understand that cultural objects have both physical and non-physical aspects. At present, there is an absence of protocols or ethical guidelines for the treatment of culturally significant artifacts held by institutions or for access to these artifacts by Aboriginal communities.
- *Involvement in Interpretation of Cultural Property*
 - While many institutions do a good job, some museums, archives and institutions are sharing traditional stories and cultural property without appropriate First Nations, Inuit or Métis involvement.

Awareness, Recognition, Funding and Programming

- *Government*
 - There is a need for collaboration between Aboriginal communities and government on issues related to Indigenous Knowledge and intellectual and cultural property.
- *Community*
 - Many communities are unfamiliar with mainstream intellectual property laws and other forms of legal protection.
- *General Public*
 - The apparent failure of the general public to understand the importance of Indigenous Knowledge means that it is not valued and respected as legitimate. This can create conflict and tensions.
- *Defending Intellectual Property Rights*
 - Taking legal action for infractions of intellectual property laws is expensive and time-consuming and this deters people from using the Canadian legal system to defend rights to intellectual and cultural property.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION

“Our traditional stories include protocols, laws that govern and direct us. We must take our responsibility from there.” — Traditions delegate

Aboriginal peoples believe that knowledge was developed over generations by their ancestors and does not belong to individuals. Knowledge is held with the purpose of

passing it on. Indigenous communities “have evolved diverse but stable societal structures which regulate the flow of knowledge and innovations.”¹⁴ Thus, knowledge-holders are faced with two systems of protection for Indigenous Knowledge: traditional customary systems, and western-based intellectual property systems. Asserting the intellectual and cultural property rights of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples is therefore dependent on the level of interaction and contact between these two legal regimes. As one delegate explained:

The Piikani people live in the Eastern edges of the Rockies, and believe that the Creator put us in that location, in the Porcupine Hills, and that we have equality with Creation. When we talk about protecting ideas, we mean protecting ideas so that they can be shared with the public. The Piikani practice of protecting ideas comes from the geographic location. If you want to protect your family, you get a tipi lodge designed. Certain individuals were authorized to paint tipis; you would approach one group to get permission to paint a tipi for another group according to the first group's design. These are old designs – as old as the Creator putting the Piikani people there in the Porcupine Hills. There were traditional laws given through dreams to an individual, who hired a painter, and put them on a lodge. Anyone wanting that design had to approach the tipi owner to ask for permission and the tipi owner had to give up that right. There was a transfer ceremony that came from a system of respect – you won't reproduce the tipi, because you know that a particular individual has the right to that tipi. It is a system of copyright.

Although there are no easy answers regarding how best to reconcile the two different systems and sets of values, many recommendations were made on how to improve the current situation. Delegates identified three types of recommendations for action: those that are the responsibility of First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities; those that are a shared responsibility between governments and communities; and those that are the responsibility of federal, provincial and territorial governments.

14 World Intellectual Property Organization, *Intellectual Property Needs and Expectations of Traditional Knowledge Holders*, WIPO Report on Fact-finding Missions on Intellectual Property and Traditional Knowledge (1998-1999), (Geneva, Switzerland: April 2001) at 58.

PART II

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL PROPERTIES SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE ACTION

| Community Responsibilities | Shared Responsibilities | Government Responsibilities |
|---|--|---|
| <i>Access to Cultural Property in Institutions</i> | | |
| Involve First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples in the representation, interpretation and conservation of Indigenous cultural property in institutions. | Involve Indigenous people with knowledge of customary and culturally appropriate ceremonies in the return of objects to owners. | Develop a policy to ensure community access to their cultural properties in institutions such as archives and museums. |
| Mobilize community support for the repatriation of cultural property held in institutions. Develop community infrastructure so that items may be properly accepted upon return. | | Introduce legislation to allow for the return of sacred items and other cultural properties to communities. |
| | | Strengthen assistance to communities to repatriate cultural items held by international institutions and governments, specifically, regarding administrative processes. |
| <i>Community Involvement</i> | | |
| Decide, as communities, what to share and what to protect as sacred. Distinguish the sacred way from the commercial way. | Work collaboratively to find respectful ways to identify respect and preserve Indigenous Knowledge. Support collaboration among Elders and Indigenous scholars and teachers. | Support community intellectual property education programs and the development of accessible and easy-to-understand communications materials. |
| Establish in each community a research protocol and ethical guidelines to protect the integrity of Indigenous Knowledge and intellectual and cultural property. | Use community-based ethics and protocols to guide government-sponsored research. Ensure the results are used for the good of the community. | Recognize that communities are the only authorities that may identify what can or cannot be shared. |

