



FIRST NATIONS HOUSING MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

BETWEEN

THE FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL
REPRESENTING
THE BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS,
THE FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT
AND THE UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS

AND

THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA
AS REPRESENTED BY THE MINISTERS OF:
INDIAN AFFAIRS AND FEDERAL INTERLOCUTOR FOR MÉTIS AND NON-STATUS INDIANS, AND;
MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
STYLED AS MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCES
AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

AND

THE GOVERNMENT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
AS REPRESENTED BY THE MINISTER OF ABORIGINAL RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION
ON BEHALF OF THE MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR HOUSING

(COLLECTIVELY THE "PARTIES")

Whereas:

- a. The Parties share common goals of establishing a new relationship based on mutual respect and recognition and of improving housing for First Nation individuals, families and communities in British Columbia over the next ten years.
- b. The Parties recognize that housing and infrastructure quality are among the factors linked to the socio-economic disparities faced by some First Nations in British Columbia (BC). Actions to support safe and affordable housing and infrastructure for First Nations communities, individuals and families will assist in addressing these disparities.
- c. The Parties recognize that there are existing strategies and reports (e.g. Aboriginal Housing in British Columbia: A Needs and Capacity Assessment, housing need as it relates to Statistics Canada data) that will assist their future work related to this Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU).
- d. The Parties recognize the importance of relationships, processes, agreements and structures, including housing associations and committees related to housing and infrastructure. The Parties agree to continue to support these elements and rely on them for assistance in the implementation of this MOU operating in accordance with, and subject to, the existing policies and legislation of the First Nations, and the Governments of Canada and British Columbia from time to time.

Therefore the Parties have reached the following understanding:

1.1 This MOU is not intended to be legally binding or to create legally enforceable rights between the parties.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this MOU is to:

- a. Acknowledge that working in partnership is necessary to overcome barriers and to address the housing gap between First Nations people and other British Columbians;
- b. Commit to exploring innovative approaches to improve housing and infrastructure for First Nations, individuals and families, including housing programs currently in place, and;
- c. Set out an initial framework for the collaborative development of interlinked on and off-reserve housing strategies.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 The Parties acknowledge and respect established and evolving jurisdictional responsibilities, and will seek to overcome impediments to progress in the provision of First Nations housing by establishing effective relationships.

2.2 The Parties recognize:

- That the Government of Canada provides assistance to First Nations with the development of their housing and infrastructure on-reserve. To improve First Nations housing on-reserve, the Government of Canada has introduced innovative approaches to housing such as the \$300 million First Nations Market Housing Fund. The Government of Canada also provides funding for housing renovation programs off-reserve, and supports the Province of British Columbia and communities in their Aboriginal housing strategies off-reserve.
- The Government of British Columbia supports Aboriginal housing services off-reserve.
- That First Nations are parties in the design, development and delivery of housing programs for First Nations individuals, families and communities regardless of residency.
- The desirability of improving housing conditions for BC First Nations and that the participation of all Parties is required in order to improve First Nations housing outcomes.
- The importance of engaging the expertise of First Nations communities and housing professionals in developing and implementing actions under this MOU.
- The value of comprehensive community planning in First Nation communities.

3. Priorities and Actions

3.1 The Parties have agreed to the following four areas for collaboration:

a. Governance, Relationships and Accountability

The Parties agree to meaningful engagement of First Nations in the design, development and decision making concerning the provision of housing and infrastructure, in accordance with the Parties' needs to control their own policy and decision making processes.

Initiatives for consideration may include, but are not limited to:

- Establishing clear mechanisms for working together so that housing is better aligned with the needs of First Nations individuals and families living on and off-reserve.
- Structures that support governance of housing both on and off-reserve;
- Exploring opportunities to improve coordination among housing agencies;
- Exploring ways to streamline government reporting processes; and,
- Establishing a process for complementary policy and program planning as well as the assessment/evaluation and monitoring of outcomes.

b. Financial Management

The Parties agree to work together to improve the financial management of housing and infrastructure for First Nations communities, individuals and families on and off-reserve. The Parties also agree to explore possibilities to continue identifying efficiencies in government funding processes for housing and infrastructure and for assisting First Nations to conduct effective planning for housing development.

