

# THE PATH FORWARD

# **Métis Self-Government**

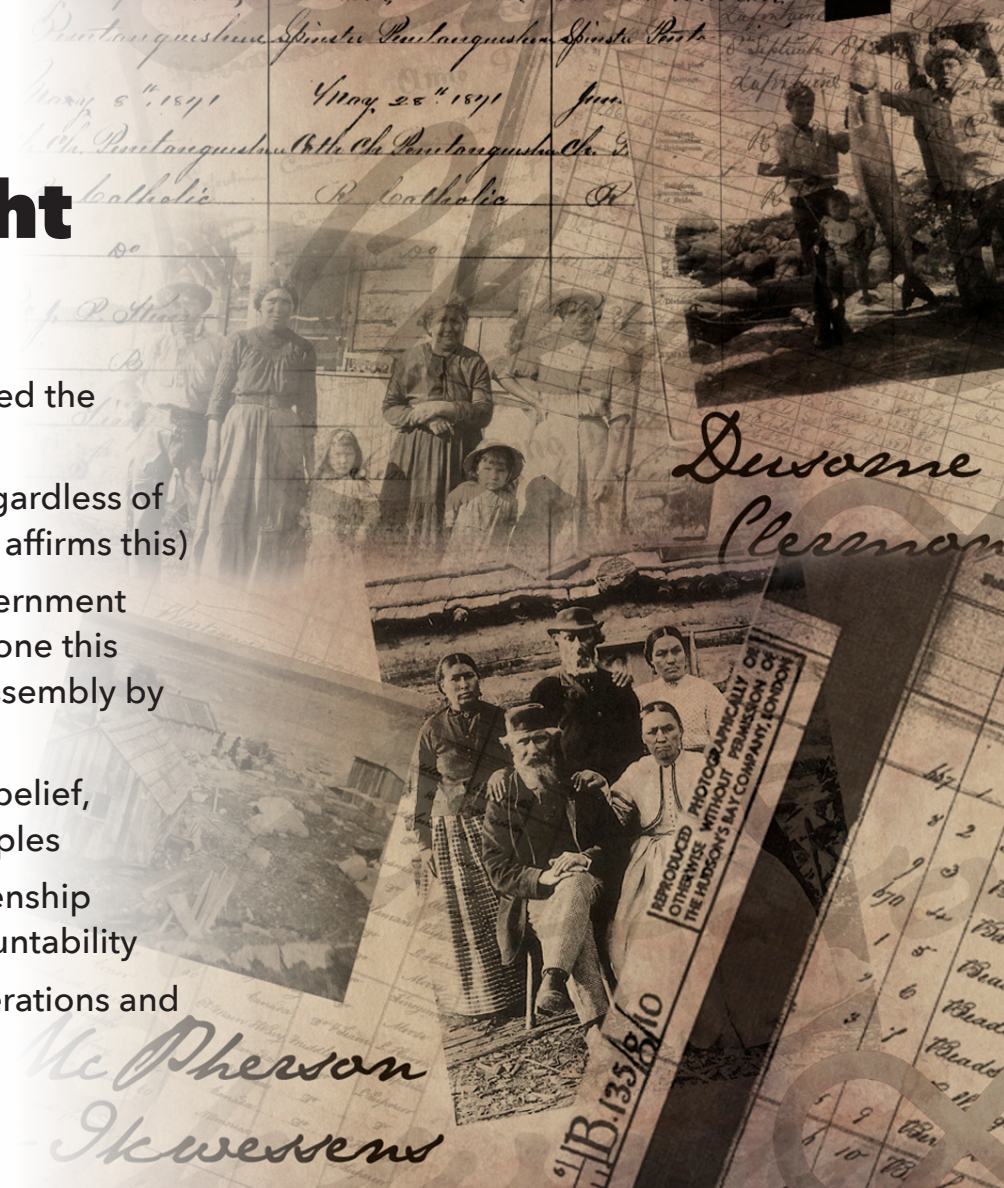
Métis Nation  
of Ontario 



Métis Nation of Ontario  
*Self-Government*

# The Métis Inherent Right of Self-Government

- As an Indigenous Peoples, the Métis have always possessed the inherent right of self-government
- This **collective right** is held by all Indigenous Peoples, regardless of whether colonial governments or the courts (e.g. UNDRIP affirms this)
- Métis communities have exercised our collective self-government rights by building our own Métis government. We have done this together - community meeting by community meeting, assembly by assembly, success by success
- The legitimacy of Métis self-government comes from the belief, support, reliance, and ongoing participation of Métis peoples
- The strength of our self-government is based on our citizenship registry, democratic elections, Métis law, justice and accountability
- This is what has sustained Métis self-government for generations and what will sustain our Métis government into the future



