

The Constitutional Accord puts self-government on the agenda for discussion at future constitutional conferences. The Prime Minister alluded to possible new constitutional arrangements for self-government by aboriginal peoples; Indian groups take the very strong position that the right to self-government forms a part of aboriginal rights and must be recognized. Legislative proposals must be forward-looking, designed to set appropriate long-term policy. It can therefore be argued that both the procedures and the substance of the conferences on aboriginal rights should have a bearing on any proposed legislative action. In the meantime, policies and legislation should be brought forward that will further self-government.

7. The Committee recommends that the federal government commit itself to constitutional entrenchment of self-government as soon as possible. In the meantime, as a demonstration of its commitment, the federal government should introduce legislation that would lead to the maximum possible degree of self-government immediately. Such legislation should be developed jointly.

The Committee is proposing a means through which the people of a First Nation might have their government recognized. The entire process should be worked out in negotiations between federal government representatives and designated representatives of Indian First Nations, leading to an arrangement that would, for greater certainty and clarity, be set out in legislation. The outlines of the proposal follow, beginning with a discussion of the basic political unit.