

Preamble to Dehcho Agreement-in-Principle:<sup>1</sup>

WHEREAS the Dehcho Dene assert<sup>2</sup> that they have lived on their homeland according to their own laws and system of government since time immemorial; and

WHEREAS the Dehcho Dene assert that they were placed in their homeland by the Creator as keepers of their waters and lands; and

WHEREAS the Dehcho Dene assert that the Treaties of 1899 and 1921 with the non-Dene recognize the inherent political rights and powers of the Dehcho Dene; and

WHEREAS the Dehcho Dene assert that their Aboriginal rights and title cannot be extinguished by any government; and

WHEREAS the Dehcho Dene further assert that their laws from the Creator do not allow them to cede, release, surrender or extinguish their inherent rights;<sup>3</sup> and

WHEREAS the Dehcho Dene intend to uphold the teachings of their Elders as guiding principles of Dehcho government now and in the future, and hereby reaffirm, assert and exercise their inherent rights and powers to govern themselves;<sup>4</sup> and

WHEREAS the *Constitution Act, 1982* recognizes and affirms the existing Aboriginal and treaty rights of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada; and

WHEREAS the Parties have negotiated this Agreement-in-Principle in order to describe how a Dehcho final agreement could define and provide certainty in respect of the rights of the Dehcho Dene relating to land, resources and self-government;

NOW THEREFORE THE PARTIES AGREE AS FOLLOWS:

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<sup>1</sup> This draft has not yet been approved by the DFN leadership or Assembly.

<sup>2</sup> Canada may want wording which clarifies that Canada does not necessarily accept the assertions herein.

<sup>3</sup> May be inconsistent with Canada's approach to Certainty, which requires surrender in event that non-assertion clause is not upheld by courts.

<sup>4</sup> Canada wants assurance that only rights consistent with Dehcho Agreement will be exercised.