

**ABORIGINAL GOVERNANCE IN URBAN SETTING:
COMPLETING THE CIRCLE**

CONFERENCE SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A Report Prepared by

**Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg
Institute on Governance
Centre for Municipal-Aboriginal Relations**

November 19, 1998

SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

The Conference in brief

The conference on Aboriginal Governance in Urban Settings was held at the Aboriginal Centre of Winnipeg on November 3-6, 1998. Conference Organizers were the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg, the Institute On Governance and the Centre for Municipal – Aboriginal Relations.

The objectives of the conference were threefold: to create and share ideas; to help establish networks among participants; and to stimulate the creation of action plans.

Summary of principal conference themes

The conference organizers judge that the following points are worthy of special mention. They were raised by a number of speakers and appeared to resonate with many of the delegates.

1. Getting rid of the government-imposed categories of Aboriginal peoples is a key step in any definition of Aboriginal governance in urban settings – any system that develops should be inclusive, not exclusive.
2. The individual taking responsibility for him or herself is the starting point for moving towards urban governance; overcoming the hurt of the past and the powerlessness of being a victim is critical;
3. A bottoms-up, grass roots approach appears to be the only way to build sound governance systems; these are long processes not without the risk of occasional failures but it is people not powers, jurisdictions or money that must be the starting point;
4. Sound governance is about evolution – it is built step by step rather than created all at once and it has to be earned by building human capacity; it is not an entitlement;
5. Taking control of education at some point early on in the development process is important for maintaining the language and culture of a minority in an urban setting;
6. Aboriginal peoples can participate actively in mainstream society without losing their identity and culture. They can learn from other groups who face similar challenges in maintaining their identities but the reverse is also true: Aboriginal people are becoming significant contributors to new approaches for dealing with governance issues to the benefit of all Canadians.
7. Economic development is an important element in the process of building sound governance. Governance requires a resource base;
8. In an urban setting, a physical manifestation of “Aboriginalness” and competence – such as the Neeginan project, an urban re-development project near the current Aboriginal centre - are also important building blocks to creating the necessary pride and confidence that underpin sound governance. Furthermore, a community interested in governance needs a place to meet and celebrate its culture;

9. Renewed voluntarism is a building block in moving towards durable self-government; a strong civil society can be a moderating force against the excesses of 'big' government and business; furthermore, such voluntary organizations can provide the 'glue' that creates strong communities;
10. Increasing the participation of youth and elders in helping define urban governance is also critical if the culture is to be maintained and if the governing systems are to retain their relevance in the future;
11. Accountability and related concepts like transparency and openness are fundamental to sound governance and any process leading to it;
12. Leadership is about empowering others, not taking power from them. Leading from behind, facilitating a path, developing a shared vision – these are key leadership attributes in a community development context.

Next Steps

Based on the results of the conference, the three sponsoring organizations – the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg, the Institute On Governance and the Centre for Municipal-Aboriginal Relations – have developed the following action plan (they encourage other organizations to develop similar plans). Their plan has five elements:

1. **The organizers will take steps to distribute the results of the conference widely.** Specifically,
 - this report will be sent to corporate sponsors, conference delegates, and others who might be interested in the results;
 - the web sites of the three organizations will be used to post speeches, photos and transcripts;
 - written copies of the material will also be available; and
 - audio tapes of the workshops will be available.
2. **In the Manitoba context, the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg will follow up with the Mayor's offer** made during the conference to enter into a framework agreement to identify common areas to work on. In addition, the Council will be receptive to initiatives aimed at beginning a dialogue among Aboriginal organizations in the Province on how to advance urban governance.
3. **The organizers will create a modest fund** to be called the Aboriginal Urban Governance Fund, the objective of which is to promote Aboriginal governance in urban settings in Canada. The fund will be used to lever other funding to pursue such projects as workshops, conferences and research such as those outlined in points four and five below.
4. **The organizers will ascertain interest among appropriate BC-based groups** to pursue a workshop, perhaps in Vancouver, to center on youth and elders in urban governance.

5. **The organizers will also ascertain whether interest exists among groups in Eastern Canada** to partner in a conference or some other learning event that would build on the Winnipeg event by focusing in on some of the topics identified in the previous section such as
 - Issues of transparency and accountability;
 - Existing models of urban governance that deal with the Who? What? and Why? questions;
 - How to seek guidance and direction from the grass roots; and
 - Issues related to youth and elders.

