

# **The National Indigenous Economic Development Board**

## **2018-2019 Annual Report**



### **The National Indigenous Economic Development Board**

10 Wellington St., 17th floor

Gatineau, Quebec, K1A 0H4

819-953-2994



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## Message from the Chairperson

On behalf of the National Indigenous Economic Development Board, I am pleased to present our Annual Report for 2017–2018.

I would to start by welcoming our three new Board members. Victoria LaBillois is a Mi'gmaq entrepreneur from Listuguj, Quebec. She owns Wejipeg Excavation; co-owns Wejuseg Construction, and is an active partner in other joint ventures. Sandra Sutter, a Cree Métis woman from the Prairies, is the Aboriginal Partnerships Manager for Tarpon Energy Services and CGT Industrial and the Executive Director for the Circle for Aboriginal Relations (CFAR) Society. Finally, Maxime Vollant is from the Innu First Nation of Pessamit. He is Executive Director of the Pekuakamiulnuatsh Takuhikan of the Mashteuiatsh First Nation.



Our Board strongly believes that closing the opportunity gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in the areas of economic participation, community development, education, employment, access to capital, housing, affordable food, and clean water is the way to build a real foundation for reconciliation.

We have a vision of a vibrant Indigenous economy, where Indigenous peoples are economically self-sufficient and have achieved economic parity with the rest of Canada, and we are committed to providing strategic advice to government that will help advance that vision.

As Chairperson for the Board, I am proud of the important milestones we achieved in 2018 which have contributed to ensuring that federal policies and programs are working for Indigenous peoples to support their wealth and well-being, including:

- **The release of our reports, studies and statements:**
  - A “*What We Heard*” report based on a Sustainable Food Systems Conference in Whitehorse;
  - Everywhere, Everyday Innovating—Women Entrepreneurs and Innovation;
  - Preparation of the 2019 Indigenous Economic Progress Report—to be released in June 2019.
  
- **Hosting special events:**
  - Expanding the Circle: What Reconciliation and Inclusive Economic Growth Can Mean for Indigenous Peoples and Canada;
  - Food Systems in the North Roundtable;

- 
- Appearances at House of Commons Standing Committees.

Our work with communities, governments, industry and academia is crucial to addressing new and ongoing challenges. We look forward to continued and positive collaboration with these sectors as we work together to close the gaps. On behalf of the Board, I am profoundly grateful to the organizations and individuals in Canada and abroad who contribute to our work and help us shape our advice on Indigenous sustainable and economic development. I would also like to thank my fellow Board members for their leadership and valuable work. We look forward for an exciting 2019 full of new opportunities.



***Chief Clarence Louie***  
***Chairperson***  
***National Indigenous Economic Development Board***

## About the Board

Established in 1990, the National Indigenous Economic Development Board (NIEDB) is a non-partisan, national organization mandated to advise the Government of Canada on Indigenous economic development issues. The Board holds a vision of vibrant Indigenous economies, characterized by economic self-sufficiency and socio-economic equality with the rest of Canada. Comprised of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis community and business leaders from across Canada, the Board plays an important role in helping the federal government develop and implement policies and programs that respond to the unique needs and circumstances of Indigenous peoples. The Board also provides a vital link between policy makers, federal departments, and Indigenous and non-Indigenous business and community leaders.

### Vision

The Board's vision is a vibrant Indigenous economy, where Indigenous peoples are economically self-sufficient and have achieved economic parity with Canadian society.

### Mission Statement

To provide advice and guidance to the federal government on issues related to Indigenous economic opportunities that enable the Indigenous peoples of Canada to have a voice in government policy.

### Mandate

To advise the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada and other federal ministers on policies, programs, and program coordination as they relate to Indigenous economic development.

### Members

In 2017–2018, the Board had nine (9) members from regions across Canada. Each member contributed valuable business, community, operational, and strategic expertise to the Board's work.



