



Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

2022

ESTIMATES BINDER

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**Speaking Notes
for**

**Hon. Murray Rankin
Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation**

Estimates Speech

BC Legislature

***Thursday, May 5, 2022
Douglas Fir Room***

KEY MESSAGES

- **We are deeply committed to advancing reconciliation in B.C. – guided by the UN Declaration and the Declaration Act, and in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples.**
- **Reconciliation is a provincial imperative – addressing the devastating impacts of colonization and dismantling systemic racism will take sustained effort from all of us.**
- **Budget 2022 provides dedicated, annualized funding through the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation that supports the advancement of reconciliation and implementation of the UN Declaration in B.C.**
- **Budget 2022 provides \$12.05 million over the next three years to establish the Declaration Act Secretariat, a dedicated body to support government’s obligations ensuring laws, policies and practices are consistent with the Act.**
- **Like all provincial budgets, the numbers on their own do not convey the scope of the work underway or the quality of the relationship with First Nations, Métis or Indigenous Peoples as a whole.**
- **Supported by Budget 2022, we are building an even stronger, more inclusive, and more just British Columbia – one that will create a better future for everyone.**

INTRODUCTION

- It is my pleasure and honour to speak in this House today about Budget 2022 ...

... and estimates for the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation.

- ACKNOWLEDGE TERRITORY: LEKWUNGEN [LUH-KWUNG-IN] PEOPLES AND SONGHEES AND ESQUIMALT NATIONS

[PAUSE]

- Joining me for Estimates are:
 - Deputy Minister Doug Caul,
 - Si Sityaawks [SEE-SIT-YOWks] - Jessica Wood – Associate Deputy Minister of the Declaration Act Secretariat,

- Ranbir Parmar, Assistant Deputy Minister and Executive Financial Officer, and
- Tracey Herbert, CEO of the First Peoples Cultural Council
- and:
 - Emily Arthur, Acting Assistant Deputy Minister of the Reconciliation, Transformation and Strategies Division,
 - Jennifer Melles, Assistant Deputy Minister of the Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships Division, and
 - Tom McCarthy, Assistant Deputy Minister of the Negotiations and Regional Operations Division.

[PAUSE]

- I am proud of the work of this ministry, and government as a whole.
- We are demonstrating our commitment to reconciliation in B.C. through tangible and meaningful action ...

... guided by the UN Declaration and the Declaration Act...

... and in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples.

[PAUSE]

- Reconciliation is a provincial imperative ...
... addressing the devastating impacts of colonization...
... and dismantling systemic racism ...

- It will take sustained effort from all of us.

[PAUSE]

- I acknowledge that May 5th, is Red Dress Day in Canada...

... a grassroots campaign to remember and honour Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit people and their families.

- A red dress is hanging on the balcony in this building.
- The silhouette is a physical reminder of the Indigenous people no longer with us – of the strength and power and human potential lost.
- It is a way to give voice to the voiceless.
- And it is way to use our own voices to say to Indigenous women, girls and two spirited people:

- “We see you. We honour you. And we will not tolerate violence against you.”
- In the past year, I have been working closely with communities as we speak truth to history.
- We respectfully stand in solidarity with survivors, intergenerational survivors and their families who are grieving after the confirmation of unmarked graves on the grounds of former residential schools.
- These findings are stark reminders of the atrocities of residential schools and reinforce our collective resolve to find answers for the generations of families who were forced to attend these institutions.

[PAUSE]

- The past two years have been a trying time – for everyone.

- The COVID-19 pandemic, the overdose crisis and the climate crisis...
- These threats are here, with the impacts all around us.
- We must work together with Indigenous Peoples – and each other – to dismantle the injustices of the past and present and to build a different future.

[PAUSE]

BODY

- Budget 2022 provides the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation with nearly \$178 million, which is a slight increase over Budget 2021.
- Like all provincial budgets, the numbers on their own do not convey the scope of the work underway ...

...or the quality of the relationship with First Nations, Métis or Indigenous Peoples as a whole.

- This year's budget represents dedicated and dependable funding....

... funding that allows us to continue the long-term work to advance **tangible** reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples in B.C.

[PAUSE]

Secretariat

- An important change to our budget is new funding to create the Declaration Act Secretariat.
- Section 3 of the Declaration Act requires us to bring provincial laws into alignment with the UN Declaration ...

