

Committees or other forums, to examine self-government issues over the 1990's: issues such as land claims, fiscal arrangements, the trust relationship, resource issues and others listed here. Studies of this kind would help identify and explain to Canadians the essential building blocks for First Nations Government as well as the progress made towards that goal since the 1983 Report of the Special Committee on Indian Self-Government. It is clear that all Canadians need to increase their understanding of aboriginal self-government over the next decade and seek to address intercultural conflicts in this area. This work will necessarily involve reviewing and updating the work of the Special Committee on Indian Self-Government.

## **THE SELF-GOVERNMENT AGENDA**

Self-government is a common thread running throughout many of the topics and issues brought before the Committee, such as child welfare, treaty rights, education and policy development, to name just a few. As the Special Committee on Indian Self-Government concluded in 1983, the task of realizing aboriginal self-government involves breaking with the past pattern of paternalistic aboriginal affairs policies and implementing a new relationship between aboriginal government entities and the federal and provincial governments. The overriding concern of aboriginal people in this regard is reinitiating some high level political forum for action on self-government such as the First Ministers Conferences on the Constitution that occurred in the 80's or the joint NIB/Cabinet Committee that existed in the 70's. From a substantive viewpoint, aboriginal self-government can be examined by looking in detail at specific sub-topics while realizing that there are many interrelationships between these topics. An examination of the following issues would assist in clarifying pre-requisites for realizing aboriginal self-government and providing Canadians with an idea of what aboriginal self-government involves.

### **1. Land Claims**

That aboriginal people were in possession of distinct land rights and cultural rights when peoples from other parts of the World arrived to settle in this Continent, is a fact of Canadian law. The legal existence of the distinct rights of aboriginal people encompassed in the term