



# British Columbia All Chiefs' Task Force Fact Sheet

## Title and Rights

First Nations are committed to working together in nation-to-nation relationships that respect the title and rights and decision-making of each nation. However, government processes and mandates are barriers to the effective and honourable resolution of the Land Question in BC. The Government of Canada's rationale for not adopting the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People is that it is inconsistent with its current policies and negotiating mandates. In essence, the current Canadian system for resolving these matters doesn't even meet the basic standards set out in the UN Declaration. The current policies and mandates are often so impoverished that the system fails, and delays and treaty failures are a result.

- There is a backlog of 800-1,000 unresolved claims within Canada's own federal specific claims process--in other words, claims involving Canada's treaty obligations – and estimates of the total value of these unresolved claims range from 2.6 billion dollars to six billion dollars. It takes an average of 13 years to settle a claim under the current system.
- The delay in completing comprehensive claims (treaties) is costing the Canadian public millions of dollars in lost opportunities not to mention the costs of litigation, whereas completion of withstanding treaties could deliver more than 10 billion dollars in economic benefits to British Columbia's economy alone over the next 15 years.
- ✚ The recognition and respect for First Nations inherent title and rights provides opportunities for First Nations to be prominent in sustainable and successful economic and social initiatives that will benefit all peoples. If all 60 First Nations currently in the BC treaty process completed treaties by 2025, they could receive a net financial benefit of \$10.28 billion. (The 60 First Nations include 111 of the 198 Indian Act bands in British Columbia.) Treaty settlement-related 'lost opportunity costs' in BC are projected to be \$1.5 billion in 2009 dollars.
- ✚ Article 26 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples clearly outlines the Rights and Title of Indigenous peoples: *"Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired. Indigenous peoples have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as at those which they have otherwise acquired."*