

Principals' Accord

Questions and answers

What is the Principals' Accord?

The “Principals’ Accord on Transforming Treaty Negotiations in British Columbia” is a political commitment by the treaty Principals that acknowledges our troubled history and commits the Principals to expanding on their work to improve and expedite treaty negotiations in British Columbia in order to support better outcomes for First Nations peoples and communities.

This includes key commitments to help transform treaty negotiations and to continue the implementation of the recommendations set out in the Multilateral Engagement Report.

Why is the Accord significant?

The Principals’ Accord jointly commits the Principals to make positive transformative changes to treaty negotiations in British Columbia.

With the signing of the Principals’ Accord, the Principals have made it clear that extinguishment and surrender of rights, in form or result, have no place in modern-day Crown-Indigenous relations or agreements.

Instead, our energy will be directed towards recognizing and implementing rights through treaty negotiations, as well as the negotiation of agreements and other constructive arrangements.

Through the Principals’ Accord, the Principals have also agreed that the Crown’s approach to negotiating and implementing treaties must be consistent with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s 94 Calls to Action.

The Principals have endorsed the co-development of negotiation mandates in partnership with First Nations at individual treaty negotiation tables. The Accord also commits the provincial and federal governments to be inclusive and ensure First Nations are involved in the development of policies on issues of interest to their communities.

How does this Accord fit with the work from the Multilateral Engagement Report?

Since the release in 2016 of the report on the “Multilateral Engagement Process to Improve and Expedite Treaty Negotiations in British Columbia” we have made significant progress on implementing many of the proposals and action items.

A number of treaty negotiating tables are exploring fundamentally different approaches to treaty agreements, founded on lasting government-to-government relationships that are flexible, can adapt to changing circumstances over time, and recognize Aboriginal rights and title as inherent and everlasting. These approaches put into practice innovations proposed through the Multilateral Engagement Process.

The Principals remain committed to reinvigorating and transforming treaty negotiations and will continue to work together to implement the remaining recommendations.

We recognize that more work needs to be done to forge a new relationship with Indigenous peoples based upon the recognition and implementation of rights, respect, co-operation and partnership.

With both the federal and provincial governments committing to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s 94 Calls to Action, we recognize the opportunity exists to make profound changes to how we approach treaty negotiations in British Columbia.