... and to do so in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples.

- Establishment of the new Declaration Act Secretariat is a strategy to ensure full implementation of the Declaration Act.
- This is a new dedicated body to help ensure policies and practices are consistent with the Declaration Act...

... and our laws are aligned with the UN Declaration in the context of section 35 of the Constitution Act.

- Budget 2022 provides \$12.05 million over the next three years to establish the Declaration Act Secretariat.
- We are fundamentally shifting our approach to how we both develop and implement provincial laws.

- This is resulting in an increasing number of legislative reforms.
- Ministries are engaging with Indigenous Peoples on policy and legislation earlier and more deeply, and it makes sense this work is supported and directed centrally.
- On the alignment of laws, Indigenous people have told us they would like an orderly and consistent process across government.
- The secretariat will support constructive and cohesive advancement, and the tools and direction we need to be successful.
- It will ensure we are working appropriately and consistently with Indigenous peoples as we work in consultation and cooperation to bring forward new legislation...

... and engage in the process of prioritizing existing legislation for alignment with the UN Declaration.

[PAUSE]

Action Plan

- My highest priority over the last year was to deliver a Declaration Act Action Plan, which we released just over a month ago.
- As required by the Declaration Act, we developed the plan in “consultation and co-operation with Indigenous Peoples.”
- We spent nearly two years engaging deeply with First Nations and Indigenous Peoples ...

... we knew that how the action plan was developed was just as important as the plan itself

- The result is an 89-point cross-government action plan ...

... that reflects the priorities of Indigenous Peoples and ...

... will guide our work to implement the UN Declaration in B.C.

[PAUSE]

- Ministries across government are now working to implement the actions...

... which they will do in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, as required by the Declaration Act.

- Not surprisingly, this ministry is involved in about a quarter of the actions.

- Many of these actions are underway, others are being incorporated into workplans and budget submissions.
- Our next step, other than working to implement the actions led by this ministry...

... is working with Indigenous Peoples to identify the tools, indicators and measures we need ...

... so we can track progress on the Declaration Act Action Plan, such as through the Declaration Act's annual reports

- We want to ensure this work is transparent and accessible so all can hold us accountable for the promises we have made.

[PAUSE]

New Fiscal Relationship Framework

- Like every government, First Nations need secure, long-term sources of revenue to fund their priorities...

... critical areas like infrastructure, services that build healthy communities, and the staff to get it done.

- We are committed to co-developing a new fiscal relationship framework that recognizes, respects and supports Indigenous Peoples' right to self-determination.

- A key action in the action plan is to develop a new fiscal relationship and framework with Indigenous Peoples in B.C. ...

... and we will be calling on the federal government to join us in this effort.

[PAUSE]

- A new fiscal relationship framework moves us away

from a short-term transactional approach toward a relationship based on trust and respect.

- We want to build a relationship where Indigenous Peoples can exercise their jurisdiction ...

... and have stable, long-term revenues that support self-determination and self-government.

- We recently announced a tangible example of our commitment ...

... a new model for forestry revenue sharing that we will co-develop with First Nations ...

... to replace the old Forest Consultation and Revenue Sharing Agreements program.

- This approach acknowledges that current forestry revenue sharing is inadequate.

- We know we need a new model ...
 - ... one that aligns with the UN Declaration ...
 - ... and meets commitments in the Declaration Act Action Plan.
- While this work unfolds, we have an interim enhancement to the existing revenue sharing program.
- It will more than double forestry revenues shared with First Nations, effective immediately.
- This is exciting work and co-developing a new fiscal relationship framework is simply the right thing to do.

Gaming

- The co-development of a new model for forestry revenue sharing is on top of 2018 revenue sharing

arrangement ...

- ... another tangible example of our commitment to a new fiscal framework.
- This 25-year agreement guarantees – entrenched in provincial legislation – seven per cent of net gaming revenue shared annually with First Nations.
- This funding is used to support self-government and self-determination...

... helping to build strong, healthy First Nations communities across B.C.

[PAUSE]

- Since the development of the gaming revenue sharing arrangement...
- ... the Province has transferred almost \$282 million to

First Nations.