# Métis Nation of Ontario

- The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) is the modern-day manifestation of the Métis communities in Ontario's inherent right to self-government
- MNO is the only Métis-created and legitimate representative government of rights-bearing Métis citizens in Ontario
- MNO was founded and is based on the will and determination of Métis people and communities,
- It is the only Métis government in Ontario with objectively verifiable registration systems, democratic elections, and governance structures and institutions at the local, regional, and provincial level





# MNO Founding Meeting

## Toronto 1993

- In 1993, the MNO incorporated the Métis Nation of Ontario Secretariat as its legal and administrative arm until such time as the MNO was able to negotiate the recognition of our government with Canada.
- This corporate form was needed in response to demands from Canada and other colonial governments that would not flow desperately needed funding for social services to the Métis without an incorporated legal entity in place
- Some of the key founding documents for the MNO include:
  - ∞ Statement of Prime Purpose
  - ∞ Registry Policies
  - ∞ MNO Bylaws and MNO Electoral Code Part A & B



# MNO Statement of Prime Purpose

"We, the Métis Nation of Ontario, have an inherent right of self-determination and self-government . . ."

"We, the Métis who live within the Métis Homelands of Ontario, desiring to bind our people together to collectively promote our common cultural, social, political, and economic well-being, have founded the Métis Nation of Ontario, to be our representative body with the following aims and objectives:

- to establish democratic institutions based on our inherent right of self-government;
- to ensure that Métis can exercise their Aboriginal and Treaty rights and freedoms and in so doing, act in a spirit of cooperation with other Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people;
- to gain the recognition and respect of the Métis as a Nation and a people;

## STATEMENT of PRIME PURPOSE of the MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO

### *Where We Got Our Name*

*The paternal ancestors of the Métis were the former employees of the Hudson Bay and Northwest Fur Companies, and their maternal ancestors were Indian women of the various tribes. The French word "Métis" is derived from the Latin participle mixtus, which means "mixed;" in French "mêle;" it expresses well the idea that is sought to be conveyed.*

*However appropriate the corresponding English expression "Halfbreed" might have been for the first generation of the mixture of blood, now that European blood and Indian blood are mixed in every degree, it is no longer general enough.*

*The French word "Métis" expresses the idea of this mixture in the most satisfactory manner possible, and thus becomes a proper race name. Why should we care to what degree exactly of mixture we possess European blood and Indian blood? If we feel ever so little gratitude and filial love toward one or the other, do they not constrain us to say: "WE ARE MÉTIS!"*

*— Louis Riel, 1885*

### *Who We Are As A People*

We, the Métis are a people of the lands, which gave rise to our history and tradition and culture. We call those lands the Métis Homelands. The Homelands stretch from the lakes and rivers of Ontario; cross the wide prairies, traverse the mountains into British Columbia and into the northern reaches of the Northwest Territories. They include the hills and valleys of the north-central American States.

These are our lands. They are Métis lands. They are the lands of our past which nurture us today and which we value as the precious foundation of our future.

As Métis who live in the Homelands, we hold it to be a fundamental truth that we are one of the Aboriginal peoples of the Americas.

The Métis Nation continues today to be the embodiment of our past, the source of sustenance for our present while giving rise to our hopes and aspirations for the future.

We are a Nation, born of independence, and self-sufficiency whose teachings are founded on the values of honesty and truth. We are proud of our rich heritage. We are inspired by the values and traditions of our ancestors. The strength of our society is based on democracy, freedom, fairness, equality, generosity, justice and the customary and written law of our people. Above all, we cherish harmony and peace.

As Aboriginal people we hold sacred the rights of the individual and of the collective. We have respect for each other, for the land and for the animal and plant life that surrounds us. We are people who honour and respect the family, our elders who hold the key to the past, and our children, who are our future.

Guided by our spiritual values we aspire to attain our highest potential.

### *Now Therefore We Declare As Follows:*

We, the Métis Nation, are a distinct Nation among the Aboriginal peoples in Canada and as such our Aboriginal and treaty rights are recognized and affirmed under Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.