PART II

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL PROPERTIES SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE ACTION

| Community Responsibilities | Shared Responsibilities | Government Responsibilities |
|---|---|--|
| <i>Customary Law/Intellectual Property Law</i> | | |
| <p>Continue research on <i>sui generis</i> (unique) models for cultural property laws, guided through community-based actions such as the establishment of Elders Councils.</p> | <p>Identify and respect Indigenous Knowledge, practices, languages and cultures. Conduct research into the extent to which a western-based approach to intellectual property (e.g. copyright and intellectual property laws, the World Intellectual Property Organization, the Convention on Biodiversity, UNESCO) may be reconciled with the proper use of Indigenous Knowledge.</p> | <p>Consider ways to reconcile western-based notions of authorship and ownership with First Nations, Inuit and Métis notions of collective rights and guardianship.</p> |
| <p>Promote awareness of customary laws and protocols and adapt Canadian law to incorporate adherence to these structures and processes. Ensure Canadian law reflects Indigenous Knowledge by supporting and respecting Aboriginal protocols for the use of natural resources.</p> | | |
| <p>Respect customary laws and protocols unique to each Aboriginal nation and community.</p> | | |
| <p>Create an exemption for intellectual and cultural properties relating to Indigenous Knowledge from the time limits under copyright law.</p> | | |

PART II

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL PROPERTIES SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE ACTION

| Community Responsibilities | Shared Responsibilities | Government Responsibilities |
|--|--|--|
| <i>Awareness, Recognition, Funding and Programming</i> | | |
| <p>Seek the cooperation of local Members of Parliament to recognize First Nations, Inuit and Métis intellectual and cultural property.</p> | <p>Further clarify community and governmental roles and responsibilities regarding the protection of Indigenous Knowledge.</p> | <p>Facilitate information-sharing at the community and individual level about copyright and intellectual property laws, and the benefits and limitations of such laws for communities and artists. Compile a list of tools available to promote and control the intellectual and cultural property rights of Indigenous peoples.</p> |
| <p>Begin a dialogue with cultural producers about respectful ways to acknowledge cultural property.</p> | <p>Educate Canadians on the significance of traditional events and ceremonies.</p> | <p>Collaborate on a federal interdepartmental strategy for action on copyright and intellectual property.</p> |
| <p>Protect practitioners and medicine people from exploitation and alert community members about inappropriate harvesting of medicines by outsiders.</p> | <p>Promote a greater awareness of privacy issues concerning sacred knowledge.</p> | |
| | <p>Inform ethics and review boards within universities and research institutes about First Nations, Inuit and Métis protocols and about the issues associated with engaging communities in research.</p> | |
| | <p>Coordinate all domestic research on Indigenous intellectual and cultural property with the work of the Canadian delegation to the World Intellectual Property Organization.</p> | |
| | <p>Create a clearinghouse of community-based ethical guidelines for the use and sharing of Traditional Knowledge.</p> | <p>Provide sufficient resources to enable necessary foundational research into customary laws and protocols.</p> |

PART II

INDIGNEOUS KNOWLEDGE AND INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL PROPERTIES SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE ACTION

| Community Responsibilities | Shared Responsibilities | Government Responsibilities |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| | Produce an international resource of best practices on the protection of Indigenous Knowledge. | Fund an Indigenous think tank to work on issues of protection and control of Indigenous Knowledge. Include Elders, Traditional Knowledge practitioners, lawyers, entrepreneurs, professors, artists, grassroots organizations and community members affected by decisions in the think tank. |
| | Create an Indigenous Knowledge Institute to help communities develop protocols and measures for the resolution of disputes over the protection and use of customs, teachings and symbols. | Fund research of <i>sui generis</i> models for the protection and control of Indigenous Knowledge. Fund ongoing community discussions of potential models. |
| | | Support communities by providing resources to enforce copyright and intellectual property rights. |

