

Kanehsatà:ke Kontinónstats ne Kanien'kéha

June 20, 2016

Following the March 7, 2016 discussions with Indigenous peoples regarding our Languages and Cultures, Ministers Luc Fortin and Geoffrey Kelley are now inviting Indigenous communities to submit briefs on how we envision our Languages and Cultures would be, within a framework of Quebec's cultural policy. Specific consultations will be held with Indigenous artists in collaboration with Conseil des arts et lettres du Québec from June 7-10, 2016.

Submissions will be analyzed by the Bureau du renouvellement de la politique culturelle du Québec, then sent to participating Indigenous communities for any changes to the draft policy proposal.

The following three Themes contain critical elements that Kanehsatà:ke Kontinónstats ne Kanien'kéha (Mohawk Language Custodian Association, Inc.) strongly believe and urge that they be embraced and contained in the Indigenous Cultural Policy of Québec.

Theme 1 – LANGUAGE: The Vehicle of a Culture

[Language] encompasses and expresses a worldview shaped by centuries, of experiences, knowledge, practices, spiritual beliefs and relationships between a people, its neighbours, and its environment, which cannot be replicated in any other tongue.

POLICY POINTS:

- Free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous peoples is required for any policy and/or legislation regarding their inherent rights and Indigenous rights.
- Indigenous human rights include Indigenous language rights.
- Indigenous languages are irreplaceable foundations for individual, community and Nations' identity, sense of belonging to a place, and well-being.
- Reconciliation can only be achieved through restitution, meaning that outstanding historical injustices are resolved through mutual agreement. It is understood that the federal government also plays a role in this process.
- Primary and Secondary schools with an Indigenous student population work with Indigenous communities, school boards and the MELS to ensure Indigenous students have access to fluent Indigenous speakers and Traditional Knowledge keepers who are recognized by their community.

Kanehsatà:ke Kontinónstats ne Kanien'kéha

- Federal and provincial governments work with Indigenous peoples to ensure equitable opportunities to access high quality bi/trilingual programs:
 1. Indigenous Language immersion programs that are funded recurrently to allow students access to 8 years in their language to ensure fluency is attained
 2. French and/or English are introduced and increased slowly, while the Indigenous language continues to be taught as the medium of instruction
 3. Academic content assessments are administered in the Indigenous language in Immersion schools and programs
 4. Academic content in schools and programs are developed in a cultural, historical and environmental heritage, in the language and available in French and English to educate the wider population.
 5. Curriculum be culturally and historically based within the associated Indigenous peoples and their communities, inclusive of the colonial history of the Americas
 6. The colonial history of the Americas be implemented in all public educational institutions with the full and effective participation of Indigenous peoples and their own houses of learning.
- The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada has identified and supported several recommendations related to Indigenous languages.
 - That cégeps and universities co-create with Indigenous peoples college and diploma programs in Indigenous languages;
 - To ensure efforts to revitalize and perpetuate Indigenous languages, Quebec shall co-create with Indigenous peoples, university Master-Apprentice Programs that lead to certification of Indigenous Language Teachers
 - The government of Québec waive administration costs for an agreed upon period to enable Indian Residential School survivors, and their families to reclaim personal names changed by the Indian Residential School system and the Churches, such as birth certificates, driver's licenses, health cards and social insurance cards.
- The government of Québec recognize the Official Standardization of Writing an Indigenous language as developed by expert language custodians and where they exist.
- The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other relevant international covenants be included in any and all policies/proposed legislation. The UN Declaration's Preamble reminds us that this human rights document is read together with the Charter of the United Nations, the International Covenant

Kanehsatà:ke Kontinónstats ne Kanien'kéha

on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.

Theme 2: TERRITORY AND URBAN LIFE: Cultural Spaces

Protecting, accessing and controlling our Indigenous cultural resources are critical to the vitality and perpetuation of Indigenous spirituality and ceremonies, languages, sacred sites and the environment.

