

**VOICE OF THE
PEOPLE**



Summary Report of the
Constitutional Reform Consultation Sessions
held September to October 2019 in Regions Across Saskatchewan

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On April 24, 2019, the Métis Nation Legislative Assembly (MNLA) approved a resolution to begin a consultation process for reforming the “Constitution of the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan” (the “Constitution”). Consultation sessions were scheduled across Saskatchewan to gather insights and feedback, leading to the creation of an initial draft report.

The next phase of consultations, scheduled for the spring of 2020, will review this draft report. The final version of the report will be presented at the April 2020 MNLA.

This summary reflects the discussions, shared perspectives, and collective vision for the future of the MN-S. It highlights the commitment to inclusivity, democracy, and the ongoing enhancement of their governance structures. Also reflected are challenges faced and the aspirations proposed for a renewed constitutional and legislative foundation.

The comments in this summary were shared by participants during and after the scheduled sessions, and have not been verified for accuracy. This summary and the session notes were compiled by independent note takers.



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Overview

Summary of Participants Feedback on the Discussion Topics Presented

The agenda for the 2019 Constitutional Reform Consultation Sessions began with MN-S representatives providing a history of the MN-S and an overview of the proposed revisions to the *Constitution of the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan* (“*Constitution*”). Due to time constraints, some sessions only reviewed a portion of the *Constitution*, however additional feedback was welcomed by email.

Sessions were held in 2019 in Beauval, Cumberland House, Indian Head, La Loche, La Ronge, Meadow Lake, Prince Albert, Regina and Saskatoon. Below is a summary of the feedback received on the discussion topics presented during these sessions.

FEEDBACK ON THE 2019 DISCUSSION TOPICS

Constitution Preamble

Participants suggested that fundamental Métis values such as cooperation, compassion, culture, inclusiveness, environmental stewardship, language, tradition, spirituality, and unity be featured in the preamble. They emphasized the need for transparency, adherence to legal frameworks, and accountability. The preamble should highlight gender equality, recognizing women’s roles in governance and culturally-relevant care, and should stress the responsibility of all Métis citizens to sustainably manage resources and maintain the historical relationship with the land. This includes adhering to established harvesting regulations and addressing climate change impacts.

Education about Métis constitutional rights and the significance of Elder teachings should be referenced, and Métis citizens should be acknowledged as stewards of the homeland. The *Constitution* must be adaptable, designed to reflect Métis aspirations, and should inspire youth to value and preserve their heritage and identity. The preamble should convey core values such as honesty, integrity, inclusiveness, transparency, accountability, effective communication, non-violence, and respect. The right to hunt, fish, and gather should be referenced in both Michif and English, to ensure clarity and inclusivity.

Citizenship

The *Constitution*’s definition of citizenship should align with the national definition. Citizenship cards are essential for all MN-S citizens, voters and officials. The definition of “citizenship” in the *Constitution* could be further clarified, by removing any conflicting articles and confirming that the citizenship registry was not impacted by political influence. Establishing a registration system for Métis newborns was suggested to ensure early recognition of citizenship. Additionally, participants suggested a more efficient process for citizenship applications, including providing updates to applicants.

Elections

Participants suggested alternatives for managing elections within the MN-S, including the potential termination of elected positions upon calling an election or temporarily dissolving the government and assigning interim governance to a specific body. They suggested holding elections at regular intervals and implementing staggered elections for smooth transitions. Additionally, it was requested to set clear terms for MN-S officials, require citizenship cards for all candidates and voters, and focus elections specifically on the President and Regional Representatives, as outlined in the Elections Act.

Executive

Participants discussed refining MN-S' Executive roles to better represent and streamline governance by proposing election and appointment methods for key positions and creating dedicated ministries. They suggested redefining Executive terms in the *Constitution* for clarity and establishing mechanisms to address criminal offenses. The need for a fair and inclusive Executive was emphasized with clear roles and effective citizen involvement, including broadened Métis of Saskatchewan input in constitutional reform discussions. The group reaffirmed the MN-S as a government entity and stressed enhancing the *Constitution* as a living document that accurately reflects the Métis Nation's heritage and ensures Executive accountability.