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

ISSUES

“You cannot separate our artistic expressions into smaller pieces as they are woven into all aspects of life.”— Traditions delegate

A key concern that arose during the Gatherings was that mainstream definitions of artistic expression are not necessarily holistic and often do not reflect the perspectives of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people. Artistic expression means different things in Aboriginal cultures. For example, because art is tied to culture and community, tipi painting is a right that is earned and is not purely an individual creative expression. Moreover, artistic expression includes such activities as hunting and trapping, sewing, designing clothing, preparing food and storytelling. Delegates identified a “disconnect” between Indigenous and mainstream conceptions of artistic expression. This often results in confusion for artists, cultural practitioners and funding bodies and limits access by artists to support programs if their work falls outside mainstream definitions of artistic expression.

Many delegates noted a perceived lack of appreciation for what goes into making cultural items. Ineffective marketing and prevalent misconceptions about Indigenous arts and crafts were identified as contributing factors. Delegates also expressed concern that stereotyping is reinforced when traditional artistic and cultural expressions are supported, while the work of contemporary Aboriginal artists is not recognized.

Delegates identified the following issues related to Indigenous Knowledge and artistic expression:

Authenticity

- *Lack of Mechanisms to Measure Levels of Authenticity*
 - Lack of understanding and respect for the authenticity of First Nations, Inuit and Métis arts and crafts highlights the need for mechanisms to foster understanding and respect for those that are authentic.
- *Authenticity in Museums*
 - In some museums and cultural institutions the sale of inauthentic items (e.g. plastic totem poles and dream-catchers, etc.) is of great concern.

Appropriation and Exploitation of Indigenous Knowledge

- *Cultural Expropriation*
 - Creators and artists lose recognition, control and profits when others appropriate their artistic and cultural expressions.
 - “Knock-offs” of First Nations, Inuit and Métis artistic and cultural expressions threaten artists’ integrity and genuine products lose their value. For example, many imitation Aboriginal arts and crafts are produced in foreign markets and imported back into Canada for sale to tourists.

- *Lack of Community Control*
 - Cultural misinterpretation and misrepresentation occurs when communities are not involved in the presentation and interpretation of their artistic and cultural expressions.
 - It is difficult to reclaim ownership of stories that have been recorded by researchers, anthropologists, etc.

Marketing and New Technologies

- *Influences of Modern Technology*
 - The Internet and other new technologies have created significant opportunities for Aboriginal artists to network, market and explore new possibilities for artistic expression. However, these same new technologies have also contributed to the issue of appropriation, misinterpretation and misrepresentation. A major dilemma faced by artists is how to use new technologies in a manner that is respectful.
- *Mass Production of Arts and Crafts*
 - First Nations, Inuit and Métis arts, crafts and jewellery are being mass-produced and sold at prices artists cannot match.
 - The mass production of cultural items strips the original meanings from them.
- *Marketing*
 - While the marketing of culture supports some Aboriginal families, it can also result in the commercialization and cheapening of culture.
 - There is a lack of markets to support genuine Aboriginal art and crafts and emerging artists have difficulty accessing existing markets.
 - Most markets only support traditional First Nations, Inuit and Métis art. There is a lack of market support for contemporary Aboriginal artistic expressions.
 - Western marketing techniques can skew traditional artistic expression by promoting one type of expression over another. For example, Inuit sculptures are now usually expected to be of animals.

Awareness, Recognition, Funding and Programming

- *Government*
 - The artificial separation between language, culture (e.g. storytelling, sacred sites, rituals) and artistic expression leads to the erosion of First Nations, Inuit and Métis artistic and cultural expressions.

