

# Investing in Nationhood: Indigenous Determinants of Prosperity and Well- Being

World Indigenous Forum

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**BIMAADZWIN**  
Advancing Our Nations

## IT IS ABOUT THE LAND

*The use, connection and control of land is by far the most fundamentally central and critical struggle faced by Indigenous Peoples on Turtle Island and across the planet.*



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## What is Bimaadzwin?

- Bimaadzwin is focused on building Nationhood
- First Nation communities need to become self governing and economically self sufficient which includes having a sufficient land base
- Focus is needed on bringing mainstream, First Nation communities, and governments together toward successfully reconstituting Indigenous Nationhood



Land



People



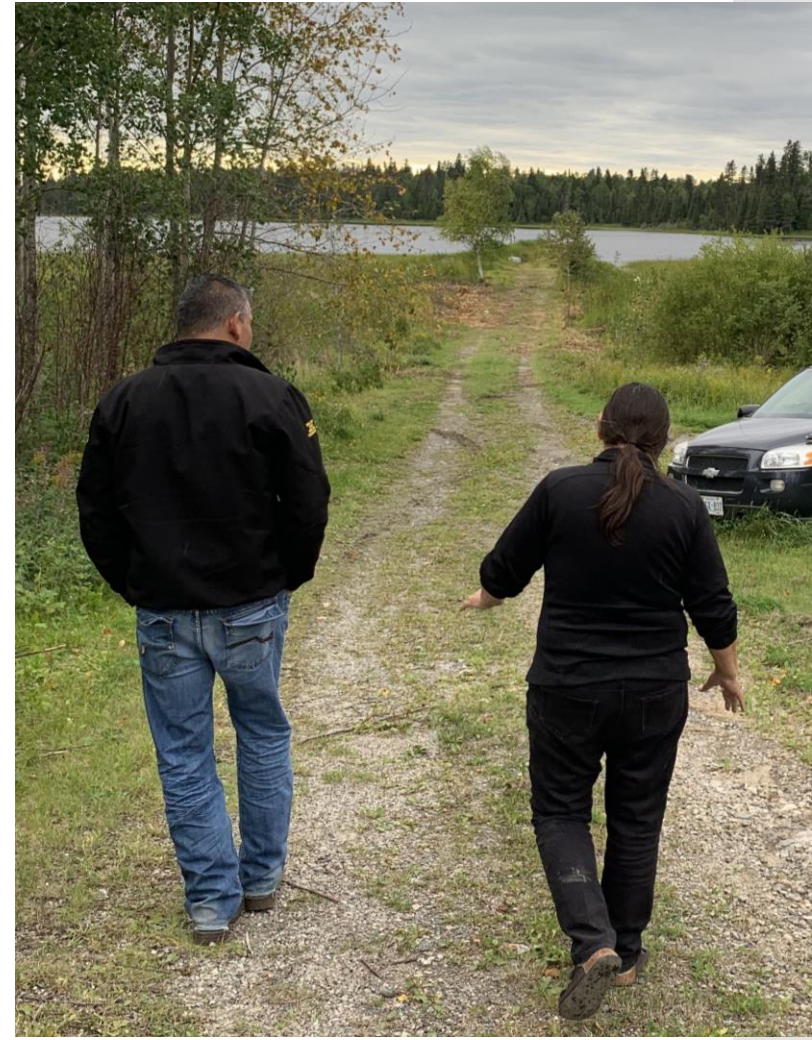
Prosperity



Nationhood

## Historical Context

- Pre-Contact: Healthy, Vibrant Indigenous Communities
- Contact: 350 Years Ago the Hudson Bay Company – based in London, England, was given our land by the British Crown
- For the next 300 years, HBC and then the country of Canada stole our land and sold it to European settlers





Means to an  
end

## RESTORING THE ROYAL CHARTER

The HBC Royal Charter is an invaluable record that has survived for more than three centuries, in part as a result of careful and deliberate conservation efforts since the 1990s. In 1996, a three-part program was enacted with a view to conserving the charter and protecting it for the future. It involved historical analysis of the document and its creation; scientific analysis of its current condition using state-of-the-art technology; and recommendations for preservation and display that would protect the Charter in perpetuity. Today, the Royal Charter resides at HBC's corporate office in Toronto; the Charter remains a priceless treasure of immense historical significance to Canada and North America.



The Hudson's Bay Company Royal Charter on display in its case at HBC's corporate office, 2016.