General Assembly

Participants reviewed the role of the General Assembly within the MN-S, and questioned its potential to override MNLA decisions, which could lead to governance complications. It was suggested that not all MNLA decisions should be subject to a vote by the entire citizenship. Emphasis was placed on ensuring effective representation of Locals, by Local Presidents and Regional Councils at the MNLA, and maintaining effective communications between these bodies.

Locals

Participants discussed improving governance at the Local level with the Métis in Saskatchewan. Locals were recognized as fundamental units of Métis government that required support and financial resources (e.g., for meetings, etc.). They noted the challenges faced by smaller Locals, particularly those with fewer members, and suggested establishing clearer roles, structures, and accountability measures to enhance Local governance.

Métis Nation Legislative Assembly

Clarification was requested on the MNLA's role as the governing authority. The need to validate decision-making processes was suggested to ensure they effectively served the Métis citizens. Additional suggestions included streamlining MNLA timelines and improving pre-meeting preparations by providing MNLA and Annual General Meeting (AGM) packages in advance. The notice period for the AGM was recommended to be extended to 45 days to facilitate better preparation. Additionally, it was suggested that delegate engagement could be improved by providing updated materials and workshops.

Provincial Métis Council

Support was offered for PMC members reciting their Oath of Office in public, at the start of their terms, to foster transparency and accountability. Additionally, maintaining regular communications and meetings with Regional Directors, Local Presidents, and the Métis in Saskatchewan was endorsed to support effective governance. The new Judicial Tribunal should have the authority to address criminal offences and remove members of the PMC, if required.

Regions

Participants highlighted the need to better define governance structures and responsibilities at the regional level. During discussions on the role of Regional Directors, participants suggested the need for job descriptions and collaborative priority-setting to ensure their alignment with regional needs. Topics like incorporation, funding distribution, and defining regional boundaries were also addressed. Governance workshops were suggested to enhance the effectiveness of Regional Directors. Accountability measures were proposed to strengthen trust and transparency in regional governance.

Senate, Women, and Youth

Participants reviewed the Senate's role and structure within the MN-S, and emphasized the need to clarify their responsibilities including administering the Oath of Office, electoral management, ceremonial activities, and dispute resolution. Support was offered to align Senators' tenures with the MN-S election cycle, and for detailed written descriptions of Senators' roles to enhance their effectiveness and governance.

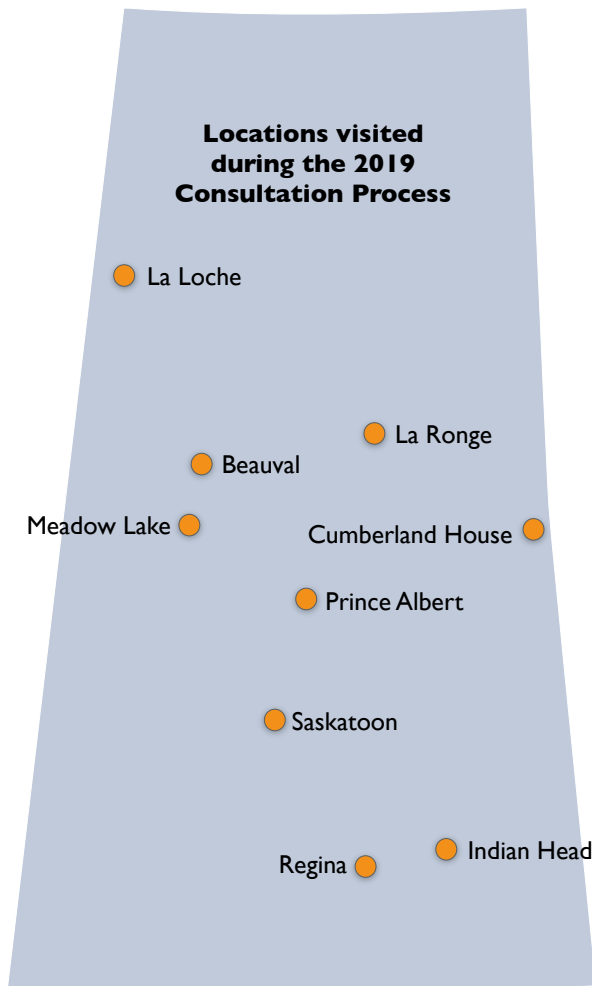
The sessions recognized the increased involvement of women on the PMC and discussed reducing the number of women representatives at the MNLA, given their current participation. Additionally, they highlighted the matriarchal history of Métis peoples. It was suggested to enhance youth engagement in governance through elections, to incorporate their viewpoints into decision-making processes.