POLICY POINTS:

In accordance with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples and other international covenants and instruments, we assert that:

- Kanehsatà:ke and other Indigenous communities require guarantees that discovering Indigenous human remains, funerary objects and other Indigenous cultural objects will be immediately disclosed to the nearest Indigenous community, through their Cultural Centres and further, that:
 - Quebec develop legislation and policies that compel individuals, municipalities, developers, parks personnel and government officials to fully inform all levels of government, including Indigenous leadership and Traditional Knowledge keepers.
 - Co-Develop vigorous enforcement mechanisms through legislation and/or policy, with severe penalties to municipalities, park personnel, developers and others who contravene the legislation and/or policy.
 - Full disclosure is immediately enforced, as in the case of remains being found at the Turcot Interchange construction. May 2016.
 - Full disclosure of all Indigenous human remains, funerary objects, and any/all Indigenous cultural objects and/or artifacts held in universities, museums, and other facilities.
- Quebec government work in full partnership with Indigenous Nations to develop educational materials for a wide audience to learn of specific cultural protocols of each distinct Indigenous Nation.
- Full access to Indigenous peoples to conduct their traditional ceremonies and activities on their homelands and sacred sites, including those territories now found in Quebec's modern creations of "national parks."

Kanehsatà:ke Kontinónstats ne Kanien'kéha

- Any legislation and/or policy related to Indigenous language and culture is widely distributed to all levels of government and their organizations in Quebec, and businesses working in Quebec to be fully informed.
- Cultural appropriation is widespread and is a very lucrative business for unscrupulous businesses throughout Quebec and Canada and denies authentic Indigenous artists and craftspeople, recognized by their communities, from earning a sustainable livelihood.
- Legislation and policies that will regulate and enforce violators who sell or barter goods that are falsely represented as being made by Indigenous peoples. Utilizing criteria created and agreed upon by Indigenous institutions; that strict authentication is required in the sale of any and all products. Authentication will be accompanied by a tag registered by Indigenous institutions. Violations of the policy/criteria will be accompanied with effective penalties for violators. Further, those false artifacts shall be confiscated and destroyed.
- Indigenous presentations in urban settings must be authenticated by the Indigenous nation they purport to represent to prevent cultural appropriation and misrepresentation.
- Urban Indigenous populations can seek out authentication from their own Nation's community to ensure truthful representation as the source of their artistic interpretations come from traditional knowledge keepers as identified by their community.

Theme 3: ART AND TRADITION: Cultural Foundations

Authentic Traditional Knowledge keepers are cherished people in Indigenous communities as they have learned and taught the young their language, culture, history, territorial stories, legends that pass on the values and beliefs of their civilization, kinships and Clans, and how their traditional governments work. They are our living libraries.

POLICY POINTS:

- Today, annual project funding is provided to Indigenous cultural centres and Friendships Centres in urban settings from the federal government. Focus is on serving Indigenous communities and urban Indigenous populations.
 - Cultural Centres and urban Friendship Centres know where to find and acquire human and physical resources needed for specific activities and events.

Kanehsatà:ke Kontinónstats ne Kanien'kéha

- Free, prior and informed consent is required as Quebec develops their “Indigenous Cultural Policy,” as there is potential for cooperative and collaborative activities in art, music, dance, tourism and exchanges.
- Sufficient and adequate funding to support Indigenous community Cultural Centers efforts to revitalize and perpetuate Indigenous languages and culture be recurring and reflective of the harm and damages caused by colonial laws and policies.
- Community Cultural Centers be given additional funding support to revitalize Indigenous sciences and medicines using Indigenous languages
- National, provincial and municipal place names be changed to reflect Indigenous peoples’ original names including abolishing place names of historical figures that emphasize colonial oppression, i.e. Dollard des Ormeaux, Sir John A. MacDonald, Oka...
- Financial support to develop the artistic potential of Indigenous youth and young adults must be included in any policy as it supports and ensures revitalization of cultures and perpetuates their identity for the future.