- *Community*
 - Obtaining permission to access, research and use Indigenous Knowledge is difficult for Aboriginal persons outside the community or not closely connected to the community.
 - Urban Aboriginal persons, including many artists, may not be connected to their ancestral communities and may therefore lack access to Traditional Knowledge and guidance. This makes it difficult to observe protocol regarding the artistic use of cultural symbols, stories, etc.
 - Aboriginal artists and communities do not have a mechanism to confer with each other about common concerns, issues and solutions.
- *General Public*
 - Lack of knowledge of the history of cultural items and their original purposes can result in misrepresentation, misuse and/or abuse. It is important to understand that ceremonies are attached to certain objects.
- *Support for Artists*
 - There is a need for increased knowledge of funding sources and programs to nourish the skills and talents of Indigenous artists.
 - Barriers to support for First Nations, Inuit and Métis artists are often the result of lack of Aboriginal participation on juries of peers within funding agencies.
 - Traditional forms of artistic and cultural expression are often funded, whereas contemporary artists experience greater difficulty in obtaining funding.
- *Barriers to Funding*
 - A number of delegates involved with new media and film production felt that the level of funding for First Nations, Inuit and Métis film production is too low.
 - Delegates also noted that, to win funding for Aboriginal films, proposals often need to have an Indigenous language component. Some delegates felt this was a good way to promote and support use of Indigenous languages, while others thought that this discourages qualified and talented artists who do not speak Indigenous languages.
 - Better information about funding criteria is necessary as certain artists appear to be favoured for funding while others struggle for recognition.
- *Proposal Writing*
 - Artists felt that proposal-writing is too cumbersome, confusing and prohibitive and that too much of their time is devoted to it rather than to expressing their creative talents.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION

“We need to put it forward that our cultures are constantly changing and are dynamic. Artistically we need to celebrate the dynamism of our art and of our people.” — Traditions delegate

Artists bear a tremendous responsibility because they play such an important role in cultural transmission and in awakening the people. As one delegate explained:

In Tlingit culture parents would nurture talent from a young age, because it was recognized as important to be a carrier of stories, a carrier of culture. Everything sprang from artistic expression. Artists in training would not necessarily have to hunt and fish; others would care for them. We have come full circle. Artists must be activists for art, and we must elevate artists, because they are the voice.

Delegates identified three types of recommendations for action: those that are the responsibility of First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities; those that are a shared responsibility between governments and communities; and those that are the responsibility of federal, provincial and territorial governments.

PART III

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSION SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE ACTION

| Community Responsibilities | Shared Responsibilities | Government Responsibilities |
|---|---|--|
| <i>Authenticity</i> | | |
| Develop validation and authentication processes for First Nations, Inuit and Métis symbols and icons. | Develop guidelines for the use of Indigenous symbols and icons to ensure their appropriate and authentic use. | Seek permission from Aboriginal communities before using their symbols and icons in federal promotional materials. |
| <i>Elders and Youth</i> | | |
| Recognize the role of Elders and youth in presenting and revitalizing Aboriginal artistic expression. | | |
| Provide community support and opportunities for artistic mentorship for youth. | | |
| Mobilize educators to help young people know their histories, cultures and languages. | | |
| <i>Marketing and New Technologies</i> | | |
| Explore the creation of an online market for traditional raw materials (e.g. materials required to make traditional baskets) to enhance the ability of communities to obtain these materials and maintain their connection to traditional skills. | | Establish an international trade policy to discourage appropriation through the imposition of a tax on the import, export and sale of inauthentic replicas of First Nations, Inuit and Métis cultural items. |
| Lobby, as artists, galleries and national institutions to protect gains made. | | Explore opportunities around the 2010 Winter Olympics to promote consumer awareness of authentic Aboriginal arts and crafts. |
| Establish boutiques and galleries to support contemporary Aboriginal art (music, jewellery, clothing, paintings, etc.). | | |

