

## Declaration Acts, Reconciliation, and Collaboration as a Treaty Nation

In the last few years, British Columbia and Canada have enacted legislation to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and guide them through reconciliation. Both pieces of legislation include a section requiring an action plan development.

BC shared its action plan a year ago, in March 2022. This action plan included a section on modern treaties and reference and accountability for a separate but connected “Shared Priorities Framework.”

This framework was signed by the leaders of all eight modern treaty governments in BC and the Premier. Canada is in the final stages of their action plan development, and we expect to see its plan released early this summer.

We have seen some positive changes in our interactions with our treaty partners, such as an increase in interest and understanding of treaties and shifts in the approaches to funding that better respect our treaties and government-to-government relationship. While we’re happy to see these changes, they’re happening slowly.

Canada and BC have a long way to go in becoming better partners. We will need to continue our commitment to advocating for all Treaty Nations and educating our treaty partners.

The enactment of these Declaration Acts and their action plans have dramatically increased engagement and demands on our time, resources, and capacity. To manage this significant increase in engagement, all Indigenous governments in Canada have had to make decisions about their priorities and participation in various engagements and initiatives.

Modern Treaty Nations have the additional responsibility to ensure our treaties and distinct rights and relationships are respected and upheld.

Huu-ay-aht is working with other Nations, Indigenous Governments, and Organizations, as appropriate, to support the increased engagement and collaboration with our treaty partners. Huu-ay-aht works with the other Maa-nulth Treaty Nations to consider impacts on our treaties and opportunities for our Nations coordinated and supported by the Maa-nulth Treaty Society (MTS).

This can look like sharing resources, information, and collective responses. With the increase in engagement from British Columbia from their Action Plan and the commitments in the Shared Priorities Framework (SPF), Huu-ay-aht often coordinates with the other modern treaty nations in BC through the Alliance of BC Modern Treaty Nations (ABCMTN).

The leaders of the Alliance recently met to approve changes to the Alliance structure to meet the needs of its member nations better to navigate this new DRIPA landscape with BC.

Huu-ay-aht determines which level is best fit for its government and citizens. Sometimes that means direct bilateral engagement to meet Huu-ay-aht specific interests.

Other times that means working with others on areas of shared interest, priorities, and expertise. Huu-ay-aht maintains a unique and individual voice at these tables. The tables we participate in do not “speak for” Huu-ay-aht. We add our values, considerations, and input into processes where the weight of collective voices has greater influence.

Our Treaty is a living agreement written before the United Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the enactment of Declaration Acts by BC and Canada. This is a period of rapid legislative change in pursuit of reconciliation.

It is important that Huu-ay-aht pursue the benefits and opportunities that come with the Acts that are guiding BC and Canada through reconciliation. However, Huu-ay-aht must also ensure they are included because our Treaty was written before these Acts.

Huu-ay-aht's leaders, administration, and experts will continue to represent the best interests of Huu-ay-aht citizens, our government, and our Treaty at all levels of treaty implementation

### **More information:**

#### **From Government of Canada website:**

The [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) is about the respect and recognition of the human rights of Indigenous peoples.

On June 21, 2021, [the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#) received Royal Assent and came into force. This Act provides a roadmap for the Government of Canada and First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples to work together to implement the Declaration based on lasting reconciliation, healing, and cooperative relations.

#### [Canada's Modern Treaty Implementation Policy](#)

*Note: Canada and representatives from the LCAC will continue to draft several annexes to the Implementation Policy throughout 2023*

#### **From Government of BC website**

The provincial government passed the [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act \(Declaration Act\)](#) into law in November 2019.

The *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act) establishes the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration) as the Province's

framework for reconciliation, as called for by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's [Calls to Action](#).

The Declaration Act aims to create a path forward that respects the human rights of Indigenous Peoples while introducing better transparency and predictability in the work we do together.

Section 4 of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* ([Declaration Act](#)) requires the Province to develop and implement an action plan to meet the objectives of the UN Declaration, and to do so in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples.

[The Declaration Act Action Plan](#), released on March 30, 2022, includes collectively identified goals and outcomes that form the long-term vision for implementing the UN Declaration in B.C. It also has 89 priority actions - tangible steps that will advance this work in key areas over the next five years.

[Shared Priorities Framework](#) – British Columbia and the Alliance of BC Treaty Nations