Urban Councils

Comments and questions were raised regarding Urban Council's intent, role, structure, and impact on regional entities. It was suggested that Urban Councils function as supportive systems for Locals, rather than as separate entities, and that their impacts on cohesive governance be assessed. Additionally, participants highlighted the need for clear negotiations and the consistent application of land claims. It was noted that Urban Councils may not be needed if Locals and regions could effectively establish their own entities. It was further suggested that the *Constitution* explain the role of Urban Councils.

Métis in Saskatchewan Participation and Feedback

Map of Consultation Session Locations in 2019



9

Sessions Held in 2019

Consultation sessions were held in 9 locations, in MN-S Regions. (NOTE: Sessions planned in early 2020 did not proceed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.)

175+

Participants

More than 175 participants attended the consultation sessions.

Additional Discussions

A Workshop Forum was held at the November 2019 MNLA, and included additional discussions on Constitutional Reform.

16+

Articles Reviewed

Participants offered suggested amendments to more than 16 articles of the *Constitution*.

Northern Region 1

Feedback provided by participants, on the discussion topics presented at the following sessions:

- La Ronge – September 27, 2019 (10 attendees)
-

Constitution Preamble

- Ensure the preamble reflects the Métis identity and reflects pride as a nation
- The Métis Nation constitutes an integral component of Canada's Indigenous population
- Emphasize values of cooperation, compassion, pride, integrity, unity, inclusiveness, history, and the environment
- Establish clear timeframes for elections, alongside defined consequences for delays, and address ineffective leadership, emphasizing transparency, integrity, and immediacy
- Celebrate monumental cases that have contributed to establishing the Métis nation
- Emphasize the importance of rights applying equally to all Métis citizens.

Citizenship

- Elected officials and voters must have a citizenship card and be card-carrying members
- Reaffirm the definition of citizenship in the *Constitution* to ensure its integrity
- Eliminate Article 10.4 of the *Constitution*
- The Registry must be separate from the political process
- Clarify whether an unaccepted citizen of the MN-S can join a Local as an "affiliate member".

Elections

- MN-S government should be suspended automatically by a certain date if elections are not held
- Consider dissolving government and entrusting a specific body to govern during election periods
- Consider commencing elections at specific time intervals
- Staggered elections would ensure that business could proceed smoothly
- Set terms for elected officials
- Ensure candidates and voters have citizenship cards.

Executive

- The Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer could be PMC members appointed by the President
- Consolidate all Executive responsibilities under a single Secretary-General role (the President)
- All tasks should be executed by the elected regional representatives.

Locals

- Provide financial resources for Locals to meet four times per year
- Locals no longer need to incorporate, except when applying for some programs, services, and grants
- Revise Article 7.1 to: "The Locals shall be the basic unit of government of the Métis in Saskatchewan"
- Determine how to address a Local with at least nine members; develop alternatives for small groups that want to join government.

Métis Nation Legislative Assembly

- Identify the types of decision making assigned to the MNLA, and if it serves Métis people
- Clarify financial management and accountability
- Justify the MNLA's role as the governing authority

-
- Give the President the authority to appoint Ministers; enable the President to assign skilled Métis citizens of the MNLA
 - Referencing the MNLA as the “Supreme Body” is problematic
 - Clarify why the MNLA is responsible for approving budgets and ministerial appointments.

