

Questions to Federal Political Parties from Métis National Council on Métis Nation Issues



1) An Ongoing Government to Government Relationship and Process

BACKGROUND:

Since 2008, the Canada-MNC Métis Nation Protocol has been the cornerstone of the relationship between the federal government and the Métis Nation represented by the MNC and its Governing Members (provincial affiliates). It sets out a process of regular meetings of the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development with the MNC President and the MNC Board of Governors as well as meetings of their senior officials to work on the Protocol agenda. The agenda consists of matters of mutual interest to Canada and the MNC and can, upon their willingness to participate, involve the five westernmost provinces. To date, the work under the Protocol has been primarily focused on economic development and Métis veterans. The Protocol also provides for an annual joint accountability report to be posted on the AANDC and MNC websites.

Your Party Platform:

The Métis National Council and its Governing Members seek a direct government-to-government relationship and process with the federal government.

- ▶ Will your party support legislation or other means to recognize the Métis Nation, its governing institutions and its right to govern itself under its own constitution?
- ▶ Will your party establish a process at the Cabinet level to deal directly with the Métis Nation leadership on Métis Nation priorities (i.e lands and resources, self-government and economic development)?
- ▶ Will your party support an annual summit of the Prime Minister with Métis Nation leadership?
- ▶ Will your party support a biennial summit of the Prime Minister and the Premiers of the five westernmost Provinces with the Métis Nation leadership?

2) A Government to Government Fiscal Relationship

BACKGROUND:

Canada and the MNC have agreed on the need for reliability and flexibility in federal funding of the MNC and the importance of transparency and accountability in new fiscal arrangements. Under the Canada-MNC Governance and Financial Accountability Accord 2013, a schedule to the Protocol, the MNC committed to the posting of its

audited financial statements on its website within 120 days of the end of each fiscal year and Canada committed to enter into a block funding agreement by April 1, 2014. To date, the MNC has publicly disclosed its audited financial statements for the 2013-14 and 2014-15 fiscal years but Canada has not entered into a block funding agreement with the MNC. The MNC also shares its annual audited financial statements with the Métis electorate at annual meetings of Métis Nation citizens.

Your Party Platform:

The Métis National Council and its Governing Members seek direct government-to-government financing from the federal government in the form of block funding contributions encompassing all federal program funding currently available to the Métis Nation.

- ▶ Will your party commit to implementing a block funding agreement that will guarantee reliable and flexible funding for the Métis Nation?
- ▶ Will your party commit to a funding formula based on the real costs of Métis Nation governance?
- ▶ Will your party commit to transfer payments that will enable Métis self-governing institutions to establish similar types of programs and services as those enjoyed by other Aboriginal peoples?

3) Economic Development

BACKGROUND:

The Canada-MNC Métis Economic Development Accord 2015 commits Canada and the MNC to develop a long-term Métis economic development strategy to implement the Accord's four priorities: business development; Métis participation in major economic and resource development projects; labour force development; and strengthening the role of Métis institutions to advance economic development. The five year Accord does not provide for resourcing of the MNC which, however, does receive some economic development funding on a project by project basis. Métis educational institutions have maximized the value of education for Métis; the Gabriel Dumont Institute since 1980 has graduated over 1,200 students with a Bachelor of Education degree. Métis ASETS (Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy) institutions have been critical in improving Métis access to labour markets through training and employment programs and establishing endowment funds at universities that provide bursaries and scholarships to Métis post-secondary students. Since their inception in the late 1980s, Métis capital corporations on the prairies that

provide small business loans have rolled over their initial capital of \$20 million many times for a total loan amount of \$130,000,000 that has supported the start-up or expansion of more than 2,000 businesses responsible for creating or maintaining close to 6,000 jobs.

Your Party Platform:

There is a need to build on the successful track record of and make strategic investments in those Métis institutions that advance Métis economic development.

- ▶ Will your party commit to supporting the renewal of Métis-specific ASETS in 2017 and move them to an A based multi-year program?
- ▶ Will your party support performance based strategic investments in Métis educational, training and economic development institutions?
- ▶ Will your party support adequate resourcing for the MNC and its Governing Members to participate effectively in the implementation of the Métis Economic Development Accord?

4) Métis s. 35 Rights

BACKGROUND:

The Government of Canada recognizes the inherent right of self-government as an existing Aboriginal right under section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. Federal Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt recently appointed Mr. Tom Isaac as a Ministerial Special Representative (MSR) to engage with the MNC and its Governing Members on a process for reconciliation of Métis Aboriginal rights under s. 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.

Your Party Platform:

In order for Métis to fully exercise their s. 35 rights, the federal government should recognize and implement the right of Métis people to self-government and lands and resources.

- ▶ Will your party support negotiations with the MNC and its Governing Members directed toward agreements on these matters that could be constitutionally protected?
- ▶ Will your party commit to adequate resourcing of the MNC and its Governing Members to participate in Métis s.35 rights reconciliation discussions?

5) Settlement of Manitoba Métis Land Claim

BACKGROUND:

The MSR is also mandated to engage with the Manitoba Métis Federation to make recommendations on a framework for negotiations further to the 2013 ruling of the Supreme Court of Canada in *MMF v Canada*. In that decision, the Supreme Court held that the federal Crown failed to implement the Métis land grant provision set out in s. 31 of the *Manitoba Act, 1870* in accordance with the honour of the Crown.

Your Party Platform:

- ▶ Will your party commit to a settlement of the Manitoba Métis land claim that was the subject of the Supreme Court of Canada declaration in *MMF v Canada* in a manner consistent with other contemporary land claims agreements?



6) Residential Schools and Missing and Murdered Métis Women

BACKGROUND:

The MNC expressed its deep disappointment over the failure of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to adopt any meaningful or corrective recommendations in its report for dealing with the Métis survivors of Métis residential schools who had been excluded from residential school settlement agreements and the apology by the Prime Minister. It also seeks to ensure that efforts to end violence against Aboriginal women and girls address the distinct circumstances of Métis women and that their voices are heard.

Your Party Platform:

- ▶ Will your party commit to compensation for the survivors of the Métis residential school at Ile-a-la-Crosse, Saskatchewan and other such Métis residential schools?
- ▶ Will your party support a National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women and Girls?
- ▶ Will your party ensure that the distinct perspectives and concerns of Métis women expressed by the Women of the Métis Nation are an integral part of efforts to end violence against Aboriginal women and girls?



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