

# 21 Common Ground Principles

Deh Cho First Nations and Canada were interested in achieving clarity in their relationship. They disagreed on ownership, sovereignty and jurisdiction. They believed that their relationship is best clarified through negotiations based on the following principles.

## **Process:**

the next step in the process are:

1. Agreement by both parties to proceed.
2. Funding and commitment to negotiate are in place as soon as possible.
3. Interim Land Use Protection are in place and a Framework Agreement in place.
4. A federal mandate will be sought as soon as possible.

## **Land:**

1. The integrity of the land will be maintained through negotiations and in the final agreement

## **Rights:**

1. The DCFN and Canada (the Parties) intend their relationship to be based on mutual recognition, sharing and to achieve this by agreeing on rights, rather than by extinguishing rights.
2. The rights of all Canadians, which are guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, will be respected by the Government of the Deh Cho. Special provisions, however will protect the Aboriginal and Treaty Rights of the Deh Cho.

## **Negotiations:**

1. An interim land use process, including interim protection measures will be negotiated simultaneously with the Framework.
2. These principles will form the basis of the mandate to be given to the negotiators, by DCFN and Canada.
3. The parties will negotiate in good faith.
4. The relationship between DCFN and the Western Arctic and Canada will be an important issue to negotiate.
5. As agreements are achieved on subject matters, the parties may implement these agreements as sub agreements prior to a final agreement.

6. Canada and DCFN commit to a process to educate each other re: Laws and Customs.
7. The negotiations of an agreement is in the interest of the people of Canada as well as of the Deh Cho.

## **Funds:**

1. The DCFN will have revenue raising capacities including taxing authorities.
2. The final agreement will address issues relating to compensation and financial payments.
3. The parties will explore alternatives for funding the negotiations process prior to entering formal negotiations. The funding will be adequate to provide for the full involvement of the Deh Cho residents in the development of the agreement, taking into account the unique culture and geography of the Deh Cho
4. Fiscal arrangements to ensure adequate support for the Deh Cho government will be negotiated in the agreement.
5. Fiscal arrangements will ensure that residents of the Deh Cho territory will enjoy the level of public services enjoyed by other Canadians.

## **Governance:**

6. The Deh Cho First Nations have their own constitution.
7. The DCFN and Canada relationship will be nation to nation, one building on existing treaties.
8. The Deh Cho government will be based on Dene Laws and Customs and on other laws as agreed to in negotiations The Deh Cho government will be the primary government responsible to deliver programs and services to all residents of the Deh Cho
9. Canada will expand assistance for capacity building to enhance governance in the Deh Cho prior to, during and after a final agreement.
10. Non-aboriginal residents will have a right to participate in Deh Cho government at the regional or community level with respect to services and functions of governance that directly affect them.