**Chief Clarence Louie**  
Chairperson  
Chief, Osoyoos Indian Band



**Dawn Madahbee Leach**  
Vice-Chairperson  
General Manager, Waubetek  
Business Development  
Corporation



**Hilda Broomfield Letemplier**  
President/Chief Financial  
Officer,  
Pressure Pipe Steel Fabrication  
Ltd.



**Dr. Marie Delorme**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
The Imagination Group of  
Companies



**Ruth Williams**  
Vice Chairperson, First Nations  
Market Housing Fund



**Chief Terrance Paul**  
CEO, Membertou Development  
Corporation



**Maxime Vollant**  
Owner, Maxime Vollant  
Consulting Services



**Sandra Sutter**  
Manager, Aboriginal Partnerships  
for PTW Group of Companies



**Victoria LaBillois**  
President, Wejipeg Excavation



## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

This year (2017–2018) has been a successful year for the Board. Our work this year has focused on various topics including: reconciliation and economic development, food systems in the North, and Indigenous women’s entrepreneurship. Our reports, statements, and events were well received by our Indigenous colleagues across Canada, by the media, and by government.

Board members continually work to ensure we provide the most up-to-date and comprehensive advice and guidance related to Indigenous economic development. In order to do this we do our best to reach out to community leaders and Indigenous change makers across the country and bring forward issues that are of direct concern to their daily prosperity and will be important drivers in accelerating economic development opportunities. Issues of wealth creation at both the small and medium enterprise level to the multi-national and global level have been areas of focus for the Board over time and this year we worked to ensure these issues were on the agenda with the federal government and other partners. We identify forums and networks where we can bring these issues forward. This year we have made presentations to House of Commons Committees and Senate Committees. Partnering with individuals, organization, and governments can help ensure that new and ongoing challenges are addressed.

We also identify key timeframes to put these ideas in front of decision makers at strategic points in decision-making cycles within government. Linking community realities into these forums is an important role we play in ensuring voices are heard in policy development.

The key highlights from the Board’s work in 2017–2018 include:

- Hosting the: Sustainable Food Systems Conference in Whitehorse followed by the release of our study on: *What We Heard: Roundtable on Northern Sustainable Food Systems*;
- Participation on the OECD’s Linking Indigenous Communities with Regional Development Project is intended to develop policy recommendations for improving economic outcomes;
- Key Meetings with the European Union Ambassador;
- Appearances at the House of Commons’ International Trade Committee and other Senate committees to discuss Northern Infrastructure;
- Attendance at the Gender based Analysis+ (GBA+) Forum in order accentuate the role of Indigenous women entrepreneurs in the economy;
- The Board hosted the last two events in our three-part series of conferences as: *Expanding the Circle: What Reconciliation and Inclusive Economic Growth Can Mean for Metis and Canada* as well as *Expanding the Circle: What Reconciliation and Inclusive Economic Growth Can Mean for Inuit and Canada*.

We are glad to see that our Reports are often referenced by other organizations and researchers. This work is meant to be shared and disseminated in order to inform the discussion around Indigenous economic development in Canada.

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### *Expanding the Circle Series*

The Board's 2016 report entitled *Reconciliation: Growing Canada's Economy by \$27.7 Billion* served as the foundation for the Expanding the Circle series. This report concluded that the economic gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, and the marginalization of Indigenous peoples, cost the Canadian economy \$27.7 billion annually. As such, the Board partnered with the Public Policy Forum (PPF) the National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association (NACCA), and the former Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) to hold a three-part series of conferences entitled *Expanding the Circle: What Reconciliation and Inclusive Growth Can Mean for Indigenous peoples and Canada*. These conferences will be chronicled in a recommendations report for the federal government on Indigenous economic reconciliation and inclusive growth. The first conference was focused on economic reconciliation with First Nations and was held February 2017 in Ottawa. More information on this conference is available in last year's annual report. Following this conference, we hosted respectively a Métis conference in November 2017 and an Inuit conference in November 2018.