Provincial Métis Council

- Consider replacing the role of Les Filles de Madeleine, with a Women’s Council
- Clarify if the PMC approves portfolios recommended by the President, whether a PMC member can receive a monthly stipend, and their reporting responsibilities
- Keep MNLA delegates updated, by providing information binders upon registration; hold engaging workshops
- Increased funding will reduce issues and increase functionality
- It is an issue if a PMC member/Minister receives an unlimited annual honorarium
- Establish a procedure for addressing breaches of the Oath of Office.

Regions

- The information regarding incorporation in Article 5.7 may require some negotiating or legal research, particularly related to provincial requirements
- Consider re-phrasing Article 5.8 due to the decentralization of funds
- Include a reference to the “Regional Boundaries Act” in Article 5
- Clarify collaboration between Regional Councils and the Area Director in Article 5.10
- Clarify the number of Locals in each Region
- Clarify if the Regional Director acts solely under the direction of their Region
- Consider having the Council and Regional Directors to set joint priorities.

Senate, Women, and Youth

- Consider dissolving the government and assigning the Senate to run the “business” of the MN-S during an election period
- Consider abolishing Senate positions and incorporating them into MN-S portfolios
- Establish a Ministry of Youth and a Ministry of Women at MN-S.

Urban Councils

- Clarify the rationale and the structure of the Urban Council
- Ensure the Urban Council is a support system for the Local
- Clarify how an Urban Council affects the Region in which the Urban Council functions.

Additional Comments

- Affiliates:
 - o Create legislation for affiliate institutions; enable them to create legislation
 - o Clarify the creation of affiliates
 - o Representation from the Métis in Saskatchewan is crucial within MN-S affiliates
- MN-S Secretariat:
 - o The Secretariat may be redundant pending future agreements with the federal government
 - o Continue research regarding the transition from a non-profit corporation to a government
- Constitutional Revisions:
 - o Article 1, 15, 16 require updating; repeal Article 17
 - o Engage in additional research on the Constitution in addition to the consultation sessions.

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- Legislative Changes / Additions:
 - o Develop an Early Childhood Education Act
 - o Provide a mechanism or policy that will address climate change issues
 - o Include quality control mechanisms to ensure legality and transparency
 - o Establish a Métis Ethics Act
 - o Consider changing “Directors” to “Regional Representatives” throughout MN-S legislation
 - o Clarify the purpose of the Northwest Saskatchewan Métis Council
 - An article on financial management and accountability could include an independent audit
 - Métis Judicial Council/Tribunal:
 - o Create an internal appeal process and mechanisms
 - o Establish and identify laws and jurisdictions
 - MN-S’ relationship with Provincial and Federal Governments:
 - o Seek a legal opinion regarding the provincial requirement to incorporate
 - o Continue research regarding the transition from a non-profit corporation to a government
 - o Define the relationship between the Métis Nation and the Federal government
 - o Clarify how the *Métis Government Recognition and Self-Government Agreement* impacts incorporation at the federal and provincial levels.

Northern Region 2

Feedback provided by participants, on the discussion topics presented at the following session:

- *La Loche – October 23, 2019 (20 participants)*
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Constitution Preamble

- Emphasize the importance of language; values and principles embedded in language
- Consider including Dene, Cree, Anishinaabe, or Saulteaux
- Ensure it is inclusive
- Replace the word “Indian” with “Aboriginal”
- Recognize that environment and respect, are integral parts of Métis culture
- Include both Catholicism and spirituality
- Recognize Métis as the stewards of the land
- Include the Métis history of living off the land
- The role of consensus decision-making, sharing aspirations and preventing majority pressure
- Métis are responsible for culture and land use
- Determine the relationship with land when the government has not acknowledged it
- Métis are unable to lease land to relatives, for farmland, or for economic development
- There are many barriers to accessing land
- The preamble can be educational for young people for history, language, and connection.

Citizenship

- Consider registering Métis newborns
- Defining citizens is crucial for governments
- Provide education and fair opportunity for funding applications
- Provide sufficient time to apply for citizenship cards.

Executive

- Address any contravention with consequences
- Indicate that Executive members are restricted to holding one seat
- Establish an accountability mechanism
- Clarify whether the role of the Secretary is to ensure compliance with policies and procedures
- Ensure the Secretary provides support and engages with their role.