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ABORIGINAL GOVERNANCE IN URBAN SETTINGS: COMPLETING THE CIRCLE

CONFERENCE SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

I. INTRODUCTION

A. THE CONFERENCE IN BRIEF

The conference on Aboriginal Governance in Urban Settings was held at the Aboriginal Centre of Winnipeg on November 3-6, 1998. Conference Organizers were the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg, the Institute On Governance and the Centre for Municipal – Aboriginal Relations. (Brief descriptions of the mandates of these organizations are contained in Appendix A.)

The objectives of the conference were threefold:

- To stimulate the creation and sharing of knowledge among participants on the topic of Aboriginal governance in urban settings;
- To help establish networks among participants that will endure after the conference ends; and
- To stimulate the creation of plans for action among participants.

Approximately 240 individuals attended the conference including delegates, speakers and volunteers. Delegates came from across Canada and had a wide variety of affiliations – the non-profit sector, various levels of government, the private sector, educational institutions. Some came in their individual capacities.

For the first two days of the conference, plenary sessions in the morning featuring speakers and panelists were followed in the afternoon by concurrent workshops. Workshop topics included, among others, lessons from other jurisdictions (the francophone and Jewish communities); youth and governance; finance and economic development case studies; urban reserves; health and wellness; housing; and the administration of justice.

Delegate satisfaction levels with the conference appeared to be high. Approximately one quarter of all delegates filled out an evaluation form at the end of the conference and, in response to a question on their overall satisfaction with the event, delegates gave the conference an average rating of just over four on a scale of one to five. Furthermore, their knowledge levels about the conference theme moved from an average of 2.5 prior to the event on the same five point scale to approximately four.

Support for the conference was provided by a dozen corporate sponsors – nine departments and agencies from the federal government, the Government of Manitoba, the

City of Winnipeg, the Royal Bank of Canada,, CN Rail, Economic Development Winnipeg and Taylor McCaffray, a Winnipeg-based law firm. Thanks to their support, conference organizers were able to lower considerably the registration fee for delegates from the non-profit and municipal sectors. Further, a number of individuals were offered scholarships to attend the conference free of charge. That said, several delegates during the proceeding urged the organizers to make future events even more affordable to ‘grassroots’ participants.

B. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The organizers of the conference have written this report with several audiences in mind. First, the three organizations wanted to provide the corporate sponsors of the event with a brief record of what occurred and the results achieved so as to provide an accounting for the funds that they so generously provided. Some sponsors provided their funds subject to certain conditions and organizers will respond to these sponsors with additional documentation for accountability purposes.

A second important audience is the conference delegates and those that volunteered their time to share their wisdom with the delegates – the elders, conference speakers and panelists. Conference organizers hope this document will be useful reference material for their purposes.

Finally, judging from the enthusiasm of conference delegates, the theme of urban governance in urban settings has wide resonance across many sectors of Canadian society. Thus, there appears to be value in sharing the results of the conference with a larger audience.

The focus of this report will be on the plenary sessions and not the workshops. Those wishing more information about the conference can visit any one of the following web sites, where they can obtain this report, transcripts of the plenary sessions and photographs of the event:

www.igvn.ca

www.cmar-crma.org

www.spcw.mb.ca

Conference organizers will also provide ‘hard’ copies of the plenary transcripts for a small fee to cover handling and shipping. Audio tapes of the workshop sessions are also available (see Appendix B for an order form).

II. SUMMARY OF THE PLENARY SESSIONS

Eric Robinson, the MLA for Rupertland and conference co-chair, opened the conference by introducing Dorris Peters, an elder from the Fraser Valley in British Columbia, who gave the opening prayer. (Mr. Robinson was later joined by his co-chair, Stacey Hill, a twenty-two year old Mohawk, from Six Nations.) Mary Richard, President of the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg, welcomed delegates on behalf of the three organizations that had planned the conference. She noted the appropriateness of holding a conference with the theme of “Completing the Circle” in the Aboriginal Centre of Winnipeg – a place that had been originally an Aboriginal meeting area, then had become a CP railway station and had now reverted back to being the major community focus for Aboriginal peoples of Winnipeg.

The conference co-chair then introduced the keynote speaker for the conference, Matthew Coon Come, Grand Chief of the Grand Council of the Crees.

A. KEYNOTE ADDRESS – MATTHEW COON COME

Grand Chief Coon Come began by noting the categories used to refer to Aboriginal peoples – Indian, Metis, status, non-status, treaty, non-treaty, on-reserve, off-reserve etc. – categories that have been invented by “...successive colonial regimes in order to divide and destroy us”. He placed the blame squarely on the federal government for ignoring the Constitution, which states that it is “...responsible for Aboriginal peoples, all Aboriginal peoples”.