#### **What Reconciliation and Inclusive Growth Can Mean for the Métis Nation and Canada?**

The conference was held at the University of Winnipeg. The forum featured remarks from distinguished guests, including Thomas Isaac (Former Special Representative of the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs on Métis Reconciliation), David Chartrand (President of the Manitoba Métis Federation), and Clément Chartier (President of the Métis Nation). Elder Mae Louise Campbell led an opening prayer and spoke to the global need for Indigenous values. Her comments underscored the importance of the implementation of Indigenous values in business.



[Watch the Métis Conference](#)

[View photos from the Métis Conference](#)

## What Reconciliation and Inclusive Economic Growth Can mean for Inuit and Canada?

The conference was held at the Shaw Centre in Ottawa. The conference included a panel with executives within various Inuit government and governance corporations, including Madeleine Redfern (Mayor of Iqaluit), Natan Obed (President of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami) and Johannes Lampe (President of Nunatsiavut Government). The forum also included remarks from the Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Northern Affairs and Internal Trade as well as the Honourable Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs. Elder Sally Webster led an opening prayer and spoke about her experience as an Inuit artist and entrepreneur.



[Watch the Inuit conference](#)

[View photos from the Inuit conference](#)

## *Sustainable Food Systems Conference in Whitehorse*

On Monday, June 4, 2018, a wide variety of stakeholders and partners involved in Northern food systems attended a Roundtable event in Whitehorse, Yukon. Participants were from across the Northern territories and Inuit Nunangat and included:

- Elder Betsy Jackson;
- Representatives from Indigenous Organizations, Governments and Corporations;
- Federal, territorial and regional government representatives;
- Industry representatives;
- Non-profit groups and academics;
- Local food producers and food Co-ops;
- Commercial food distributors and retailers.

A *What We Heard* report was produced to summarize the feedback received from stakeholders and partners during the Roundtable. While submissions included a wide range of specific comments, the report summarized feedback into four common themes: outside influences on food systems, required coordination, harvesting of traditional foods, and funding structures.

The Board reviewed the research they have done and the insights from the Roundtable. This work informed recommendations addressed to the federal government on ways to improve Northern sustainable food systems and address food security.

The Northern Sustainable Food Systems Recommendations Report was launched in Nanaimo on February 19, 2018. You can find the report on our website.





## APPEARANCES AND PRESENTATIONS

### *The Board supports Bill C-262: An Act to ensure that the laws of Canada are in harmony with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*

#### **Romeo Saganash—Presentation to the Board**

At the May 2017 Board meeting held on Lennox Island, in Prince Edward Island, Member of Parliament Romeo Saganash joined the Board to present on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (the Declaration). He highlighted the importance of renewing a nation-to-nation/Inuit-Crown relationship between Indigenous peoples and the Government of Canada as well as recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to fully implement United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, particularly Article 3 which references Indigenous Peoples' right to self-determination.

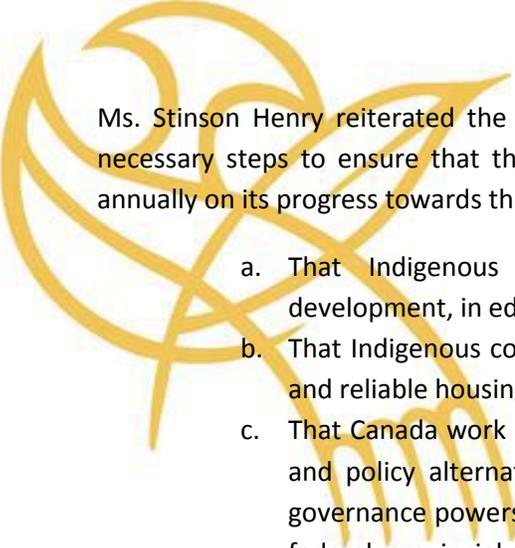
Mr. Saganash also spoke about Bill C-262, which will provide a legal framework towards fully adopting the Declaration in areas such as treaty rights, housing, education, infrastructure and self-government. According to Mr. Saganash, Bill C-262 supports reconciliation, human rights and justice for Indigenous peoples and directly relates to the Board's 2016–2019 Strategic Priorities. This presentation informed Sharon Stinson Henry's presentation in front of the House of Commons' Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs.