General Assembly

- The General assembly could override the MNLA potentially causing issues.

Locals

- Ensure Annual General Meetings are held
- Establish accountability and transparency measures
- Enhance this section
- Establish a process that ensures progress for Locals
- Establish open, ballot box elections at Locals
- Create distinct legislation for Locals, defining roles, structure, and accountability led by the Executive
- Locals must secure funds for programs and resources independent of the PMC and MNLA
- Ensure the Regional office supports the Locals.

Métis Nation Legislative Assembly

- Consider how representation is determined (e.g., does it include Dene people)
- Remove the requirement for four Métis Women of Saskatchewan representatives
- Restrict assigning portfolios exclusively to PMC members
- Review the entire *Constitution* and ensure consistent application of clauses
- Articles 2.5 and 3.4 appear to be contradictory.

Provincial Métis Council

- Amend Article 3 to require that the Métis Women of Saskatchewan and the Provincial Métis Youth Council representatives be elected.

Regions

- Clearly define Regions; clarify whether Dene will be acknowledged
- The *Boundaries Act* defines Regions (available on the MN-S website)
- There are 12 Regions, containing additional boundaries
- The *Constitution* permits 121 Locals within 12 Regions; currently 85 exist
- Article 5.4 specifies the location for regional offices; currently, this region lacks a regional office
- Ensure Locals have established offices.

Senate, Women, and Youth

- Senators should have a four-year term consistent with election cycle.

Additional Comments

- Article considerations:
 - o Article 1 requires revision
 - o Article 2.2 should be revised to exclude the requirement for four representatives of the Métis Women of Saskatchewan on the MNLA
 - o Article 2.4 should be revised to restrict the assignment of portfolios to PMC members
 - o Article 4 should be revised to indicate that Executive members cannot hold two seats concurrently
 - o Article 7 should be revised to specify that all Locals will hold ballot box elections
 - o Article 12 should be revised to specify that members of the Senate are appointed for four-year terms, to match the four-year election cycle terms
 - o Article 14 requires strengthening
 - o Article 14A may become redundant, due to pending agreements and Acts
 - o Articles 15 and 16 requires updating
 - o Repeal Article 17 as it has achieved its objective
 - o Bring forward a resolution for consideration at the November 2019 MNLA, requiring Locals to hold ballot box elections.

Northern Region 3

Feedback provided by participants, on the discussion topics presented at the following session:

- Beauval – October 22, 2019 (22 participants)
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Constitution Preamble

- Family is a key principle
- Responsibility, consideration, and interactions are crucial
- Ensure a relationship with all other nations in this country, beginning with the Treaty
- Support youth with their Métis identity.

Citizenship

- Articles in the *Citizenship Act* conflict with the *Constitution*, specifically on someone who self-identifies
- Repeal the grandfather clause in the *Citizenship Act* as it refers to it in the *Constitution*
- Address wait times for Citizenship cards, revise “membership cards” to “citizenship cards”
- Regional Representatives cannot constitutionally hire someone for the Métis Registry
- Citizenship has major implications on programs
- The *Constitution* must reflect our actions, ensure consistency
- Establish a system to register newborns.

Executive

- Ensure the Métis Nation is able to fight for their rights
- Elections are not necessary or viable to replace someone that has passed away
- Consider comprising the Executive of only a President and Vice-President.

General Assembly

- Address the concerns that hundreds of people could attend a General Assembly to override decisions
- Consider repealing or amending Clause 11.2.

Locals

- Currently there are no boundaries
- Consider organizing to take advantage of trapping blocks
- The Northwest Métis land claim covers the majority of the trapping blocks
- The medicine wheel approach allows men, women, youth, and Elders to empower the Local
- Consider the family model.

Métis Nation Legislative Assembly

- Clarify if population is defined by region
- Consider using the population model used by the Association of Métis and Non-Status Indians
- Consider the fairness of varied membership rates at Locals regarding representation
- Ensure portfolio holders include Local Presidents of organized Locals in good standing
- Consider starting at the Local level before moving to the regional, provincial, and national levels.