We, the Métis Nation, have the inherent right of self-determination and self-government. We, the Métis who live within the Métis Homelands of Ontario, desiring to bind our people together to collectively promote our common cultural, social, political, and economic well-being, have founded the Métis Nation of Ontario, to be our representative body with the following aims and objectives:

- ∞ to research, publish and promote the genealogical documentation of the Métis, and to establish and maintain a registry of the Métis Citizens of Ontario;
- ∞ to establish democratic institutions based on our inherent right of self-government;
- ∞ to encourage the full participation of all Métis in the Métis Nation;



# Advancing Métis Rights

**Over the last 27+ years, the MNO has successfully advanced Métis rights, including self-government on many fronts.**

For example:

- MNO advanced the **Powley case** all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada, where the highest court in the country recognized Métis section 35 rights for the first time in Canada
- MNO has negotiated **two harvesting agreements** with Ontario and today, regulates the Métis harvest in Ontario through the MNO Harvesting Policy and MNO Harvesters Cards which are recognized and respected by Ontario
- MNO has established well-run **programs and services** to improve the lives of MNO Citizens, including in areas of health, education, housing, healing and wellness, etc.



# MNO Self-Government Negotiations

- In 2015, a window of opportunity opened for the MNO to negotiate a renewed government-to-government relationship with Canada
- Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's mandate letters to all federal Cabinet Ministers made clear that his government would prioritize Canada's relationship with Indigenous peoples, stating that "no relationship is more important."
- MNO seized this window of opportunity to obtain a negotiation process with Canada to discuss the recognition of Métis self-government in Ontario.





# ***MNO-Canada-Ontario Framework Agreement***

- On December 11, 2017, the MNO, Canada and Ontario signed the ***Framework Agreement for Advancing Reconciliation*** which establishes formal negotiation process
- One of the Framework Agreement's key purposes was to develop a self-government agreement





# The Purpose of the Negotiations

- 1.1 The Parties agree that the Purpose of the Negotiation Process contemplated under this Framework Agreement is to **jointly develop a government-to-government relationship between the Crown and Métis communities in Ontario represented by the MNO** that advances reconciliation between the Parties consistent with the purpose of section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, including by;
  - 1.1.1 **recognizing the MNO as a Métis government** with decision-making authority over its own roles and functions, processes and relationships with its Citizens and Communities; and
  - 1.1.2 establishing processes wherein the **collectively-held rights and credible claims of Métis communities in Ontario represented by the MNO may be determined, recognized and respected**; and
  - 1.1.3 working towards reaching bilateral or trilateral arrangements that invest in, support and enhance the cultural, social, physical, emotional, spiritual and economic well-being of Métis communities in Ontario represented by the MNO as well as Ontario Métis generally.

# ***Métis Government Recognition and Self-Government Agreement (MGRSA)***

- On June 27, 2019, the MNO signed a historic ***Métis Government Recognition and Self-Government Agreement*** (MGRSA) with Canada
- The MNA and MN–S also signed very similar Agreements with Canada on the same day





# Purpose of the Self-Government Agreement

- The overall purpose of this Agreement is **to support and advance the inherent right of self-determination and self-government of the Métis Communities Represented by the MNO** as recognized and affirmed by section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*
- This Agreement also sets out a **mutually agreeable process leading to federal legislative recognition of the Métis Government** of the Métis Communities Represented by the MNO as an Indigenous government



# A Mutually Agreeable Process:

## All MNO citizens and MNO communities:

- Build the Métis Government Constitution
- Métis Government Laws
- Electors Ratify the MGRSA and Métis Government Constitution

## Fulfill the MGRSA requirements (with Canada):

- Inter-Governmental Relations Agreement
- Fiscal Finance Agreement
- Build Transition Plan
- Canada passes Federal Recognition Legislation
- Agree on a Self Government Implementation Date





# CORE MÉTIS GOVERNANCE

- The MNO Self-Government Agreement recognizes law-making powers in three Core Areas:
  - ∞ Citizenship
  - ∞ Internal Operations
  - ∞ Leadership Selection



# Additional Negotiations

- In addition to Métis jurisdiction already recognized in the 3 core governance areas, there will be negotiations for Additional law-making powers (Schedule A), including:
  - ∞ Health & Wellness
  - ∞ Labour & Education
  - ∞ Housing
  - ∞ Child & Family Services
  - ∞ Application of Métis Government Laws on Lands held by MNO
  - ∞ And More!
- Plus additional areas as needs are identified.