Turning to the urban context, the Grand Chief noted that “...the tragic mass migration” from traditional communities to the urban centres has been accomplished by making sure that reserves are not viable. He went on to criticize a number of federal government departments, many of which, he noted, were sponsors of the conference: Correctional Services for tolerating a racially-based prison population “...in clear violation of international human rights standards”; Justice Canada “...for the absurd and oppressive positions” taken by its lawyers; Health Canada for the lack of safe drinking water and basic sanitation services; Central Mortgage and Housing for the “horrendous” housing situation for Aboriginal people across Canada; and the Privy Council Office, where the “...policy of Aboriginal dispossession originates and is coordinated for every government department”.

The result of these desperate conditions on reserves is that many Aboriginal people have no choice but to move to cities, where they face a de facto loss of Aboriginal status and rights and the lack of an effective political voice to advocate for services and programs. “It is no wonder”, he noted, “that our people are dying violent deaths, deaths from illness and poverty, deaths from incarceration, deaths from suicides and substance abuse – both on and off reserve”.

Mr. Coon Come was also critical of Aboriginal leaders. He noted that “The competition to represent urban Aboriginal people is so intense that I received some strong calls and letters warning me and criticizing me for accepting your invitation to speak here today.” Further, national and regional organizations are often like “clubs for chiefs” rather than powerful voices for correcting injustice. The imposed categories are accepted by leaders and have become part of their identities.

In concluding, he stated that the time has come to move beyond compensation and apologies to jobs, houses and better living conditions. Among other things, such a step will require a new vision for Aboriginal governance, “...one that spans regional and provincial boundaries and rejects the categorization of our people...”. The fates of on-reserve and off-reserve are connected and this is how he understands the meaning of the conference theme, “Closing the Circle”. At the moment, the circle “...is broken into hundreds of pieces”.

B. NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES – PANEL DISCUSSION

The panel consisted of Harry Daniels, President of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples and Marilyn Buffalo, President of the Native Women’s Association of Canada.

Mr. Daniels began by predicting that the issue of urban governance will become more and more prominent as high migration rates of Aboriginal peoples to the cities continue. In light of this, he argued for clarity around certain terms like self-government, sovereignty, self-determination and governance. Key questions need to be posed and answered in defining governance in an urban setting:

- who are the people to be governed? Are they Metis, those with treaty rights, Inuit etc.?
- how will urban governance relate to existing municipal structures?
- what will Aboriginal people want to control? arts, culture, education?
- will citizenship be all embracing or exclusionary?
- are we talking about governance or self-administration i.e. receiving money from another level of government so that there is accountability back to them;
- who is going to finance this new government? where is the tax base?

Having posed these questions, he went to advocate an “integrative model”, one where Aboriginal people will control certain aspects of their lives in cities such as education and health and where other services will continue to be given by existing levels of government. All of this will need to be negotiated. He further advocated a governance model that does not reject people because they fall into certain categories e.g. those with no treaty rights. He noted that we must get beyond the current “caste system” that we now have where those with Bill C-31 status are the “untouchables”. Further, he asserted that there are certain Aboriginal leaders who won’t give help to their own people.

He concluded his remarks by arguing for a pragmatic approach, one based on Aboriginal peoples realizing their own responsibilities for improving conditions.

Marilyn Buffalo began her remarks by noting that her organization represents 51% of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. As its president, she continues to ask herself questions about long-standing problems: the lack of hot lunch programs; high crime rates among Aboriginal people; the flight of women and children from reserves; the lack of spiritual and cultural centres in our cities; high suicide rates, to name a few. She was also critical of the land management bill before Parliament, legislation that, if passed, will not address the legal void relating to matrimonial property.

Her agenda for moving forward consisted of the following elements among others:

- stop the petty politics among Aboriginal organizations so that we can approach the federal government united;
- adopt a community development approach to create strong communities;
- respect different spiritualities;
- involve women and children in every step;
- develop a new volunteerism – we don't need a per diem to help our neighbours;
- develop urban outreach centres, training centres, cultural colleges;
- institute leadership training programs for youth;
- have a good media strategy - we can't be afraid of articles in the *Globe and Mail*;
- adopt an appropriate balance between the role of women as teachers and healers and the role of men to provide and protect; and
- drop the tags that people place on us.

In illustrating some of these points, she pointed to a community in Ottawa called Little Italy where grandmothers “call the shots”; where religion is important; where everyone speaks their language; and where there is an ethic of sharing. She concluded by urging a return to work on the substantive issues – the 400 plus recommendations of the Royal Commission including those related to urban governance – noting that no one has bought the government's “reconciliation statement”.

C. FEDERATION OF CANADIAN MUNICIPALITIES – JAE EADIE

As past President of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the former Deputy Mayor of Winnipeg, Mr. Eadie spoke on behalf of President Claude Cantin, who was unable to attend the Conference because of budget deliberations in Quebec City.