- With this funding, First Nations are creating programs and undertaking projects such as
 - construction for new housing and community buildings,
 - childcare and supports for new parents,
 - initiatives to preserve and strengthen Indigenous languages,
 - mental health services,
 - supports for business ventures, and much more.

[PAUSE]

- Another tangible example of our commitment is the recent announcement of one-time \$74 million grant

to First Nations.

- This is on top of the \$282 million we have already transferred to First Nations.
- This grant is to assist in recovery and growth after the COVID-19 pandemic reduced First Nations' fiscal resources, including gaming revenues by almost 80 percent.

[PAUSE]

Treaties and other agreements

- Although Indigenous Peoples have many shared experiences, each and every Nation is unique...

...which mean reconciliation with one nation may be different from another's.
- We believe treaties and other agreements will be

more successful and enduring ...

... if we make sure they recognize the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples...

... and they have the ability to evolve rather than being frozen in time.

- ... we are seeking to shift from short-term transactional arrangements to the co-development of long-term agreements ...

... that recognize and support reconciliation, self-determination, decision-making and economic independence.

- We approach this work with the intent of building successful partnerships that are responsive to individual First Nations and Indigenous communities...
... and help build mutually beneficial relationships that

will evolve and grow over time ... with Nations and Indigenous organizations as our partners.

- I am pleased to see that Budget 2022 allows us to meet our commitments to Nations and Indigenous organizations...
- ... so we can keep our promises, helping to build relationships based on trust and respect.

The economy

- B.C.'s leadership in reconciliation provides business and industry with a global competitive advantage...
... helping to attract private sector investment and in-demand talent.
- Advancing reconciliation aligns with Economic, Social and Governance – or ESG - frameworks for responsible investing ...

... and creates an environment that supports mutually beneficial relationships between First Nations and private sector businesses.

- Ensuring Indigenous Peoples as respected partners in the economy provides for more certainty and clarity for projects and investment decisions...

...supporting prosperous economies and healthy communities.

- Reconciliation and the economy go hand-in-hand,
... which is also why reconciliation is fundamental to our future
- Simply put, by working together, we get better outcomes.

- That is how we create opportunities for Indigenous peoples, B.C. businesses, communities and families everywhere.

[PAUSE]

CONCLUSION

- All I have mentioned are not a comprehensive list of all that we are doing to advance reconciliation in B.C.
- We have work underway throughout government, its agencies and Crowns, that is advancing reconciliation.
- Reconciliation is about working together in respectful partnerships that recognize the inherent rights of Indigenous peoples.
- This government is committed to doing just that...

... as we rebuild the province's economy after this pandemic...

... as we negotiate treaties and other constructive agreements that bring lasting change...

... as we implement the Declaration Act Action Plan...

... as we align and reconcile our provincial laws with the Indigenous rights and jurisdiction.

- I know this is a big task, but I am eager to move it forward.
- As we continue to advance reconciliation, we are seeing momentum – and hope - building throughout B.C. ...

... all levels of government ... in the private sector.

- And that is exciting.

[PAUSE]

- We all know, to build a better future than our past...
...we must make the province a place where the rights of Indigenous Peoples are respected...
... and First Nations, Métis and Inuit people can thrive.
- Thank you to my colleagues - and everyone in this Chamber - for your work advancing reconciliation ...
... helping right the injustices of the past .. and present.

[PAUSE]

- I look forward to our discussion today.

– END –

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
Budget 2022 - MIRR
Updated: May 4, 2022

KEY MESSAGES

- **We are deeply committed to advancing reconciliation in B.C. – guided by the UN Declaration and the Declaration Act, and with meaningful consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples.**
- **Reconciliation is a journey – systemic issues like anti-Indigenous racism and helping Indigenous Peoples heal from the devastating impacts of colonialism will take sustained effort over many years.**
- **Budget 2022 provides dedicated, annualized funding through the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation that supports the advancement of reconciliation and implementation of the UN Declaration in B.C.**
- **Budget 2022 provides \$12.05 million over the next three years to establish the Declaration Act Secretariat, a dedicated body to support government’s reconciliation efforts by ensuring laws, policies and practices are consistent with the Act.**
- **Like all provincial budgets, the numbers on their own do not convey the scope of the work underway or the quality of the relationship with First Nations, Métis or Indigenous Peoples as a whole.**
- **Supported by Budget 2022, we are building an even stronger, more inclusive, and more just British Columbia that will create a better future for Indigenous Peoples.**

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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q1. What is the Ministry's budget for 2022/2023?

