

# CONSTITUTIONS FACT SHEET

## What is a constitution?

- The highest law of the land – all laws, policies, and procedures must be consistent with the Constitution.
- A constitution describes the “rules of the game”.
- It is the guarantee that our government makes to the people.
- It is the foundation upon which to build a strong government.
- It is everything the *Indian Act* is not.

## What is in a constitution?

- A constitution describes who we are and where we come from.
- It must reflect the basic beliefs, principles and values of citizens.
- It defines how government will operate including how citizens can participate in government.
- It defines how the resources of the Nation will be protected and how they can be used (for example: lands, resources, finances).
- It sets out the expectations, requirements, and conduct of government officials to act in a manner that benefits the entire Nation.
- A constitution sets the limits of government authority and power.
- It identifies how disputes will be resolved and by whom.

## Why have a constitution?

- So that we can govern ourselves based on our own values – self determination.
- So that everyone in our Nation can understand and be assured of how our government will operate and how we can participate in government decisions.
- Constitutions can lead to political stability.
- To lay the foundation for good governance and sound economic growth for our future generations.

*The constitution is our voice and reflects our values, our identity, and our rights as a self-determining Nation.*

*Constitutions put the “self” back into self-government.*

*Building a constitution will take time, energy, and resources.  
The process requires patience and good problem-solving skills  
as we grapple with fundamental issues of Nation-building.*