

A Call to Action to the Government of Canada by participants in the ANVILS 2016 workshop and friends

Drafted at University of Alberta, Edmonton on July 10, 2016

Whereas:

In 2000, the Assembly of First Nations declared a State of Emergency on Indigenous Languages in Canada due to the dire conditions of Canadian Indigenous languages at the time, a state that has since that time further deteriorated, in spite of courageous efforts by community language champions, elders, youth and fluent speakers to stem the tide of Indigenous language loss with little or no resources.

Whereas:

In 2003-2005 the Canadian government, through the Department of Canadian Heritage launched a National Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures (TFALC) to long-term revitalize Indigenous languages in Canada, many of which were and still are critically endangered.

Whereas:

In 2005, the TFALC submitted its detailed task force report “Towards a New Beginning: A Foundational Report for a Strategy to Revitalize First Nation, Inuit and Metis Languages and Cultures.” This report contained 25 recommendations.

Whereas:

The Canadian Government in 2003 earmarked \$160 million as interim funding towards the TFALC findings and recommendations.

Whereas:

In Fall 2005, the newly elected Conservative government shelved the Task Force Report and removed the \$160 million funding from the fiscal framework.

Whereas:

In the Fall 2015, the newly elected Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, said in his mandate letter to Minister Carolyn Bennett, the newly appointed Minister of Indigenous Affairs, “No relationship is more important to me and to Canada than the one with Indigenous Peoples. It is time for a renewed, nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous Peoples, based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership. To support the work of reconciliation, and continue the necessary process of truth telling and healing, work with provinces and territories, and with First Nations, the Métis Nation, and Inuit, to implement recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, starting with the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.”

In addition, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau stated in his mandate letter to the Hon. Melanie Joly, the newly appointed Minister of Canadian Heritage, that he would “Work in collaboration with the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs to provide new funding to promote, preserve and enhance Indigenous languages and cultures.”

We, the undersigned therefore urgently call on the Government of Canada to:

- implement the mandate given by Prime Minister Trudeau in his mandate letters to the Hon. Carolyn Bennett and the Hon. Melanie Joly to provide adequate funding to revitalize Canada’s Indigenous languages;

Please copy and circulate more copies of this petition as needed and send signed petition(s) to the following 5 addresses:

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