Mr. Eadie began by noting that the Federation since 1937 has been recognized as “the national voice of municipal government in Canada”, with its member municipalities representing more than 20 million Canadians. The Board of the Federation has established a standing committee on Municipal-Aboriginal relations, a testament to the growing priority of Aboriginal-related issues for municipalities. Policies, the development of which were overseen by this committee, call for a clear municipal role in treaty and self-government negotiations; fairness in tax losses from changes in land status; and the establishment of the Centre for Municipal-Aboriginal Relations.

He then moved to the main theme of his speech – the desire by municipal governments to build bridges with First Nations and Aboriginal communities. From his perspective, four areas appeared particularly ripe for further collaboration:

- **how to increase Aboriginal representation in municipal councils, commissions, advisory boards and committees** – he noted that “Municipal governments need to be open to the changes that are taking place within the Aboriginal community and be willing to jointly explore new ways of working together, reinforcing Aboriginal governance”;
- **how to collaborate on economic development issues** – for example, through economic partnerships, municipal procurement and supplier development strategies or through raised public awareness of what Aboriginal businesses have to offer;
- **how to achieve jurisdictional harmonization, particularly in the areas of by-laws and land use legislation** – he pointed to the Grand River Notification Agreement in Ontario as one among a number of positive developments;
- **how to build knowledge and awareness of each other** – two recent examples are the Community to Community Forum in British Columbia, which brought together municipal and First Nation leaders to discuss common problems and sketch out possible common action, and the establishment of the Centre for Municipal-Aboriginal Relations, one of the sponsoring organizations for this conference.

In concluding, Mr. Eadie noted that in the confined space of the urban environment, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples are in the same canoe with the result that “we need to be paddling together”.

D. ABORIGINAL COUNCIL OF WINNIPEG – MARY RICHARD

Following introductions by the conference co-chairs, elders Dorothy Betz from Winnipeg and Gerry Jewers from the Mi’kmaq Nation opened the second day of the conference with prayers. The co-chairs then introduced Mary Richard, President of the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg.

Mary began with the assertion that there is no “magic formula” for achieving urban governance. The only way to achieve it is through recognition of our abilities by others. In short, the right to governance must be earned.

She then described some of the key elements of a community development approach that has been successful for the Council:

- community development relies 85% on people and only 15 % on money;
- consultants and lawyers don’t develop communities – you must rely on the human resources within the community;
- governments can facilitate and enable but they too can not develop communities;
- development is a long, slow process and there is trial and error;
- it is important to know the strengths and weaknesses of those you are dealing with – the trick is to turn ‘negatives’ into ‘positives’ in order to find ways to work together;
- accountability to the community is essential to maintain support;

- begin where people are at – she gave the example of starting with 350 poor people organizing a tea party and then a weight reduction program;
- don't accept the categories of Aboriginal peoples established by the federal government – she gave an example of the federal government's distribution of training funds in Manitoba based on these categories, a distribution approach that her Council is fighting;
- an appropriate leadership style is “leading from the rear, facilitating, clearing paths for people”; leaders, once they move on, must leave the “ladder” for others;
- ‘leverage’ can be useful; the Council will not hesitate to put its own money into a viable project knowing that it will almost always get the funds back.

She concluded her remarks by noting that we have a wonderful country, one that has its problems but Aboriginal people must rely on themselves to solve those affecting them. Education is the most important element to achieve self-responsibility – “we need to know both worlds, western and Aboriginal.” She mused that the Vatican model of governance – a city within a city – might eventually prove to be appropriate for Aboriginal peoples in Winnipeg.

Members of the Council then read out the vision statement for the new development Neeginan, “our place”, and showed a video outlining the thinking that had led to the project.

E. MODELS OF URBAN GOVERNANCE – PANEL DISCUSSION

Three individuals made up this panel – John Les, Mayor of the District of Chilliwack, Rosemarie Kuptana, coordinator for a study on Aboriginal governance being undertaken by the Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, and Viola Thomas, President of the United Native Nations in British Columbia. The panel was moderated by Katherine Graham, Associate Dean of the Faculty of Public Affairs at Carleton University.

John Les led off by describing the context in which his city's relationships have evolved with Aboriginal peoples. The Sto:lo Nation, consisting of 26 bands and 5000 people, is the main organization he deals with. The relationship has been an evolutionary one – 15 years ago there was very little interaction contrasted with regular contact today. He gave some examples:

- the development of an agreement that took three years to negotiate, following the adoption of the Kamloops amendment to the *Indian Act*, an agreement which both parties are still very happy with;
- an Aboriginal person ran successfully for city council;
- there has been Sto:lo representation on a variety of city and district committees and boards e.g. organizations dealing with planning and health;
- the Fraser Valley Regional District meets regularly with the Sto:lo Nation and such meetings have led to some practical service arrangements such as fire protection.