- Budget 2022 provides Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation \$177.919 million, which is 0.3% more than Budget 2021.
- This dedicated and dependable funding allows us to continue the long-term work to advance reconciliation and implement the UN Declaration in B.C.

Q2. Where has Budget 2022 changed over Budget 2021?

- Budget 2022 includes a significant step towards meeting our government's commitment to reconciliation by creating a Declaration Act Secretariat, dedicated to coordinating government's reconciliation efforts and ensuring new legislation and policies are consistent with the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.
- Budget 2022 provides \$12.05 million over the next three years, \$3.2 million for 2022/2023, to establish the Declaration Act Secretariat.
- All of this supports our work with Indigenous Peoples to advance reconciliation and implement the UN Declaration.

Q3. What about Budget 2022 funding for other ministries' reconciliation activities?

- Budget 2022 provides funding across government for various initiatives that support reconciliation and the implementation of the UN Declaration. For example:
 - Working in partnership with the First Nations Health Authority to continue creating up to 15 First Nations Primary Care Centres throughout the province.
 - Supporting Aboriginal Head Start, which provides culturally based inclusive child care, early learning and family bonding opportunities for Indigenous children.
 - Funding for Indigenous-led emergency management in First Nations communities.
 - Increased access to justice for Indigenous people through a virtual Indigenous Justice Centre.
 - Connecting First Nations communities to high-speed internet and cell service.
 - Expanding the Indigenous Forest Bioeconomy Program to include a new Accelerator Program, which will help Indigenous partners commercialize and scale-up innovative forest-based products.

Q4. What is the role of the Declaration Act Secretariat?

- Ministries are engaging with Indigenous Peoples on policy and legislation earlier and more deeply, and it makes sense this work is supported centrally.
- To ensure success, the Declaration Act Secretariat is a dedicated body to support government's reconciliation efforts by ensuring laws, policies and practices are consistent with the Act.
- In developing the plan for the secretariat, we have heard from First Nations leadership and legal experts on how best the new Secretariat can effectively coordinate and

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Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

support this cross-government obligation to align our laws, policies and practices with the UN Declaration.

- Si Sityaawks (Jessica Wood) is Associate Deputy Minister of the Declaration Act Secretariat.

Q5. Is there funding allocated for the actions included in the Declaration Act's action plan?

- The finalized action plan includes tangible, achievable actions in the areas of self-determination and self-government, rights and title, ending anti-Indigenous racism, and social, cultural and economic well-being.
- The implementation of specific actions, including associated funding, is the responsibility of the lead ministry/ministries of those actions.

Q6. Why does Budget 2022 have a decrease of \$1.434 million to fund treaty and other agreements?

- We are advancing our treaties and other government to government agreements to respond to the needs of individual nations, many of which entail multi-year financial commitments.
- Budget 2022 allows us to meet our multi-year commitments to existing treaties and other government-to-government agreements, and includes a financial commitment of \$115.629 million.

If pressed by what the \$1.434 million decrease in funding between Budget 2022 and Budget 2021

- Every year, the profile of payments changes.
- Budget 2022 allows us to fully meet our multi-year commitments to existing treaties and other government-to-government agreements.
- There is no budget cut.

Q7. Angela Polifroni, director of operations for Toquaht Nation, is quoted as saying she was pleased to see "Indigenous issues and acknowledgment of Indigenous jurisdictions" throughout the budget document, but noted that "fully-resourced implementation" of treaties is not possible based on the funds committed. What is your response?

- Budget 2022 allows us to meet our multi-year commitments to existing treaties and other government-to-government agreements, and includes a financial commitment of \$115.629 million.
- There is a significant increase to \$130 million planned for 2022/23 in the ministry budget for treaties and other agreements as noted in the service plan released on budget day.
- The funding increase scheduled for 2022/2023 is based on the work the ministry is doing with nations in regards to the timing of the implementation of specific programs.
- BC and Modern Treaty Nations have been working both individually and collectively through the Alliance of British Columbia Modern Treaty Nations to develop a framework and supporting fiscal policies to ensure resourcing is in place for the full implementation of modern treaties.