Senate, Women, and Youth

- Address inconsistencies; eliminate the four extra seats for women at the MNLA
- Consider eliminating the need for a women's representative, due to number of women participating on the PMC
- Women, Elders, youth, and men offer unique perspectives at the Local, regional, and provincial levels
- Ensure the Senate is not a political body.

Urban Councils

- Clarify and justify the rationale for Urban Councils; consider repealing Article 6
- Additional levels are unnecessary (e.g., Locals, Regions, etc.).

Additional Comments

- Métis Independence:
 - o Clarify and justify the definition of "third order of government" in Article 13.1
 - o Amend Article 13 by replacing "third order of government" with "Métis distinct order of government".
- Affiliates:
 - o Connect Affiliates to the *Constitution* for reporting, accountability, and transparency
 - o Establish Affiliate offices in the north
 - o Ensure services are allocated to the north and not concentrated in the South
 - o Devolve Affiliates to the Regions and Locals.
- Article considerations:
 - o Article 1, requires revision
 - o Article 3, should be amended to indicate that the representative from the Métis Women of Saskatchewan and representative from the Provincial Métis Youth Council be elected positions
 - o Article 4, should be amended to specify that the Executive be comprised of only a President and a Vice President
 - o Article 10, should be amended by replacing "membership cards" with "citizenship cards"
 - o Article 11.2, should be repealed or amended to specify that citizens cannot override decisions of the MNLA
 - o Article 12.2, should be amended by eliminating the four extra seats for women at the MNLA
 - o Article 13, should be amended by replacing "third order of government" with "Métis distinct order of government"
 - o Article 14A, may be redundant pending agreements with the Federal government; continue research following the change to government
 - o Article 15, requires updating
 - o Article 16, requires updating
 - o Article 17, should be removed.

Eastern Region 1

Feedback provided by participants, on the discussion topics presented at the following sessions:

- Cumberland House – September 26, 2019 (15 participants)
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Constitution Preamble

- Acknowledge the children and their future, their homelands and traditional hunting and gathering territories
- Emphasize the importance of family, kinship, wellbeing, education, democracy, equality, respect, pride, Elders, and a clear definition of Métis identity
- Reference the importance of education on the *Constitution* in schools and amongst all the Métis of Saskatchewan
- Ensure the *Constitution* can evolve
- Incorporate historical laws
- Emphasize the importance of language, culture, history, and traditional territory (the land, water, rivers, lakes and marshes)
- Protection of livelihood and financial stability.

Citizenship

- It is crucial to know how many Métis citizens there are
- Citizenship is an issue; many Métis people are now Bill C-31 due to gaps in services for Métis people.

Executive

- Historically, Métis people had government, the St. Laurent Laws, the Buffalo Hunt; Louis Riel had a Cabinet.

Locals

- Establish a defined membership quota for Locals
- To fulfill a membership quota, MN-S may have to combine some Locals.

Additional Comments

- Article considerations:
 - o Article 2, the not-for-profit model did not work for governments
 - o Article 11 requires revision
 - o Article 14 may become redundant pending future agreements with the federal government
- Results of the gap in services and Bill C-31:
 - o Métis children are losing their Métis identity
 - o Métis children in care must be identified and enumerated
- Include Elders in discussions on education, values, direction, guidance and language
- Ensure the MN-S protects the livelihood and encourages the involvement of women and leaders
- Métis are a nation and should have their own government
- Family, unity, and nation-to-nation relationships are crucial
- Reclaim traditional Métis homeland names
- The Métis Judiciary should address the systematic oppression of the judicial system,

Eastern Region 3

Feedback provided by participants, on the discussion topics presented at the following session:

- Indian Head – October 3, 2019 (10 participants)
-

Constitution Preamble

- Highlight the need for Métis youth to connect with their traditional values and heritage
- Stress the significance of land in sustaining the Métis in Saskatchewan
- Underscore the responsibilities of elected officials through the Oath of Office (the “Oath”)
- Note the movement among Métis youth to reclaim their identity despite discrimination
- Celebrate Métis culture for its rich connections, kinship, and communal gatherings
- Stress the importance of including both oral and researched history in the constitutional preamble
- Acknowledge spirituality in the Constitution (not religion)
- Recognize the contributions of both Elders and youth in traditional practices like hunting and trapping.