From his perspective, he believes that Aboriginal people must be successful economically to be a success culturally. Consequently, they must integrate into the mainstream

economy but without loss or diminution of their culture. Harmonization based on practical arrangements is the challenge to meet. What he fears is balkanization or a system that is more complex and bureaucratic and therefore costly. Such a system will be in no one's best interests.

Rosemarie Kuptana was the next speaker. She noted that there must be a balance – an overemphasis on the negative is not helpful. She then gave examples of a number of positive examples in the area of Aboriginal self-government: the establishment of Nunavut in 1999; the agreements in northern Quebec; the Yukon self-government accords; the Mi'kmaq education agreement and finally the lands management agreement now being ratified by Parliament.

She then went on to refer to the “internal racism” within the Aboriginal community, noting that “we are our own worse enemies”. Aboriginal organizations engage in turf wars; we exile our leaders; and we have significant gaps between the ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’.

Rosemarie went on to describe the structure established by the Senate Committee. It has put in place an Aboriginal Governance Roundtable to work closely with the Committee, consisting of the national organizations, hereditary and traditional leaders and women's organizations. The structure is served by an Aboriginal Governance team, including herself, Konrad Sioui and Larry Chartrand. Charlie Watt and Janis Johnson are the two senators that co-chair the Senate committee.

The Senate Committee has recently put out a discussion paper to provide an opportunity for dialogue. Four sets of issues are set out:

- what should be the basic principles or standards for self-government arrangements?
- what are the key issues and principles relating to negotiations of agreements?
- how should self-government be most effectively implemented? and
- how should the new relationship be structured e.g. fiscal relationships?

She concluded her presentation by observing that final agreements setting out self-government arrangements are a misnomer – they are “not a wave goodbye but a kiss hello”.

The final panel presenter was Viola Thomas. Like other presenters at the Conference, she criticized the categorization of Aboriginal peoples, noting that Bill C-31 created 29 categories alone. This has led to fractiousness, essentially engineered by the federal government.

She went on to note that one of the fundamental challenges facing Aboriginal people is to redefine what democracy means. Does it mean adopting or emulating Eurocentric models? The starting place is with the basic values and principles common to Aboriginal peoples – no children went hungry; sharing as a fundamental concept; and informed consent. She then listed a number of challenges, some of which were the following:

- how do we reach out to marginalized people?

- how do we ensure that our rights are not watered down?
- why do so few bands allow their off-reserve members to vote?
- why are so few Aboriginal students being employed by Aboriginal organizations?

She concluded by observing that her organization is open to any Aboriginal person in or outside of Canada. Some current projects include an Aboriginal youth shelter, an Aboriginal legal secretarial program, and partnerships with Friendship Centres.

F. THE MAYOR OF WINNIPEG – GLEN MURRAY

The newly elected mayor of Winnipeg joined the conference delegates and made a short speech. He said he was very moved by what he had heard from the panel members and added that his mandate is one of effecting fundamental change. He vowed to make it uncomfortable for racists.

With regard to Aboriginal people, he wants to develop a framework agreement with the Council as the basis for determining areas for joint action. A new partnership with aboriginal groups should underpin “radical, fundamental change”. He concluded by noting that the next generation of Aboriginal people in Winnipeg should not have to experience what the current generation has gone through.

Conference delegates gave the new mayor a standing ovation.

G. THE MINISTER OF NORTHERN AFFAIRS – DAVID NEWMAN

The Minister began by expressing his belief “...the great challenge facing our country is facilitating the emergence of appropriate forms of governance for our Aboriginal peoples”. His starting point for approaching governance is with strengthening the community closest to the individual – the one most responsive to individual needs and with the best opportunity to reconcile the needs of the individual with those of the community.

Attributes, according to Mr. Newman, that constitute sound governance include the following: a system based on reason, on competencies and on inclusiveness; effective accountability; the capacity to generate quality policies and administration; acceptability to Canadians; affordability; respect for the Canadian mosaic; and a system that furthers “...the broad mission of our country”. Underlying any sound governance system is an ethic that “we all need one another”. Each person contributes a little and then “...receives the vast benefit of society’s achievement”. Consequently, strong, healthy voluntary organizations are another feature of sound governance.