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- Budget 2022 provides Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation \$177.919 million, which is 0.03% more than Budget 2021.
- Like all provincial budgets, the numbers on their own do not convey the scope of the work underway or the quality of the relationship with First Nations, Metis or Indigenous Peoples as a whole.
- For example, we have shared \$356 million in gaming revenues since the gaming revenue sharing program began in 2019 (including the \$74M one time grant) directly with First Nations.
- These funds have been used towards construction of single-family homes, repairs and upkeep of community buildings and Elders' housing, strengthening community responses to COVID-19, and supports for post secondary education for community members including childcare for those students.
- This dedicated and dependable funding allows us to continue the long-term work to advance reconciliation and implement the UN Declaration in B.C.

Q8. Why is funding decreasing through the First Nations Clean Energy Business Fund?

- The First Nations Clean Energy Business Fund (FNCEBF) is supported by annual provincial rentals from eligible independent power projects.
- The project proponents pay the province to use water (water licenses) and rent land (land tenures) to use for their projects. It's the fees from these licenses and tenures that support the fund.
- When the projected revenue into the fund decreases, so does the amount available to support projects.
- Projections for 2022/23 indicate \$1.692 million decrease in revenues to the fund.
- We are continuing our commitment to support remote First Nations communities reduce their reliance on diesel-powered generators.

Q9. How are you supporting Indigenous language revitalization and culture?

- B.C. has incredible language diversity and is home to 34 First Nations languages, which make up more than half of all Indigenous languages in Canada.
- We are committed to supporting Indigenous languages and culture, which help address systemic social challenges and connect people to community, land and culture.
- For example, through a \$50-million multi-year investment in 2018, the First Peoples' Cultural Council is supporting Indigenous communities to reclaim their language and culture.
 - With this investment, First Nations completed over 470 language revitalization projects funded by the First Peoples' Cultural Council last year alone.

Q10. Will the ministry restore the level of funding to the First Citizens Fund seen five years ago?

- The First Citizens Fund revenue is interest-driven and recent low interest rates have affected revenue that supports programs. We will provide approximately \$1.6 million to support programs in 2022/2023, which is comparable to 2021/2022.

Q11. How does gaming revenue sharing with First Nations work?

- Like every government, First Nations need secure long-term sources of revenue to fund their priorities – critical things for every government, such as infrastructure, services that build healthy communities and the staff to get it done.
- In September 2020, the Province and BC First Nations Gaming Commission jointly finalised a 25-year arrangement to share provincial gaming revenue.
- The arrangement provides 7% of net provincial gaming revenue to First Nations to be used to support self-government and self-determination, strong, healthy communities and services that make life better for families in First Nations communities across B.C.
- Each First Nation that participates in revenue sharing can use their gaming revenues to support priorities for its community.
- The revenue may be used in six areas that support governance, capacity building and strengthened program and service delivery:
 - health and wellness;
 - infrastructure, safety, transportation and housing;
 - economic and business development;
 - education, language, culture and training;
 - community development and environmental protection; and
 - capacity building, fiscal management and governance.
- Since the program began, the Province has transferred \$356 million in shared gaming revenues to First Nations. It has been used for programs and services in Indigenous communities according to their individual priorities.
- First Nations are creating programs and undertaking projects such as construction for new housing and community buildings, childcare and supports for new parents, initiatives to preserve and strengthen Indigenous languages, mental health services, supports for business ventures, and much more.

Q12. What is the Province going to do about the decline in gaming revenue and subsequent affect on First Nations?

- Like every government, First Nations need secure long-term revenues to fund their priorities – critical things for every government, such as infrastructure, services that build healthy communities and the staff to get it done.
- First Nations were hard hit by the pandemic – and successive fires and floods – and have used funding from the gaming revenue sharing agreement to meet their immediate needs, impacting other community priority projects and initiatives.
- In 2020/21 due to the decline in gaming activity from public health measures to respond to the pandemic, First Nations gaming revenues were approximately \$74 million lower than anticipated.
- In April 2022, the Province provided a one-time \$74 million dollar grant to mitigate the loss of these revenues that have been a crucial support for First Nations governments.