PART III

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSION SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE ACTION

| Community Responsibilities | Shared Responsibilities | Government Responsibilities |
|---|-------------------------|---|
| <i>Awareness, Recognition, Funding and Programming</i> | | |
| <p>Recognize and support the role and work of artists as carriers of culture.</p> | | <p>Change legislation to recognize that access by Aboriginal peoples to the natural resources necessary for traditional artistic and cultural expression (e.g. raw materials for making baskets, timber, wild meats) are treaty and constitutional rights that must not be infringed.</p> |
| <p>Create more opportunities and venues for storytelling in communities.</p> | | <p>Canadian Heritage should promote the diversity and excellence of First Nations, Inuit and Métis artistic and cultural talent nationally and internationally.</p> |
| <p>Increase awareness of traditional cooking practices and local foods and their link to health.</p> | | <p>Include diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis understandings of artistic expressions in funding criteria.</p> |
| <p>Lobby for adequate resources, culturally safe spaces and opportunities for Indigenous artistic expression.</p> | | <p>Increase awareness of funding sources, including application processes, for artists.</p> |
| | | <p>Create a Community Liaison Officer position within Canadian Heritage to assist artists through proposal-writing workshops and similar activities.</p> |
| | | <p>Encourage adequate nurturing of, and compensation for, Aboriginal artists.</p> |

PART III

INDIGNEOUS KNOWLEDGE AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSION SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE ACTION

| Community Responsibilities | Shared Responsibilities | Government Responsibilities |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|

Canadian Heritage should explore increased institutional support for artists by re-establishing the National Arts and Crafts Marketing Board, establishing artists co-ops and guilds, creating a First Nations, Inuit and Métis National Arts Council and supporting artist mentorship programs.

ADVISORY GROUP'S CLOSING REMARKS

In preparing for *Traditions: National Gatherings on Indigenous Knowledge*, we were acutely aware of the importance of our task. First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples have a profound responsibility to nurture and celebrate the vast knowledge that our ancestors have passed on. Our cultural beliefs, traditional practices on our traditional territories and artistic expressions define our societies and are crucial to their survival. We were also aware that, while Indigenous peoples believe in sharing knowledge, they are responsible for ensuring that it is protected against misuse or appropriation. *Traditions* allowed us to discuss these and other important issues with other Indigenous peoples, to learn from each other's insights and experiences, and to devise new ways to plan for the future with the support and collaboration of representatives from various levels of government, including our own Indigenous governments.

Traditions was an important opportunity to discuss the key issues concerning our ways of knowing, our relationships with the land, various forms of artistic expression, cultural appropriation, and repatriation. As this report highlights, two other issues that are very close to the hearts of Indigenous peoples are language revitalization, which underlies so many other issues, and the need for greater recognition and protection of the knowledge and wisdom of Elders as leaders, guides and educators. An important outcome of *Traditions* is the acknowledgement that Aboriginal nations, communities and governments all have distinct responsibilities for action and accountability for results as well as a responsibility to build partnerships to create change. Each also has customs and appropriate protocols for engagement.

From the early planning stages we used Venue, Action, Language and Song (VALS) for building partnerships with each other and with the Department of Canadian Heritage. VALS consists of principles and discussion protocols that integrate different cultural forms of decision-making, and that create an opportunity for dialogue that respects First Nations, Inuit and Métis practices and protocols. The concept of the circle was a guiding principle that is shared among many Aboriginal communities. In collaboration with Elders from host nations and communities, a process for discussion was developed for each of the Gatherings to encourage the development of a format that was relevant and respectful of the cultural protocols of our hosts.

We believe that those associated with the National Gatherings were involved because of their dedication to open and constructive dialogue leading to decisions for action and accountability, and because of their commitment to establish more harmonious and productive relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada. We extend our gratitude to the Department of Canadian Heritage and to all of the delegates from across Canada. Their shared and fundamental belief in the importance of recognizing, valuing and protecting Indigenous Knowledge in all its forms made these Gatherings possible.

CONCLUSION

“... the question arises: what are you going to do? All these processes – bringing people together – mean something must be given back to those who have come here. It’s a huge responsibility.”— Traditions delegate

Traditions: National Gatherings on Indigenous Knowledge was undertaken by Canadian Heritage to build better relationships between the federal government and Aboriginal peoples, to broaden understanding of shared challenges, and to enrich the capacity to work together to bring about a future that includes healthy Aboriginal languages and cultures and greater community control over the protection, preservation and sharing of Indigenous Knowledge in all its forms.