Rather than focus on power, control, jurisdiction and authority, the starting point should be on the needs of Aboriginal people and how an Aboriginal community can best address those needs through setting measurable goals. The course and methods for moving towards these goals will “...emerge in total as the characteristics of a form of governance”. The forms of governance adopted by some of the ethnic communities in

the province might prove instructive. They provide strong religious organizations and facilities; effective educational institutions and finally recreation as well as health and wellness institutions. None of these approaches overlaps with or detracts from the existing three levels of government.

While examining lessons from other jurisdictions is helpful, Mr. Newman pointed out that the reverse flow is occurring: “Aboriginals are having a significant influence over the design of our health, education and justice systems in Manitoba”. His goal is, by the year 2025, to have the mainstream of Manitoba’s “...rich diverse multicultural community recognize Aboriginal people as the pre-eminent part of the multicultural community of Manitoba”.

Following comments on the national unity issue, one to which he believes Aboriginal Canadians can make an immense contribution, the Minister concluded with this suggestion: “let us set measurable goals and work together to achieve them. A form of governance will emerge naturally, following – not preceding – results”.

H. BANQUET SPEAKER – DOUGLAS CARDINAL

The co-chair, Eric Robinson, introduced the internationally known architect, Douglas Cardinal. He began by recounting some of the teachings of the elders in the context of the 1960s when the Chiefs of Alberta laid out the basis for Indian control of education. Of fundamental importance, according to the elders, was to learn how to be responsible. Operating as a victim was not being responsible. It is easy to blame someone else but that doesn’t develop a future for our children. Only by taking responsibility for themselves can “spiritual warriors ” then take responsibility for others.

Being responsible means having power – “a magical being with the power of creativity”. True warriors play in the larger world yet to be discovered, the “land of the eagle”. Being responsible also means making commitments. According to Mr. Cardinal, “fear makes you small. Declare your visions powerfully and keep your word.” There is power in commitment, not in fear. We often resent the power in others and don’t support them. The true leader, however, empowers others and doesn’t take power from them. The Ouje Bougamou, in creating an award winning community, showed the power of taking responsibility and making a commitment. Once having made a commitment, he advised that individuals and their communities should be “unreasonable” in carrying through with them.

He recounted the events prior to his firm’s bidding for the design work for the new Museum of Civilization in Hull, Quebec. The elders advised him to compete for the job, given the importance of the location of the building across the Ottawa River from the Parliament buildings. Thus, every time parliamentarians gaze out their windows and see the new building with its distinctive Aboriginal characteristics, they will understand that Aboriginal peoples are not going away. And despite Cardinal’s earlier battles with the then Prime Minister, Pierre Trudeau, Trudeau became one of his best clients.

In summary, Mr. Cardinal repeated the main points of his message: you have the power to be a magical being; operate by commitment, not by fear. Be unreasonable in your commitments; and finally, Aboriginal peoples have a great contribution to make to world society. “Society needs our contributions”.

I. FINAL LUNCH SPEAKER – STAN DIXON

Wayne Helgason of the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg introduced Stan Dixon, businessman, former Chief of the Sechelt Indian Band, and current Vice President of the Vancouver Friendship Centre. Mr. Dixon noted that his people had been burdened with “negativity”. His experience with youth is that they need a process and something positive – the belief that they can ‘win’ at something. This belief can lead to self-sufficiency.

This was the path the Sechelt band chose in the 1980s in moving to self-government. They were tired of all their negative living conditions and being told what to do. Consultations with the community led to the understanding that taking control of education was critical. Further, there were four tribes in the Sechelt area and they decided to amalgamate to reduce dissension. Some of the benefits of the agreement include the following:

- the band receives one check from Treasury Board each year; they have no dealings with Indian and Northern Affairs;
- they have a unique land holding scheme – fee simple ownership by the Band but with the land remaining under 91(24) status;
- there are incentives for young people to take on commitments to buy a home – the Band assumes all housing costs when their citizens reach the age of 60;
- self-government gives the opportunity for a better life but one has to earn it; it’s not an entitlement;
- they are part of two worlds – the Band has its own governing structure and yet is also part of the provincial municipal system;
- individuals are putting the accent on the positive – many are getting involved in voluntary type activities like coaching soccer.

He noted that, when the self-government regime was created, he was characterized as “...the lead buffalo in the buffalo jump”. It was a tough five year period. But now all that has changed. People are frequently visiting the Band to learn from its experience.

J. CONFERENCE CLOSING

Mary Richard closed the Conference by thanking “two wonderful people”, Barbara Bruce and Duane Shuttleworth, the conference co-ordinators. She noted that we have accomplished a great deal, that we are on “the same wave length”. She wished everyone a safe journey.

The two elders, May Louise Campbell and Dorris Peters, asked conference participants to form a circle and hold hands while they gave a closing prayer.