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Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

- This one-time grant ensures that First Nations who were among the hardest hit by the pandemic won't be left behind during the recovery.
- It will continue support First Nations' priorities for social services, education, infrastructure, cultural revitalization and self-government capacity.
- This grant makes up for lost revenues that fund new community projects and programs and significant economic development that can benefit First Nations communities and beyond, bringing more prosperity to every part of the province.
- This renewed approach to revenue sharing is part of our commitment to create a new fiscal relationship with First Nations that supports self-government and self-determination.

Q13. Can you explain how the recently announce gaming revenue grant fits into these numbers?

- Through this grant, we are recognizing the COVID 19 impacts on First Nations share of gaming revenues - \$74 million.
- We have been proud to call gaming revenue a secure, long-term revenue stream for all First Nations governments across the province. And it still is, except when you have a once in a lifetime event like COVID-19.
- As a government, we made the decision to maintain Community Gaming Grants at pre-COVID levels to ensure continued funding to non-profit groups.
- Government also provided supports to municipalities including COVID-19 Safe Restart Grants and the deferral of school property tax remittance to help with cash-flow pressures.
- Supporting First Nations is completely consistent with these measures and it's the right thing to do.

Q14. Can you provide a breakdown of gaming revenue of funding?

- In 2019/20 and 2020/21 we transferred \$196.84M in total.
- In 2021/22 we transferred \$58,059,120.
- Last week we transferred the 22/23 amount, \$26,928,930. This is significantly less than they anticipated to receive. The decline in gaming revenues totalled \$73,941,070. We addressed this with the one-time grant.
- In total that's almost \$356M.
- We expect there may be additional adjustments to 2021/22 revenues. There has been a very strong recovery in the gaming sector and with the bounce, we expect that number might be adjusted upward.

Q15. What about funding for MNBC?

- Métis Nation BC and the Province share a commitment to strengthening our relationship and advancing reconciliation, and we are committed to continue building an on-going, positive relationship.
- The Province and Métis Nation British Columbia signed a Letter of Intent late last year. This is an opportunity to phase out the Métis Nation Relationship Accord II and

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develop a partnership that respects self-determination through a “whole of government” approach.

- As part of our work, we are undertaking a ‘whole of government’ review, which will include developing shared priorities and reviewing current funding and future needs.
- During the development of the Declaration Act Action Plan, we released a consultation draft for input from Indigenous Peoples, Nations, and organizations. We were encouraged to receive feedback from both Métis people and Métis Nation BC.
- Action 4.2 of the Declaration Action Plan includes a commitment to “Advance a collaborative, whole-of-government approach in the partnership between the Métis Nation of British Columbia and the Province of B.C., respecting Métis self-determination and working to establish more flexibility and sustainability in funding.”
- We take a distinctions-based approach in our relationships with Indigenous peoples – and our relationship with Métis in B.C. Any funding, programs, and services will be different from our relationships with First Nations. Similarly, our relationship with the Métis in B.C. will be different than what other governments have with Métis within their jurisdiction.

If asked:

- This ministry’s funding to the Métis Nation British Columbia in 2020/2021 was \$665,000. We also committed \$745,000 in 2021/2022 funding up to February 2022.
- If our budget is approved, we will continue to support MNBC’s governance capacity with \$400,000 and we anticipate that many of the other Ministries will be continuing their program support for MNBC.

DECLARATION ACT ACTION PLAN MIRR SPECIFIC ACTIONS

Q16. What is the status of Action 1.1 - In partnership with the Government of Canada, establish a new institution designed and driven by First Nations to provide supports to First Nations in their work of nation- and governance-rebuilding and boundary resolution in accordance with First Nations laws, customs and traditions?

- We are working together with First Nations to find the best way forward, while recognizing that leadership for this work rightfully belongs to First Nations and not to the Province.
- In 2019, the First Nations Leadership Council solicited the development of initial ideas and perspectives on the development of an Indigenous Commission.
- This was followed in spring 2020 with an all-Nations forum on shared territory overlaps where initial ideas about an Indigenous Commission were shared.
- Unfortunately, this forum was cut short by the beginning of the pandemic, but a virtual version was held in the fall of 2021 and the Province remains supportive of Nations continuing this work.

Q17. What is the status of Action 1.2 - Shift from short-term transactional arrangements to the co-development of long-term agreements that recognize and support reconciliation, self-determination, decision-making and economic independence?

