

Editors' Introduction

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Warren Weir and Wanda Wuttunee

Two significant documents on Aboriginal economy were released in this past year. The Assembly of First Nations presented their report on *The State of the First Nation Economy and the Struggle to Make Poverty History* in March. The report was prepared for the AFN Inter-Nation Trade and Economic Summit by the Assembly of First Nations Make Poverty History Expert Advisory Committee. And in June this year, the Canadian Federal Government announced its new *Framework on Aboriginal Economic Development*. Both documents require a response from the general public, Aboriginal organizations, communities and their leaders, and educational and other think-tanks, as well as corporate, government, and civil groups. To start this process in our own way, for CANDO, we have added this new section, the State of the Aboriginal Economy.

To open up the discussion, Oppenheimer and Weir introduce and review the Federal Government of Canada's newly introduced Federal Framework for Aboriginal Economic Development. Their brief paper provides the conceptual framework upon which the government will build future policies and programs. The Framework is replacing the Canadian Aboriginal Economic Development Strategy (CAEDS), which was released in 1989. As such, it is important that the new Framework be understood and ideas for improving its implementation be shared. The authors conclude the paper with several introductory questions about the Framework with the intent to initiate further discussion on the Framework and to stimulate ideas for this new section in the subsequent issues of this Journal.

The next piece included in this section is an early response by the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) to the initial consultations facilitated by the Federal government on the "New Framework". In "Gender Analysis of the New Federal Framework for Aboriginal Development: Discussion Guide and Annexes", Whiteduck and Peebles, representing the NWAC, share concerns of gender equity in both the consultation approach facilitated by the government representatives and the need for vigilance regarding the ways in which Aboriginal men and women are addressed, categorized, researched, evaluated, and essentially recognized under the new framework.

Last, we present an important look at the question, *Have We Made Any Progress in the Struggle to Make First Nation Poverty History?: A 40-Year Perspective*. In their summary of the larger AFN report, Wuttunee and Wien use the Wahbung vision as a beginning point to provide a contemporary profile of First Nation poverty and document in detail changes in population, business and institutional development, labour force participation, employment, income, education, and various health and social characteristics. Twelve conclusions set out the highlights of this research, ranging from the importance of service organizations, the role of the Supreme Court, and the Constitution.