J. SUMMARY – THE KEY CONFERENCE THEMES

The conference organizers judge that the following points to merit special attention. They were raised by a number of speakers and appeared to resonate with many of the delegates

1. Getting rid of the government-imposed categories of Aboriginal peoples is a key step in any definition of Aboriginal governance in urban settings – any system that develops should be inclusive, not exclusive.
2. The individual taking responsibility for him or herself is the starting point for moving towards urban governance; overcoming the hurt of the past and the powerlessness of being a victim is critical;
3. A bottoms-up, grass roots approach appears to be the only way to build sound governance systems; these are long processes not without the risk of occasional failures but it is people not powers, jurisdictions or money that must be the starting point;
4. Sound governance is about evolution – it is built step by step rather than created all at once and it has to be earned by building human capacity; it is not an entitlement;
5. Taking control of education at some point early on in the development process is important for maintaining the language and culture of a minority in an urban setting;
6. Aboriginal peoples can integrate into mainstream society without losing their identity and culture. They can learn from other groups who face similar challenges in maintaining their identities but the reverse is also true: Aboriginal people are becoming significant contributors to new approaches for dealing with governance issues to the benefit of all Canadians.
7. Economic development is an important element in the process of building sound governance. Governance requires a resource base;
8. In an urban setting, a physical manifestation of “Aboriginalness” and competence – such as the Neeginan project, an re-development project near the current Aboriginal Centre - are also important building blocks to creating the necessary pride and confidence that underpin sound governance. Furthermore, a community interested in governance needs a place to meet and celebrate its culture;
9. Renewed voluntarism is another building block in moving towards durable self-government; a strong civil society can be a moderating force against the excesses of ‘big’ government and business; furthermore, such voluntary organizations can provide the ‘glue’ that creates strong communities;
10. Increasing the participation of youth and elders in helping define urban governance is also critical if the culture is to be maintained and if the governing systems are to be relevant in the future;
11. Accountability and related concepts like transparency and openness are fundamental to sound governance and any process leading to it;
12. Leadership is about empowering others, not taking power from them. Leading from behind, facilitating a path, developing a shared vision – these are key leadership attributes in a community development context.

III. NEXT STEPS

A. SUMMARY OF THE SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

To make progress on the third objective of the conference – stimulating the development of action plans among participants – the conference organizers developed an exercise that took place over the last morning of the event. Specifically, delegates were assigned in a random manner to one of seven small groups, each of which was given a topic related to the conference themes. The seven topics were:

- Improving communication and building networks;
- Encouraging experimentation through pilots and other means;
- Initiating policy or program changes;
- Increasing youth and elder participation in governance;
- Developing new approaches to funding;
- Initiating research or evaluations and communicating results; and
- Other initiatives not captured by the above topics.

Organizers advised groups to ignore their topic if they felt it not useful or too constraining. That said, the majority stuck to their assigned subjects.

Following an initial brainstorming session in which the groups identified a number of challenges or opportunities for further action, they were asked to narrow their proposals to three priority items. These were then reported to a plenary session. The three priority items for all of the groups were later copied onto a single sheet that was then distributed to delegates during the final lunch. Delegates were asked to indicate their top three choices of all of the items listed.

The table below summarizes those choices that received at least ten ‘votes’ (organizers collected 73 completed forms) grouped under subject headers. It should be seen has one among a number of indicators to guide future activities in the area of urban governance.

Challenge or Opportunity	No. of delegates	% of total delegates
<u>Relation with citizens</u>		
• Ensure openness and transparency of governing process	34	47%
• Seek direction and endorsement from grassroots	20	27%
<u>Relationship to other governments or organizations</u>		
• Seek framework agreements with governments	19	26%
• Find ways to encourage an all inclusive approach in Manitoba	10	14%
<u>Research on Governance</u>		
• What is urban governance?	17	23%
• Why do people want it?	16	22%
• Who is our constituency?	10	14%
<u>Elders and Youth</u>		
• Encourage elders to provide wisdom and guidance	13	18%
• Youth to seek out elders and participate in governance	10	14%
• Community members to provide wisdom and guidance to implement ideas from youth & elders	18	25%
<u>Learning Events</u>		
• Initiate similar conferences in other parts of country	13	18%
• Build on Winnipeg experience and communicate the story	11	15%

B. ACTION PLAN

Based on the results of the conference, the three sponsoring organizations – the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg, the Institute On Governance and the Centre for Municipal-Aboriginal Relations – have developed the following action plan (they encourage other organizations to develop similar plans). Their plan has five elements:

- 1. The organizers will take steps to distribute the results of the conference widely.**
Specifically,
 - this report will be sent to corporate sponsors, conference delegates, and others who might be interested in the results;
 - the web sites of the three organizations will be used to post speeches, photos and transcripts;
 - written copies of the material will also be available; and
 - audio tapes of the workshops will be available.
- 2. In the Manitoba context, the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg will follow up with the Mayor's offer** made during the conference to enter into a framework agreement to identify common areas to work on. In addition, the Council will be receptive to

initiatives aimed at beginning a dialogue among Aboriginal organizations in the Province on how to advance urban governance.