Initiatives for consideration may include, but are not limited to:

- Examining existing programs;
- Considering new approaches for management of social housing on and off-reserve with the goal of promoting financial sustainability; and,
- Exploring mechanisms that promote alternative home ownership and equity building that enable First Nations communities, individuals and families to access competitive financing.

c. Capacity Development

The Parties agree to work together to support capacity development related to housing and infrastructure including building maintenance and standards, training and employment associated with housing construction and management.

Initiatives for consideration may include, but are not limited to:

- Creating resource materials for homeowners/renters;
- Exploring the development and implementation of training programs and support networks for First Nations housing professionals in areas such as financial, administration, development, property and asset management, business planning, construction and building trades; and,
- Exploring and promoting opportunities to increase First Nations involvement in construction-related training and apprenticeships and ultimately employment.

d. Comprehensive Approach to Housing

The Parties agree to work together to develop a comprehensive approach to housing and explore opportunities to address issues along the full range of the housing continuum for First Nations communities, individuals and families both on and off-reserve. The Parties agree to explore opportunities to improve community infrastructure, including utilizing alternative construction designs (e.g. "green" designs; environmentally appropriate designs).

Initiatives for consideration may include, but are not limited to:

- Exploring ways to increase cultural appropriateness and sustainability of social and market based housing for First Nations communities, individuals and families both on and off-reserve, while meeting client housing needs in a cost effective manner;
- Exploring on and off-reserve partnership opportunities between the public and private sectors, that promote home ownership;
- Supporting comprehensive planning processes that lead to improved living conditions.

4. Measures of Success

4.1 Process

The Parties will work together to identify the data and information necessary to improve housing and to monitor and report on housing status for First Nations communities, families and individuals in British Columbia. To achieve this, the Parties agree to form a joint data management committee, which will be responsible for: establishing data sharing agreements and mechanisms; identifying ways to improve data; and reporting.

4.2 Tracking Progress

The data management committee will develop mechanisms for tracking progress on improvements to the housing conditions for First Nations people which is the shared goal of the parties to this MOU. The committee will consider various data including, but not limited to, First Nations housing conditions, needs, supply and capacity development.

5. Implementation

5.1 The Parties agree to meet annually to discuss any issues related to the implementation of this MOU.

5.2 The Parties agree to create a technical committee to oversee the implementation of this MOU within three (3) months of signing this MOU.

5.3 The Parties agree to collaboratively develop interlinked on and off reserve housing strategies in support of First Nations individuals and communities.

6. Term

- 6.1 Any Party to the MOU may request that the MOU be reviewed, replaced or amended by providing three (3) months written notice to the other Parties.
- 6.2 A process to review, amend or replace this MOU must be undertaken within the timeframe agreed to by all Parties at the commencement of that process.
- 6.3 Any amendments to this MOU must be in writing and signed by all Parties.
- 6.4 Any Party may withdraw from the MOU with three (3) months written notice.



FIRST NATIONS HOUSING MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

In witness whereof the parties have executed this Memorandum
this 21 day of May, 2008.

Government of Canada

Honourable Chuck Strahl
Minister of Indian Affairs and
Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians

Government of British Columbia

Honourable Mike de Jong
Minister of Aboriginal Relations
and Reconciliation on behalf of the
Minister responsible for Housing

Honourable Monte Solberg
Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, and
Minister responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

The First Nations Leadership Council Representing:

First Nations Summit

Grand Chief Edward John

BC Assembly of First Nations

Regional Chief Shawn Atleo

Union of BC Indian Chiefs

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip
Chief Judith Sayers
Chief Robert Shintah
David Porter
Chief Lynda Price