- Every Nation must decide the path to reconciliation that is right for them – that is critical to self-determination.
- We are committed to government-to-government relationships where we proactively negotiate the implementation of rights and title, as partners.
- Together, First Nations, Canada, and B.C. are creating innovative agreements that are flexible and better suited to addressing the needs of individual nations.
- In the last few years, we have signed unique and diverse agreements with First Nations that exemplify this action including Lake Babine, Gitanyow, Heiltsuk, Snuneymuxw and others.
- Progress is also being made in treaty negotiations.
- In 2019, the provincial and federal governments and the First Nations Summit finalized a new policy to guide treaty negotiations in the province.
- The new policy aims to base treaties on a recognition of the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples, and states explicitly that treaties do not require Indigenous Peoples to extinguish their rights.

Q18. What is the status of Action 1.3 - Utilize sections 6 and 7 of the Declaration Act to complete government-to-government agreements that recognize Indigenous self-government and self-determination?

- Sections 6 and 7 of the Declaration Act enable government to enter into unique agreements with a wide range of Indigenous Governing Bodies beyond Indian Act Bands or Treaty Nation governments.
- In most cases, these agreements will set out a process and a role for Indigenous Governing Bodies in making statutory decisions different from what is currently set out in legislation.
- These types of agreements are intended to improve predictability and transparency of certain decisions and will provide a clearer process for how decisions are made.
- In June 2021, the government started negotiations with the Tahltan Central Government on the first consent-based decision-making agreement ever to be negotiated under the *Declaration Act*.
- We are engaged in discussions with other First Nations who have expressed interest in exploring potential agreements.

Q19. What is the status of actions 1.4 - Co-develop with Indigenous Peoples a new distinctions-based fiscal relationship and framework that supports the operation of Indigenous governments, whether through modern treaties, self-government agreements or advancing the right to self-government through other mechanisms - and action 1.5 - Co-develop and implement new distinctions-based policy frameworks for resource revenue-sharing and other fiscal mechanisms with Indigenous Peoples (incl. Finance)?

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- Government committed to a new fiscal relationship with Indigenous peoples through the Draft 10 Principles and 2018 Concrete Actions Document.
- The first major initiative was the 25-year gaming revenue sharing arrangement that provides approximately \$100 million annually to all First Nations.
- In late April, we also announced a commitment to co-develop a new forestry revenue sharing model from the ground up with First Nations.
- Working with First Nations, we expect to finalize an engagement plan and begin the forestry engagement in September 2022.
- We are moving away from the short-term transactional approach of the past toward a new fiscal framework that recognizes, respects and supports Indigenous Peoples' right to self-determination.
- We recognize that there is much work to do with respect to co-developing a new fiscal relationship and framework that supports the operation of Indigenous governments.
- The Action Plan to implement the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act includes a commitment to this work over the next five years.
- This will also include collaboration with the federal government.
- There are many evolving pieces that we all will need to consider, including the development of varying and evolving models of Indigenous self-government structures.
- It is important we understand how these pieces relate to each other as well as how they relate to the work we have ahead to align provincial laws with the United Nations' Declaration Principles.

Q20 What is the status of Action 2.1 - Create a dedicated secretariat to coordinate government's reconciliation efforts and to ensure new legislation and policies are consistent with the Declaration Act?

- The Declaration Act Secretariat is being established to support government's reconciliation efforts to align legislation with the UN Declaration, and to do so in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples.
- In developing the plan, we heard from First Nations leaders and legal experts on how the new Secretariat can effectively coordinate and support our work to align laws, policies and practices with the UN Declaration.
- We have appointed Si Sityaawks - Jessica Wood - as Associate Deputy Minister of the Declaration Act Secretariat.

Q21. What is the budget for the Secretariat other than salaries?

- Budget 2022 provides \$12.05 million to establish the Declaration Act Secretariat.
- Ministries are engaging with Indigenous Peoples on policy and legislation earlier and more deeply, and it makes sense this work is supported centrally.
- Reconciliation is a cross-government responsibility, and every Ministry in government will be tapping into the expertise and advice of the Secretariat.

Q22. What is an agreement under Section 7 of the Declaration Act? Action 2.4 states government will negotiate new joint decision-making and consent agreements under section 7 of the Declaration Act that include clear accountabilities, transparency and