3. **The organizers will create a modest fund** to be called the Aboriginal Urban Governance Fund, the objective of which is to promote Aboriginal governance in urban settings in Canada. The fund will be used to lever other funding to pursue such projects as workshops, conferences and research such as those outlined in points four and five below.
4. **The organizers will ascertain interest among appropriate BC-based groups** to pursue a workshop, perhaps in Vancouver, to center on youth and elders in urban governance.
5. **The organizers will also ascertain whether interest exists among groups in Eastern Canada** to partner in a conference or some other learning event that would build on the Winnipeg conference by focusing in on some of the topics identified in the previous sector such as
 - Issues of transparency and accountability;
 - Existing models of urban governance that deal with the Who? What? and Why? questions;
 - How to seek guidance and direction from the grass roots; and
 - Issues related to youth and elders.

APPENDIX A THE CONFERENCE ORGANIZERS

ABORIGINAL COUNCIL OF WINNIPEG

The Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg Inc. is a political organization representing people of all Aboriginal origins in Winnipeg. The Council represents the interest of urban Aboriginals by developing a sense of political solidarity, which provides appropriate recognition and status to Aboriginal people of Winnipeg.

Located at the former CPR Station, which has been transformed into an urban Aboriginal Centre, the Council acts as an umbrella organization and is engaged in a wide range of activities in support of urban Aboriginal interests. The Council creates and endorses programming through other organizations that are part of a comprehensive service delivery network. Access for Aboriginal people to utilize and influence systems that impact their lives is seen as critical. In this regard the Council must be aware of the interests of community members and must develop the capacity to deal with them. The former task is rooted in “community development work” and the latter requires a knowledge about delivering service.

For more information, contact the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg, 112 –181 Higgins Avenue Winnipeg Manitoba R3B 3G1 (204) 989-7112 fax: (204) 989-7113

INSTITUTE ON GOVERNANCE

The Institute On Governance is a non-profit organization founded in 1990 to promote effective governance, defined as the responsible and responsive exercise of power on matters of public concern. We do this by creating, sharing and applying knowledge about governance within and across jurisdictions, and by fostering learning through networks in Canada and internationally.

The IOG currently focuses on the following themes:

- ***Public Service Reform*** - in such areas as service quality, decentralization, expenditure management, human resource management, devolution and privatization;
- ***Citizen Engagement & Accountability*** - innovative ways of engaging citizens in the development of public policy and the delivery of services;
- ***International Governance Innovations*** – the exploration of effective approaches, dissemination of information and working with developing countries to foster innovation in governance institutions and practices.
- ***Aboriginal and Northern Governance*** – services to institutions in and outside of Canada, including advice on governance issues, training and development, public education and research.

For more Information contact the Institute On Governance, 122 Clarence Street, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1N 5P6 (613) 562-0090 ▪ Fax: (613) 562-0097
E Mail: info@igvn.ca ▪ Website: www.igvn.ca

CENTRE FOR MUNICIPAL-ABORIGINAL RELATIONS

The Centre for Municipal - Aboriginal Relations (CMAR) is a joint initiative of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and the Indian Taxation Advisory Board (ITAB). Its mission is to promote effective municipal-Aboriginal relations based on the principles of mutual recognition, respect, sharing and mutual responsibility. A Steering Committee, with representation from the FCM Board and ITAB, guides the Centre's operations.

The scope of CMAR's work includes: relations between municipal and First Nation governments; relations concerning urban Aboriginal citizens; and relations between rural municipalities and Aboriginal communities. The Centre has three broad functions. As a clearing house, it has worked to develop a data base of agreements and effective practices with respect to municipal-Aboriginal relations. It undertakes targeted research and has prepared a number of studies on effective practices as well as other specific research projects. It also has a mandate to promote an ongoing municipal-Aboriginal dialogue through presentations and the promotion of exchanges and conferences.

For more information, contact CMAR at Lorne Building, 90 Elgin Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H4 (613) 954-6201 fax (613) 990-2494. Web site: www.cmar-crma.org

APPENDIX B
ORDER FORM FOR CONFERENCE MATERIALS