Citizenship

- Address the MN-S’ onerous citizenship application process
- Reduce barriers to those seeking Métis citizenship.

Executive

- The Executive could be exclusively an advisory position
- The Executive is unnecessary considering the role of the PMC; it should be removed from the *Constitution*
- The positions of Secretary and Treasurer are no longer required as we move to a formal government; the Treasurer can become the Minister of Finance
- Create an enforcement mechanism to address non-compliance with the Code of Conduct.

Locals

- The creation of new Locals should be determined by the Region
- A mechanism is needed to ensure that Locals are active and engaged.

Provincial Métis Council

- Establish a process to remove members of the PMC
- Ensure Oath-taking is recorded, documented, witnessed, and done in public
- The President should be able to appoint Cabinet Ministers outside of the PMC; a selection committee (outside elected officials) could review qualifications for Ministry candidates

Senate, Women, and Youth

- Amend Article 12:
 - o By removing the provision that women will be designated four seats at the MNLA
 - o To indicate that women and youth each be elected to hold a maximum of two seats at the MNLA
- Create a Ministry for Women and a Ministry for Youth, appointed by the MNLA
- Considering the historical context, examine the involvement of women in shaping the *Métis Constitution*
- Clarify the role of the PMC in the Legislative Assembly

Urban Councils

- Consider removing Article 6 (Urban Councils) from the *Constitution*, as there is already provincial representation and Locals in the cities
- Amend Article 6.1 to allow provisions for hunting, harvesting and land claims across the province.

Additional Comments

- The *Constitution* requires elaboration and detail
- Consider selecting Standing Committee members; Standing Committees can convey recommendations to the PMC
- Clarify the impacts of the changes in the federal government; specifically regarding funding
- The MN-S must ensure a plan for the future (e.g., negotiate deals in resource extraction, develop companies to support sustainability)
- Clarify the responsibility of addressing mismanagement of Locals
- Allow the new Judicial Tribunal the authority to address criminal offences and remove members of the PMC.

Western Region 1

Feedback provided by participants, on the discussion topics presented at the following session:

- Meadow Lake – September 19, 2019 (16 participants)
-

Constitution Preamble

- The identity of Métis citizens, includes accountability, autonomy, consistency, equality, ethics, history, integrity, language, open-mindedness, respect, sharing, tradition, transparency, and trust
- Acknowledge the importance of providing services to others
- Emphasize the importance of culture, tradition and spirituality
- Focus on youth empowerment and education
- Protect the intellectual property of Métis citizens.

Citizenship

- Absent Métis citizens may reflect a lack of trust toward Locals and governments
- The Métis citizenship registry is crucial for allocating funding
- Develop a process for maintaining updated Métis citizenship registry lists, and submitting the updated lists to the MN-S office; ensure children are registered as Métis citizens
- Remove Article 13 (Grandfather Clause) from the *Citizenship Act*.

Executive

- Study the Laws of St. Laurent and the Buffalo Hunt to understand the demands of leadership.

Provincial Métis Council

- Establish greater communication and collaboration
- Improve the structure of the PMC
- Support communications between Local Presidents, Regional Directors and the MN-S Executive
- Regional Directors' limited availability, impacts citizens' ability to gather information and ask questions about Citizenship Card access
- Ensure Regional Directors adequately share information with Métis citizens
- Ensure Locals set regular meetings; Local Presidents must be available.

Regions

- Clarify whether the MN-S has the ability to change the number of Regions
- Allocating funds by population, causes inadequate funding for some regions.

