PRESS RELEASE
September 11, 2026

Assembly of First Nations Approves Resolution to Recognize the Indigenous Coalition of Tourism Champions (ICTC)

Joint Release from the Mi'kma'ki Territory, Coast Salish Territories, and Aundeck Omni Kaning First Nation in Ontario

The Indigenous Coalition of Tourism Champions (ICTC) is pleased to announce that the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) approved Resolution 65/2026 by consensus at its Annual General Meeting in July 2026 in Ottawa.

The resolution formally recognizes the ICTC as the national Indigenous tourism body representing First Nations and Indigenous tourism across Canada. It supports a collaborative, regionally driven approach that respects First Nations' sovereignty, prosperity, cultures, and self-determination.

The ICTC currently includes three provincial tourism associations: Indigenous Tourism of British Columbia (ITBC), Indigenous Tourism Ontario (ITO), and the Nova Scotia Indigenous Tourism Enterprise Network (NSITEN).

The ICTC is open to all Provincial/Territorial Indigenous Tourism Organizations (PTITOs) across Canada. The coalition is united by its mission to strengthen Indigenous-led tourism as a powerful pathway for cultural understanding, prosperity, and respect for the cultural sovereignty of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis Peoples.

The resolution provides the AFN Economic Development Team and the ICTC to develop a national Indigenous Tourism Strategy and work together. This strategy will be aligned with and reflect the priorities of First Nations, support regional distinctions and advocacy, and create fair access to funding, investment, and economic opportunity.

In addition, the AFN Economic Development Team has committed to:

- Working with the ICTC and Provincial/Territorial Indigenous Tourism Organizations to strengthen Indigenous tourism across Canada.

- Supporting the development of a national Indigenous tourism strategy that reflects the unique needs of each region and is built on the principles of fairness, collaboration, and informed consent.
- Supporting the ICTC in securing sustainable funding and advancing long-term strategic priorities.
- Receiving regular updates from the ICTC on progress and future initiatives.

The passing of this resolution by First Nation Chiefs and leaders from across Canada is a milestone for Indigenous tourism in Canada. It reflects the AFN's commitment to building a stronger national Indigenous tourism voice while respecting regional leadership and First Nation governance.

ICTC looks forward to strengthening our relationship and vision with other Provinces/Territories, industry partners, and governments to work together and grow a sustainable, Indigenous-led visitor economy across the country that will increase our Indigenous economies, provide great jobs and careers.

Indigenous Tourism Ontario (ITO)

"Indigenous tourism is a powerful driver of economic development, cultural revitalization, and community prosperity. The Indigenous Coalition of Tourism Champions provides an important opportunity to bring Indigenous tourism leaders together from across the country, strengthen our collective voice, and ensure that the priorities and realities of Indigenous tourism operators are reflected in national conversations and investments. ITO is proud to support a collaborative approach that creates greater opportunities for Indigenous tourism businesses and communities."

— ***Kevin Eshkawkogan, ITO President & CEO***

Nova Scotia Indigenous Tourism Enterprise Network (NSITEN)

"The strength of Indigenous tourism in Canada comes from the diversity of our communities, cultures, people, and destinations. For organizations like NSITEN, being part of a national Coalition creates an opportunity to ensure that the voices and experiences of Indigenous tourism operators in Atlantic Canada are part of the broader conversation. By working together, we can build stronger pathways to investment, market access, capacity building, and sustainable economic opportunity for Indigenous communities."

~ Robert Bernard, NSITEN Executive Director

Indigenous Tourism BC (ITBC)

"As the organization mandated by the First Nations Leadership Council to be the voice of Indigenous tourism in British Columbia, ITBC understands the importance of strong Indigenous leadership and a collective voice. A national Coalition will strengthen our ability to advocate for shared priorities, increase access to investment and resources, and advance Indigenous-led tourism across Canada."

— ***Brenda Baptiste, Chair, Indigenous Tourism BC***

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Coalition Mission: This new national tourism organization's mission is to strengthen and grow a sustainable grassroots Indigenous Tourism Industry grounded in fairness, equity, and respect for Indigenous sovereignty while recognizing verified identity, cultural authenticity, land rights and title.

About Nova Scotia Indigenous Tourism Enterprise Network (NSITEN): NSITEN is a not-for-profit organization based in the ancestral territory of Mi'kma'ki in what is known as present-day Nova Scotia. Established in 2017, the organization has focused on supporting the growth of Mi'kmaw tourism, promoting authentic cultural experiences, market-ready business development, and advocating for meaningful involvement in the mainstream tourism industry. (www.nsiten.com)

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About Indigenous Tourism Ontario (ITO): ITO is recognized as Ontario's first and only pan-provincial Indigenous tourism organization. ITO's mandate is to improve the socio-economic conditions of Indigenous people through developing and innovating the Indigenous tourism industry. ITO focuses on both individual and community tourism development by aligning and forming partnerships among businesses, associations, organizations, government departments, and industry leaders across Ontario and Canada. (www.IndigenousTourismOntario.ca)

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About Indigenous Tourism British Columbia (ITBC): Our vision is to be a leading advocate for Indigenous tourism in BC, working collaboratively to grow a thriving industry that supports Indigenous sovereignty, prosperity and community well-being while shifting perceptions of BC and supporting local and global appreciation for Indigenous worldviews. (www.indigenousbc.com)

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