

Declaration of Indigenous Circumpolar Women's Gathering

We, the Indigenous women representing the Circumpolar North have met in Yellowknife, Canada at the "Indigenous Circumpolar Women's Gathering", as sisters over 3 days, deliberating on the present situation and the future of our Indigenous women, as a result, we hereby declare the following as one voice:

Who We Are

We are diverse Indigenous women representing various cultural regions in the Circumpolar North and we all bring our own gifts

We all share common experiences as Indigenous women

We share a responsibility for our cultures and its revitalization

We are holistic beings and balance life— women's voices must be heard

We all enter this gathering at various points of our journey— some of us know our history and some of us do not but it is our sense of responsibility that unite and strengthen us

What We Stand For

Protectors

We are protectors of culture, serving as stewards for ancestral knowledge.

Our languages, protocols and practices are sacred and critical to the wellbeing of our children, families, and communities.

We have the power, authority and right to reshape our history and choose how we want to be treated

We put our children and grandchildren in the centre of the circle.

We nurture and support them on their journey to becoming proud Indigenous peoples

Our Teachers

We show the utmost respect to our mother, the land, taking only what we need. In turn, she takes care of us

The land is connected to our identity as Indigenous peoples— what we learn from the land protects us in mind, spirit and body

We learn and embody the lessons from the land and our creation stories (this comes from the story of the birds flying together as one)

We acknowledge and honour our two-legged teachers who are our Elders, our youth, our children and our babies

We seek out the wisdom and knowledge of our Elders in a respectful way.

We acknowledge that their teachings hold answers for our future

Taking Care of Self

We listen to our instincts, our heart, and we lead from a position of strength

We seek out our individual gifts and learn how to use these gifts in the best possible way

We recognize that in order to follow through with our responsibilities as Indigenous women, we must honour ourselves and wellbeing through self-care

Supporting Each Other

We share, teach, and support Indigenous women when they seek out their cultural knowledge. It is ours to share

We create safe spaces to talk openly, share our experiences, allow us to be who we are, and heal together. Voice adds strength and unbalances the status quo

We acknowledge and honour the role of men in our lives and the support, love and respect they show us as Indigenous women

We acknowledge and support our brother, sisters, and children who are in need. We show compassion, love, and work towards a solution

Creating Change

Reconciliation is an ongoing process and is everyone's responsibility

Change occurs from commitment to our position and using our voice whenever the opportunities arise

Creating partnerships and networks across the territories is critical to moving forward. A social media strategy is critical to remain connected and united.

We work to change the system from the inside out