# Decades of First Nations Injustice

- Community Relocations to small reserves
- Lack of Clean Water
- Lack of Healthy Foods
- Shortage of Housing
- Medical & Nutrition Experiments on Indigenous Children
- Forced Sterilization of Indigenous Women
- Over-representation of children in State Care
- Missing and Murdered Women and Girls
- Grinding Poverty, Suicide and Despair

# Lack of Housing and Infrastructure Investment



# The Cost of Doing Nothing

- Average Indigenous lifespan is 10 - 15 years shorter
- Infant mortality rates are two to three times higher
- Diabetes rates are almost four times higher for First Nations on reserve
- Higher rates of obesity
- Opioid-related deaths are up to 3 times higher for First Nations in British Columbia and Alberta
- Health and medical services are less accessible

[https://www.canada.ca/en/indigenous-services-canada/news/2018/01/improving\\_healthoutcomes.html](https://www.canada.ca/en/indigenous-services-canada/news/2018/01/improving_healthoutcomes.html)



## Nationhood: Determinant of Effective Health

- In order to become healthy and happy, First Nation citizens must be able to live in healthy happy communities.
- Eliminating poverty and despair requires proper infrastructure from clean water to housing. Education, employment, self-governance, culture, language are all determinants of health.

# The Pathway Forward

- For Nationhood assertion, there is a critical need for meaningful investments in First Nations health. Simply put, effective health systems require investment.
- Sustainable solutions require supporting capacity at the First Nations community and organizational level as a first priority.
- This is why Bimaadzwin is working with one of the largest pharmaceutical companies in the world to help create happy, healthy communities.



## INDIGENOUS HEALTH

## POLICY FRAMEWORK

- The IHPF is a collaboration between Boehringer Ingelheim Canada Ltd (BI), Bimaadzwin, and Indigenous health policy subject experts.
- The IHPF Details strategic objectives and principles to support ongoing investment in Indigenous health in Canada
- This is work that “goes beyond the pill” and is focused on a community driven Pathway to health



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# Strategic Action: Indigenous Health Outcomes Components: “Beyond the Pill”



Research and Community Engagement in the areas of Diabetes and COPD – determining synergies between need and solutions-based action plans.



Indigenous-Led engagement, consultation, health policy experts, and networking and roundtable processes to engineer and schedule action plans/pilots.



Ensure Indigenous participation at the regional and National level of discussion, dialogue, and direction toward increased health outcomes.



Production of policy papers and action plans based on virtual Round-Table discussions (to ensure greater participation and cost effectiveness).





## What have we done so far?

- Involving the private sector aligns with both UNDRIP and the Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) Calls to Action that call for Indigenous Peoples' rights (to health, education, justice, and so on) be incorporated into corporate policy and core operational activities.
- BI has committed up to \$50,000 per pilot project. We hope to approve four pilots this December and begin the projects in early 2021 over an initial six month period.
- BI, Bimaadzwin, and our Indigenous Health Expert Steering Committee have now entered a new phase of research focused on Rare Diseases prevalent among Indigenous Peoples.