#### **Sharon Stinson Henry—Appearance in front of the House of Commons' Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs**

In April 2018, Sharon Stinson Henry appeared in front of the House of Commons' Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs to support Bill C-262 and its recommendation for the full adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples into Canadian law. Ms. Stinson Henry noted that the Board had previously welcomed Canada's decision to fully support the Declaration without qualification.

Ms. Stinson Henry highlighted articles from the Declaration that relate to Indigenous economic development, including Article 3, which states that "Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development."

In her presentation, Ms. Stinson Henry also said that the Board believes that implementing the Declaration would ensure the protection of reserve lands and traditional territories, and would allow for reserve sizes to go back to what they originally were, as Article 8 calls upon states to "provide effective mechanisms for prevention of, and redress for any action which has the aim or effect of dispossessing them of their lands, territories or resources".



Ms. Stinson Henry reiterated the Board’s recommendation that the Government of Canada take all necessary steps to ensure that the standards set out in the Declaration are met and that it report annually on its progress towards this goal. Specifically, the Board recommended Canada to ensure:

- a. That Indigenous peoples have equal economic opportunities in community development, in education, in employment, and in access to capital;
- b. That Indigenous communities have equal access to health care, to clean water, to safe and reliable housing, and to healthy, affordable food; and
- c. That Canada work in mutual partnership with Indigenous peoples to develop legislative and policy alternatives to the Indian Act that would give further expression to the governance powers of Indigenous peoples and how they coexist with the powers of the federal, provincial and territorial governments.

In closing, Ms. Stinson stated that the Board was pleased to see that Bill C-262 aligns with these recommendations and believes that this bill will actively contribute to the reconciliation process in Canada.

### ***Dawn Madahbee Leach—Appearance in Front of the House of Commons’ International Trade Committee***

In September 2017, Dawn Madahbee Leach appeared in front of the House of Commons’ International Trade Committee as Interim Chair of the Board. She congratulated the Government of Canada for its endorsement of United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples without qualification earlier in the year and urged the Government to take a bold and decisive leadership role in ensuring that a modernized North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) integrates Indigenous rights and considerations.

Ms. Madahbee Leach noted that when NAFTA was first negotiated in 1994, Indigenous peoples in North America expressed different opinions. While some felt that trade liberalization would create economic opportunities, others felt that NAFTA would not benefit Indigenous peoples as a whole. Many concerns stemmed from the fact that NAFTA was negotiated without proper consultation and participation of Indigenous peoples.

An Indigenous rights chapter in NAFTA would help protect the rights of Indigenous peoples in North America, particularly in Mexico where Indigenous peoples have been forced to leave their traditional lands and lost their livelihoods as a result of the original NAFTA. The Board stands in solidarity with Indigenous communities in Mexico and across North America, and urged the Government of Canada to lead in rectifying the issues that led to the violation of Indigenous rights under NAFTA.

## *Empowering Indigenous Women Entrepreneurs*

### **Hilda Broomfield-Letemplier—Meeting with the Chilean Minister of Gender and Equity**

In November 2018, Hilda Broomfield-Letemplier met with the Chilean Minister of Gender and Equity, Isabel Plá. Ms. Broomfield-Letemplier spoke about the emergence of women’s economic prosperity as a priority under the Canadian government which includes having a GBA+ lens applied to all aspects of policy development and decision-making. She continued by speaking about the Board’s specific initiatives that prioritized supporting Indigenous women’s entrepreneurship and women’s economic empowerment since 2011. Ms. Broomfield-Letemplier spoke about the report titled *Everywhere, Everyday Innovating—Women Entrepreneurs and Innovation* published in February 2018. More specifically, she highlighted the study’s focus on Indigenous women entrepreneurs and how the study found that cultural differences might impact the type of entrepreneurial innovation and how Indigenous women accomplish their entrepreneurial goals.

Ms. Broomfield-Letemplier further discussed upcoming work of the Board on the Indigenous Economic Progress Report, to be released in early 2019. She spoke about some of the findings pertaining to economic equity between Indigenous men and women. She mentioned some preliminary findings of the report to explain the closing economic gap between non-Indigenous and Indigenous populations and the economic the gap between Indigenous men and women.