Advancing Métis Self-Government Together

# Engaging Citizens Across Every Region

## Regional Implementation



# Growing Métis Self-Government Together

Bringing together all Citizens, Communities and Regions

- MNO is working with all MNO Regions and Community Councils to ensure we tailor citizen engagement on Constitution and core Laws through negotiated:

## 1. REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION AGREEMENTS

## 2. REGIONAL WORKPLANS

- These OUTLINE Activities and options for the Region to grow self-government capacity and have meaningful:
  - ∞ Citizen Engagements
  - ∞ Regional Consultations
  - ∞ Group Conversations





# Regional Implementation Agreements

- The MNO has been negotiating Regional Implementation Agreements (“RIAs”) with each MNO Region
- The RIAs are designed to:
  - ∞ **implement the internal commitments and principles** in the Self-Government Agreement for each Region (e.g. consulting with citizens, working together on a Constitution that includes governance structures at local and regional level, etc.); and
  - ∞ **help build governance capacity within each MNO Region in preparation for future Governance Structures** of the MNO being separate legal entities at the regional and local level.
- The RIA's are similar to the Regional Consultation Protocols that guide how MNO implements the duty to consult.





# Regional Implementation Agreements Workplans

- RIA Workplans outline the key activities that the region will undertake:
  - ∞ to build understanding and awareness among citizens;
  - ∞ to engage citizens on what they want to see with self-government;
  - ∞ to strengthen citizenship, promote leadership, and;
  - ∞ ensure transparency and accountability of our Métis Government at all levels.



# Next Steps

- **MNO will work with MNO Citizens, Communities, Regional and Community Councils to develop the Constitution for the future Métis Government**
- **MNO also will work to develop the Core Métis Government Laws in the areas of:**
  - ∞ Citizenship
  - ∞ Leadership Selection
  - ∞ Internal Operations
- **The very first steps in this work will be consulting with MNO Citizens and developing an MNO-Wide Consultation Plan**
- **This consultation will lead towards a ratification vote to approve of our Métis Government Constitution and Self-Government Agreement**



# RATIFICATION

- After we gather all that information together from our consultation with citizens, structure it all into a deeply meaningful Constitution, then we have to send it out to Electors (MNO citizens with complete citizenship files) for a Ratification Vote.
- These Ratification Votes will be to approve our Métis Constitution and Self-Government agreement.





# 1 GET STARTED

Each of MNO's 9 Regions draft and sign a Regional Implementation Agreement (RIA). The RIAs are customized to the unique needs and concerns of each Region. They also include common principles that ensure all voices will be heard and all MNO communities are properly supported.

# 2 GET ORGANIZED

Next, Regional Implementation Committees (RIC) will be formed with representation from each MNO community council in the Region. The RICs will develop work plans to build capacity and engage MNO Citizens within the Region, and address any unique concerns the region has when it comes to self-government.

# 3 RECOGNIZE OUR SUCCESSES

As MNO communities and citizens work together to build our vision for the future, the Government of Canada will pass a new federal law ('federal recognition legislation') that recognizes and cements our Self-Government Agreement in Canadian law.

# 4 WE BUILD IT TOGETHER

Community by community, all MNO citizens will be engaged to contribute their ideas, ask questions and, importantly, listen to one another. Through collaboration and consensus, we will build a Métis Government that is fair, worthy of respect, and true to our values.

# 5 CRAFT A MÉTIS CONSTITUTION

With the contributions and ideas of all MNO citizens, and inspired by the values and traditions of our ancestors, a Constitution will be drafted.

# 6 BUILD OUR CORE MÉTIS LAWS

We will build Métis Laws on citizenship, leadership selection and internal operations to provide a strong foundation for our Métis Government and future generations of Métis in Ontario.

# 7 RATIFY AND MOVE OUR MÉTIS GOVERNMENT FORWARD!

With our Métis Laws in place and all other Self-Government Agreement requirements met, we will hold a province-wide referendum to approve our Constitution and the Self-Government Agreement. Once ratified by the Métis Citizens, we will move forward with Métis Self-Government in Ontario!

# Our Self-Government Journey Ahead



**Ask your Friends ...**

**Ask your Family Members ...**

**What does  
Métis  
Self-Government  
mean to you?**



**[self.government@metisnation.org](mailto:self.government@metisnation.org)**  
**[www.metisnation.org/self-government](http://www.metisnation.org/self-government)**