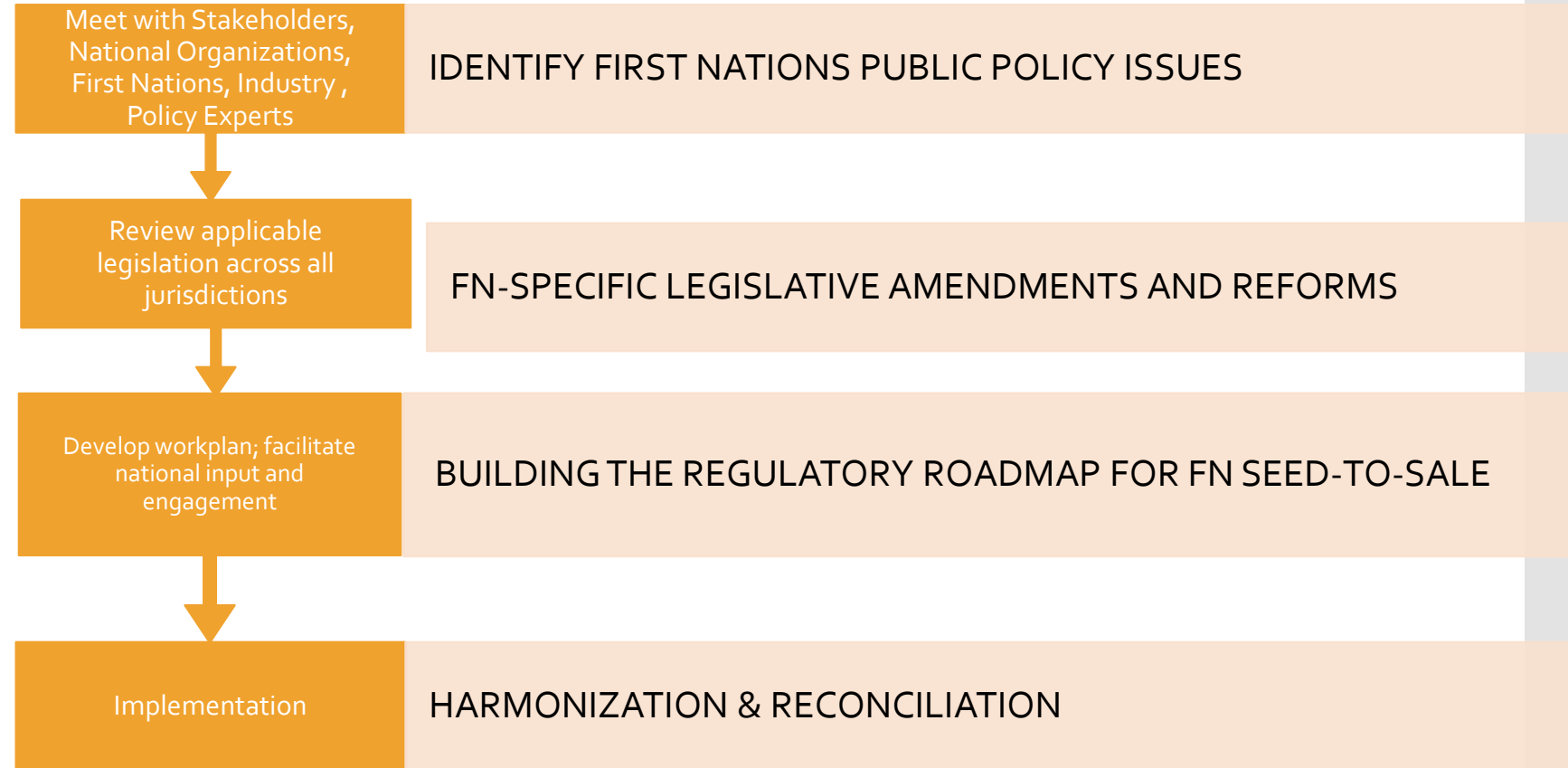
## “Economic Racism”

- We still have a long way to go to bridge the economic gap between First Nations and the rest of Canada
- Last year, at the AFN Cannabis Summit, National Chief Perry Bellegarde said the lack of First Nation inclusion in Canada’s Cannabis Act was a form of “economic racism”
- This overall lack of First Nation inclusion is still happening despite Canada’s promise of Reconciliation and implementation of the TRC Calls to Action
- This “economic racism” is happening despite the UNDRIP assertion that Indigenous Peoples must be able to control their own economies
- As far back as 1996, the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) determined that First Nations must have enough land and resources in order to build our own economies

# Sharing the Harvest

- One of the milestone reports and recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples was “Sharing the Harvest: The Road to Self-Reliance”
- First Nation inclusion in Canada’s cannabis and hemp industry will truly be the sharing of a multi-billion dollar annual harvest
- First Nation communities fit into the framework – as investors, owners, producers, processors, distributors
- There is a potential procurement role in the First Nation Cannabis Seed to Sale Supply Chain
- This supply chain also includes greenhouses for growing healthy foods in our northern communities

# First Nations- Federal Cannabis Framework





# Climate Change and Green Energy

- First Nations and Indigenous Peoples must be the protectors of the air we breathe and waters we drink for future generations
- We need the latest green energy infrastructure and V2G technology to combat climate change



Nationhood is Indigenous lands + Indigenous laws.

It is the essence of a nation – with shared language, heritage, history and geography, it is asserted through inherent rights that come from Indigenous experience of undivided relationship with their land and water over millennia.

## BUILDING NATIONHOOD THINKTANKS IN COMMUNITIES

- The pandemic has revealed fault lines in our system. It is becoming evident that colonized models of globalization, extractive economy, food production and mass migration have impacted our environment or ecology. Sustainable Indigenous land stewardship of millennia has been destroyed in just few decades.
- From crisis comes opportunity. It is time to reconstitute. We are all gathered here as we not only understand the economic potential of the Indigenous world, but we believe in cultural and ethical ways of going about the future. It is time to reimagine.
- Through this presentation I want us to consider investing in the fundamental changemaker - Indigenous Nationhood.
- Investment in community-based non-profit models for empowering Nationhood are needed. I look forward to sharing with you further details on what Bimaadzwin is doing in that area!

Miigwetch!  
Thank you!

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of Hydro One
- Former Chief of Serpent River First Nation
- Hereditary Chief, Descendent of Treaty  
Signatories