### **Hilda Broomfield-Letemplier—Presentation at the GBA+ Forum**

Later in November 2018, Hilda Broomfield-Letemplier presented and sat on a panel at the GBA+ (Gender-Based Plus) Forum in Ottawa. She talked about the intersection between the Board’s work and the GBA+ mandate of including analysis on policy that spans beyond gender into race, ethnicity, religion, age and mental and physical abilities. Ms. Broomfield-Letemplier emphasized that the “plus” aspect of GBA+ was particularly important for Indigenous populations as it could produce better policy outcomes. There are reports that are released by the Board that are connected to the GBA+ mandate or include a GBA+ lens such as the *Everywhere, Everyday Innovating—Women Entrepreneurs and Innovation* report. Additionally, the upcoming 2019 Indigenous Economic Progress Report will include a chapter dedicated to a gender analysis of the indicators. Ms. Broomfield-Letemplier finished by speaking about GBA+ as a tool for Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples by using it in the consultation and engagement processes with Indigenous communities, using it to co-develop policies and programs, and ensuring that every government policy and program that will impact Indigenous populations are culturally appropriate.



## ***Dawn Madahbee Leach—Meeting With the European Union Ambassador***

Dawn Madahbee Leach met with the European Union Ambassador to Canada, His Excellency Peteris Ustubs in November 2018, in Ottawa. Ms. Madahbee Leach spoke with the Ambassador about the work of the Board, including the 2019 Indigenous Economic Progress Report, the 2019 Northern Sustainable Food System's Report, and the Indigenous Reconciliation Conferences. She spoke about the work she has accomplished, on behalf of the Board, on the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) project, and specifically the international component. She spoke about the connection that Canada has with the European Union through the mandate of this project; the mandate being to create a pool of knowledge across the representative countries on policy making and the opportunity to identify shared strategies to improve well-being and prosperity for Indigenous peoples. Ms. Madahbee Leach indicated that the final goal of this project is to write and launch the International Indigenous Economic Development report, with a deadline of Fall 2019.

## **SPECIAL REPORTS**

### ***Indigenous Women's Entrepreneurship Report***



**EVERYWHERE,  
EVERY DAY  
INNOVATING.**

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS  
AND INNOVATION



The Board worked with Carleton University's Centre for Women in Politics and Public Leadership to support a study on Women, Entrepreneurs, and Innovation with a specific chapter on Indigenous Women Entrepreneurs. The final report, *Everywhere, Everyday Innovating—Women Entrepreneurs and Innovation*, was published in February 2018.

The report found that most policies and financial assistance programs currently equate innovation solely with technological advances, and therefore do not consider how women are innovating much more broadly. The report offered recommendations for governments, financial institutions and women entrepreneurs.

## **COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS**

### ***Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)***

The OECD's *Linking Indigenous Communities with Regional Development Project* is intended to develop policy recommendations for improving economic outcomes for Indigenous people by better linking them with regional development efforts. The project involves extensive collaboration and engagement between governments and Indigenous representatives. The OECD provides advice to governments on a worldwide basis. This is the first Indigenous project they have done. Ms. Dawn Madahbee Leach, the Board's vice-chairperson, is Canada's Indigenous Champion for this project.

The project will create a platform for exchange of best practices and experiences between Indigenous community leaders, policy makers and experts; provide a diagnosis of the development potential of different Indigenous communities; highlight best practices; and, recommend improvements regarding policies for Indigenous communities. Indigenous involvement in this project will be critical for its success.

## Looking Ahead

### *2019 Indigenous Economic Progress Report*

The 2019 Indigenous Economic Progress Report is slated to be released in June 2019. The new report will include a gender chapter that will look into the gender differences in regards to economic development. The report will also include a section on the infrastructure in communities such as access to clean drinking water, connectivity, transportation, and other indicators that have impacts on Indigenous economic development. The report will delve into alternative indicators for areas such as governance and land management.