Traditions delegates have stated clearly that there is no “one-size-fits-all” solution and that the responsibility for action falls to communities and governments alike. Another clear statement from delegates is that now is the time to move forward. We have heard these messages. While *Traditions: National Gatherings on Indigenous Knowledge* has concluded, this is not the end of the journey. We at Canadian Heritage now find ourselves at a crossroads as we seek the most appropriate ways to honour the voices we have heard.

In conclusion, we take this opportunity to recognize all the Elders, Chiefs, Ministers, First Nations, Inuit and Métis delegates and government representatives who attended the *Traditions* Gatherings. We thank everyone who came to the discussion circles with open hearts and open minds. In preparing this report, we hope that we have been successful in accurately reflecting the many voices heard at the Gatherings, and in respecting the knowledge and wisdom that has been imparted to us along the way.

APPENDIX A: SCHEDULE OF TRADITIONS: NATIONAL GATHERINGS ON INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE MAY 3-JUNE 24, 2005

- 1. Rankin Inlet, Nunavut**
May 3-5
- 2. Edmonton, Alberta**
May 10-12
- 3. Penticton, British Columbia**
May 17-19
- 4. Wanuskewin, Saskatchewan**
May 25-27
- 5. Yellowknife, Northwest Territories**
May 31-June 2
- 6. Wendake, Quebec**
June 7-9
- 7. Eskasoni, Nova Scotia**
June 14-16
- 8. Six Nations, Ontario**
June 22-24

APPENDIX B: PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION AT THE GATHERINGS

Over 400 delegates attended the eight Gatherings, including First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples from every province and territory.

Figure A:

Proportion of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Delegates

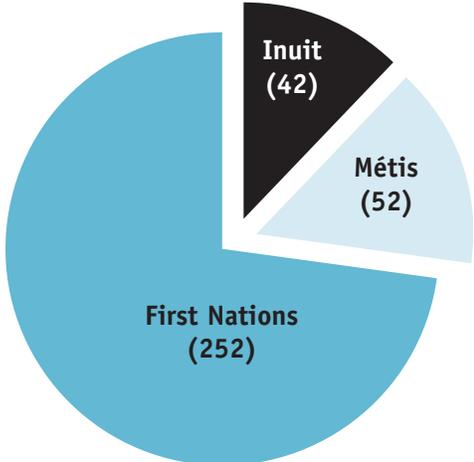
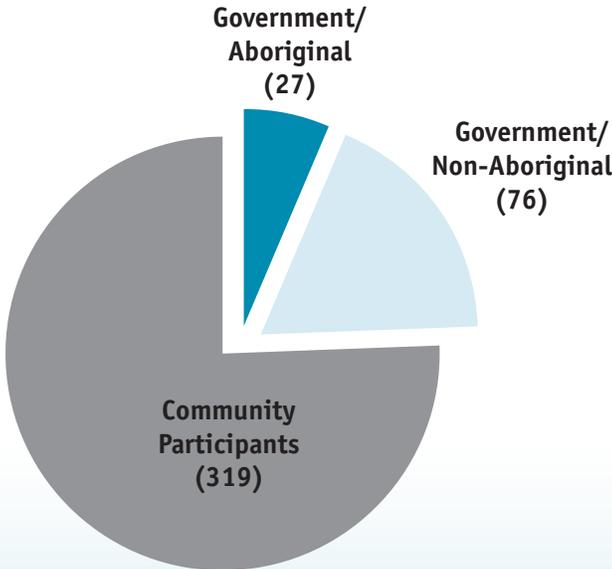


Figure B:

Proportion of Government and Community Participants



* The Government/Non-Aboriginal category includes all non-Aboriginal delegates, including those who work for organizations outside any level of government.

