

The Calgary Declaration



Nine premiers and two territorial leaders have unanimously agreed on a framework for open and grassroots public consultations with Canadians on strengthening the Canadian federation.

Premiers and territorial leaders considered both the subject matter and the process of public consultation on national unity. The attached framework of subjects for consultation is not intended to be exhaustive. Each province and territory will determine the scope of consultation and the most appropriate mechanisms.

Premiers and territorial leaders also reached an agreement on guidelines and on a time framework. All premiers and leaders undertook to initiate consultations this fall. They will report progress prior to their January Team Canada trade mission.

Premiers and territorial leaders also reiterated that the federation also needs practical non-constitutional approaches to reform, strengthen, and improve its effectiveness. In August, premiers and territorial leaders released a statement on Social Policy Renewal that sets out approaches to work co-operatively with the federal government in the areas of health care and social programs. Today, premiers, territorial leaders and the Prime Minister agreed to meet this fall to discuss social policy renewal and to work co-operatively in the areas of health care and youth unemployment.

Premiers and territorial leaders remain committed to meeting with Aboriginal leaders to follow up on the recent Annual Premiers' Conference held in St. Andrews. This meeting has been tentatively scheduled for Winnipeg, Manitoba, on November 18, 1997.

Framework for Discussion on Canadian Unity

1. All Canadians are equal and have equal rights protected by law.
2. All provinces, while diverse in their characteristics, have equality of status.
3. Canada is graced by a diversity, tolerance, compassion, and an equality of opportunity that is without rival in the world.
4. Canada's gift of diversity includes Aboriginal peoples and cultures, the vitality of the English and French languages, and a multicultural citizenry drawn from all parts of the world.
5. In Canada's federal system, where respect for diversity and equality underlies unity, the unique character of Quebec society, including its French-speaking majority, its culture, and its tradition of civil law, is fundamental to the well-being of Canada. Consequently, the legislature and Government of Quebec have a role to protect and develop the unique character of Quebec society within Canada.

6. If any future constitutional amendment confers powers on one province, these powers must be available to all provinces.

7. Canada is a federal system where federal, provincial, and territorial governments work in partnership while respecting each other's jurisdictions. Canadians want their governments to work co-operatively and with flexibility to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the federation. Canadians want their governments to work together particularly in the delivery of their social programs. Provinces and territories renew their commitment to work in partnership with the Government of Canada to best serve the needs of Canadians.

Guidelines for the Process of Public Consultation

1. It will be open to general citizenry.
2. Efforts should be made to find creative ways for engaging Canadians in each provincial consultation process.
3. Governments should act as a catalyst for the process of consultation.
4. It is acknowledged that provinces and territories may wish to have processes of consultation in stages but the advantage of a co-ordinated time frame is recognized.
5. Each province and territory is free to decide on the range or scope of consultation as well as the most appropriate mechanism for consultation.