

B.C. First Nations Fisheries Council

Statement of Solidarity on Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Joint Management

Affirmed by the Representatives in attendance at the
FNFC 2010 Fall Fisheries Assembly
November 2, 2010



FIRST NATIONS
FISHERIES COUNCIL

WHEREAS First Nations in British Columbia have constitutionally protected Title and rights that have been affirmed by the Supreme Court of Canada, international conventions, and local and international treaties, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;

WHEREAS First Nations in British Columbia have Title and rights to our lands, waters and resources, and these rights include the right to be self-determining and to manage our lands, waters, and resources according to our sovereign, inherent and collective responsibilities, laws and jurisdictions for the benefit of future generations and the protection of indigenous species;

WHEREAS as sovereign First Nations we have the right to protect, manage and derive social, cultural and economic benefits from the wealth of our lands, waters and resources;

WHEREAS First Nations acknowledge the interdependence we have with one another and respectfully honour our commitment to work with one another where we share lands, waters and resources to maintain and develop resource development strategies and cooperative relationships built upon respect, transparency, openness, accountability and mutual trust;

WHEREAS the First Nations Fisheries Council has been empowered by First Nations leadership in B.C. to implement the *B.C. First Nations Fisheries Action Plan* and part of this task includes advocacy to advance title and rights, to build capacity, and to help facilitate discussions with the federal and provincial governments regarding the recognition of First Nations inherent rights through discussions on the development of an effective joint management framework with respect to the management of fisheries and aquatic resources;

WHEREAS on May 26, 2010 the First Nations Fisheries Council and Fisheries and Oceans Canada – Pacific Region signed a *Commitment to Action and Results* to work together on areas of mutual concern, including joint management, aquaculture, Section 35(1) protected fisheries and economic access.

WHEREAS First Nation representatives from B.C. have gathered in Tsimshian territory to discuss how to work collaboratively with each other and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to co-manage their fisheries and marine resources.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the First Nation representatives and Chiefs in Assembly affirm the following principle statements for joint management, as endorsed by First Nations leaders and participants at the 2010 First Nations Fisheries Council Fall Assembly:

- A. That we recognize and respect each other's autonomy and support each other in exercising our respective title, rights and jurisdiction. This recognition and respect applies to each First Nation in terms of their involvement and stance on fisheries and aquatic resources.
- B. On a Nation-to-Nation basis, First Nations must be engaged from the outset of discussions in all decisions (and development of policy which sets a framework for decision-making) which are being considered which will impact our title and rights. We require active engagement in planning, management and decision-making processes for all fisheries, watershed, marine, and aquaculture related matters which have the potential to impact our title and rights. This involvement is required in order to adequately protect environmentally, socially, and culturally significant areas, to safeguard our traditional food sources, to secure the long-term health of wild salmon and other aquatic resources, and to protect our right to manage the lands, waters and resources within our territories.
- C. As Indigenous Nations of our respective territories, we acknowledge that our Nations will work collaboratively to develop effective capacities at the community, Nation, aggregate, B.C., and National scale, in order to effectively engage in decision-making and policy development that relates to our title and rights. These capacities will reflect the autonomous nature of our title and rights and recognition that issues in our territories and resources in many cases will require our collective analysis, discussion, engagement, and action.
- D. As Indigenous Nations of our respective territories, we require active engagement in the science that guides decision making on the management, regulation, and enforcement of fisheries and aquaculture. We will be engaged in the development of science approaches and tools, and we should be leaders in the collection and analysis of data within our territories. We expect decisions to be made based on a melding of the best scientific information and incorporation of First Nations traditional knowledge with resources made available for First Nations to actively document their knowledge.
- E. We commit to working in accordance with the Statement of Solidarity to ensure that any actions taken in respect of fisheries and aquaculture are respectful of our rights, title, lands, waters and resources, are consistent with our common cultural belief systems, and will improve our overall quality of life.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Representatives in attendance at the Fisheries Assembly 2010 call upon the First Nations Fisheries Council to enact the principle statements outlined in this Statement of Solidarity to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans federal and provincial governments, advocating for the engagement of First Nations at the Nation and community level in the development of an effective and joint management framework for the management of fisheries and aquatic resources in B.C.

THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED As Indigenous Nations of our respective territories, we acknowledge that we seek to work collaboratively with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans in order to ensure the effective management of the all fisheries and aquatic resources within our territories.