Figure C:

Regional Representation

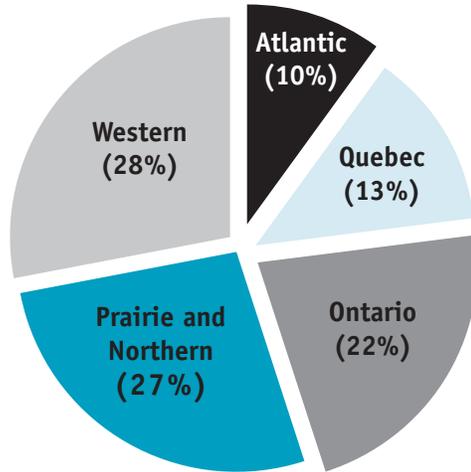


Figure D:

Distribution of Delegates by Province of Origin

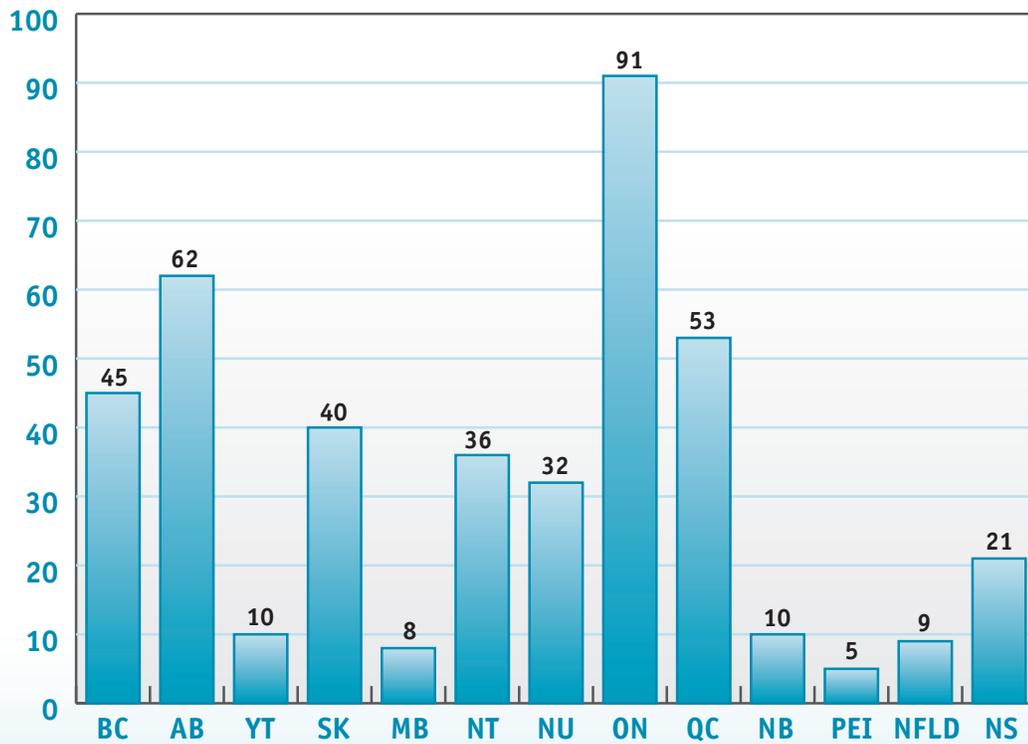


Figure E:

