

A joint statement for the June 15 launch of co-development of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis languages legislation

Canadian Heritage, the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and the Métis Nation state that they will:

- Work collaboratively, transparently and on a distinctions-basis to co-develop national First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Nation languages legislation whose content will reflect the distinct geographic, political, legislative, and cultural contexts impacting language revitalization, recovery, preservation, protection, maintenance, and promotion.
- Co-develop legislation that addresses the revitalization, recovery, preservation, protection, maintenance and promotion of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nation languages, through two mechanisms: a joint co-development working group to discuss issues of common concern and bilateral working groups with Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Assembly of First Nations, and the Métis Nation to address issues that are specific to each cultural group.
- Co-develop legislation in a way that supports the full and meaningful implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action (for those impacted) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the federal government's commitment to a nation-to-nation, government-to-government, or Inuit-Crown relationship.
- Co-develop legislation that recognizes First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nation language rights and jurisdictions, and that recognizes that Indigenous languages are fundamental to Indigenous self-determination. Such legislation would, among other things, further affirm and address the right of Indigenous peoples to revitalize, use, develop and transmit their languages to future generations, including through the control of their educational systems and institutions.
- Adopt a collaborative process that includes funding for all Statement parties to undertake meaningful engagement; regular meetings of a co-development and bilateral working groups; and early agreement on roles and responsibilities, including terms of reference for a co-development process.
- Each of the Indigenous organizations will conduct engagements with their constituency, financed by Canadian Heritage; Canadian Heritage will assume responsibility for securing input to federal positions from other relevant departments and agencies; and where necessary, Canadian Heritage and each Indigenous government or organization will be seeking engagement from other governments, organizations and individuals.
- Work towards an introduction of the legislation in Parliament in 2018.