Gender Distribution of Delegates by Gathering

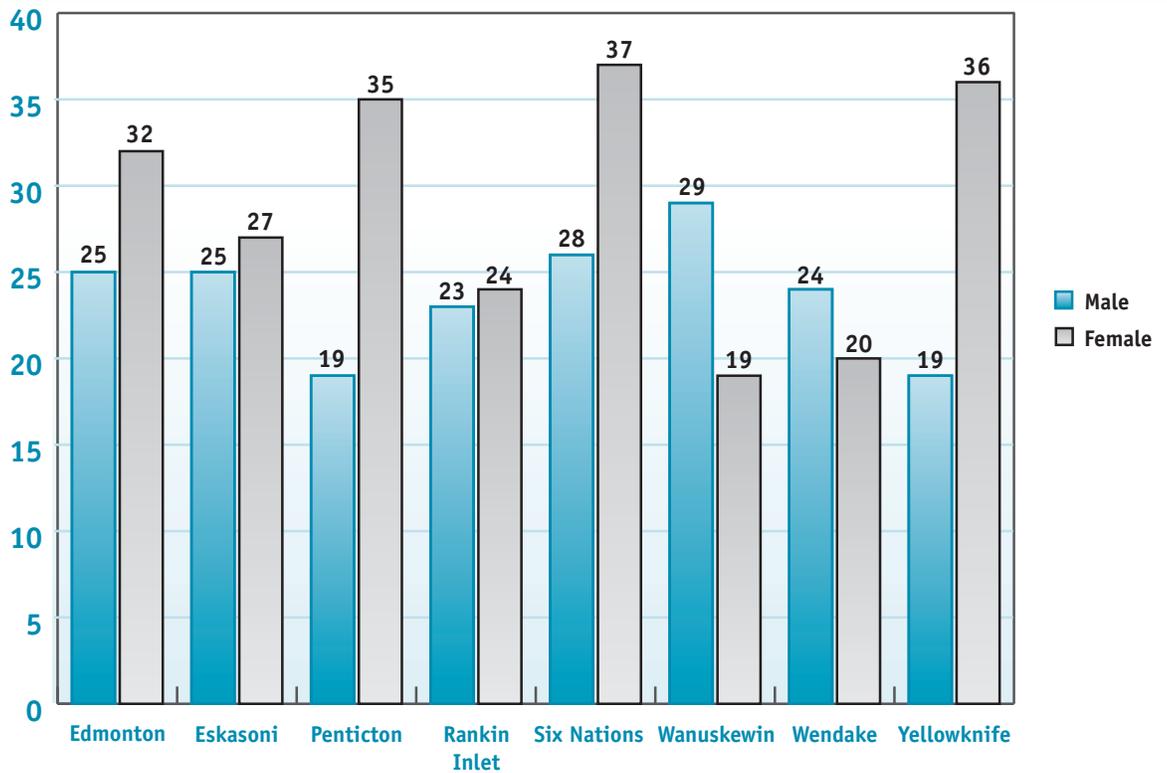
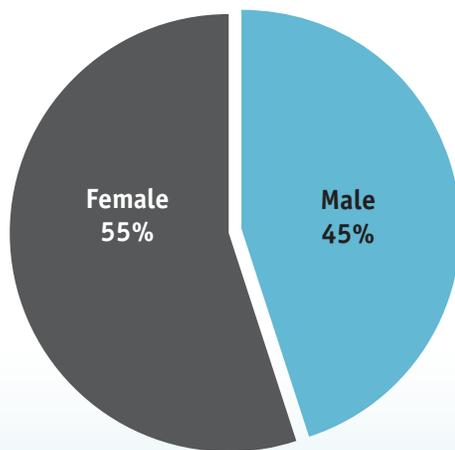


Figure F:

Total Gender Distribution for All Gatherings



APPENDIX C: BREAKDOWN OF PARTICIPATION AT THE GATHERINGS

Over 100 of the delegates in attendance at the National Gatherings were representatives of federal, provincial and territorial governments. The following institutions participated:

Federal Departments and Agencies

- Canadian Heritage
- Justice Canada
- Industry Canada
- Law Commission of Canada
- Parks Canada Agency
- Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development
- Environment Canada
- Health Canada
- Privy Council Office

Canadian Heritage Portfolio Organizations

- Canada Council for the Arts
- Canadian Race Relations Foundation
- Canadian Museum of Civilization
- Museum of Science and Technology
- Museum of Nature
- Canadian Conservation Institute
- Canadian Heritage Information Network

Provincial / Territorial Governments

- Government of Nunavut
- Government of Alberta
- Government of Saskatchewan
- Government of Manitoba
- Government of the Northwest Territories

Provincial / Territorial Ministers

- Hon. Pearl Calahasen, Alberta
- Hon. Charles Dent, Northwest Territories