Additional Comments

The following additional comment was provided in writing:

- Article considerations:
 - o Article 1, replace “organization” with “Nation”
 - o Article 11, should be removed
 - o Article 13, (Grandfather Clause) contradicts Article 10 and enables non-Métis to obtain citizenship
 - o Article 14A may be redundant, pending agreements with the Federal government
 - Increase notice prior to future constitutional reform sessions, to provide time for meaningful feedback
 - Throughout the *Constitution*, replace the eliminate the word “Indian”
 - Advertise consultation meetings in local newspapers, radio stations, and social media platforms.
-

Western Region 2

Feedback provided by participants, on the discussion topics presented at the following session:

- Prince Albert – September 28, 2019 (45 attendees)
-

Constitution Preamble

- Emphasize unity and inclusivity, ensuring that all rights applicable to the Métis nation, are uniformly available to every Métis citizen
- Highlight gender equality, recognizing women's roles in governance, culturally-relevant care, and the importance of their contributions to government and society
- Stress citizens' responsibilities to sustainably manage resources, with a focus on conservation and accountability in harvesting, and maintaining the historical Métis relationship with the land; this includes established harvesting regulations and ongoing discussions on climate change impacts
- Acknowledge the entire homeland as Métis traditional territory and the significance of Elder teachings
- In the preamble, capture the essence of discussions, ensuring it translates core values such as honesty, integrity, inclusiveness, transparency, accountability, effective communication, non-violence, respect, and the right to hunt, fish, and gather; interpret these values in Michif and English for clarity and inclusivity.

Executive

- Address concerns about the current function of the provincial body, which suggest the need for clearer roles and greater involvement with the Métis in Saskatchewan
- The *Métis Act* and the Métis Nation Accord confirm that the MN-S is a government, not an NGO
- The process of Constitutional reform has begun, but there are still concerns about the limited involvement beyond local Presidents and the need for broader Métis citizen input to ensure fairness and inclusion
- The *Constitution* defines our identity and the historical role of Saskatchewan in the Métis Nation; discussions should focus on enhancing this living document to move forward constructively
- The Executive should be held accountable for decisions made that represent all Métis citizens
- Address the need for a fair and inclusive Executive that represents the unique voice of Métis citizens, and ensures that political positions benefit rather than exclude.

Métis Nation Legislative Assembly

- Provide MNLA meeting packages one day prior to meetings for all attendees to review
- Ensure Local Presidents and Presidents receive their MNLA and AGA binders at least two weeks before the meetings to allow sufficient time for review with their locals
- Extend the notice period for the Annual General Meeting (AGM) to 45 days to facilitate better preparation
- There was no follow-up to a petition was submitted in June 2019 requesting a public meeting
- Motions seem to be passed at the MNLA without discussion.

Provincial Métis Council

- Consider the following revisions to Article 3:
 - o Article 3.1 – add Elder representative on the MNLA
 - o Article 3.2 – add “upon ratification at the next MNLA”
 - o Article 3.9 – repeal, as elected officials should not hold paid positions for the MN-S.

Senate, Women and Youth

- Prioritize the needs of Senators by ensuring they are well-informed and respected:
 - o Provide clear written definitions of their roles, responsibilities, and limitations
 - o Re-examine the duration and positions of Senators to clarify their functions and enhance governance effectiveness
- Historically, the Senate was responsible for running elections, hiring the Chief Electoral Staff, overseeing election appeals, administering oaths, leading ceremonial activities, and handling disputes.
- Each region is represented by one Senator under the *Senate Act*, reinforcing their integral role in regional governance.

Additional Comments

The following additional comment was provided in writing:

- Constitutional Reform process considerations:
 - o The constitutional reform sessions must provide time for discussion on the *Constitution*
 - o Clarify whether amendments to the *Constitution* have been passed without approval
 - o The non-adherence to the existing MN-S Constitution, Legislation, and Acts, makes discussions on Constitutional reform seem meaningless.
 - o Despite the requirement for an Annual General Assembly every year, it has not convened in almost three years
- Consistent enforcement of rules is needed:
 - o There is a requirement for equitable hunting rights across the province to unify the Métis Nation
 - o Manitoba has advanced further in these aspects, likely due to historical leadership and organizational changes within the Métis National Council
- Delegates expressed dissatisfaction with the handling of constitutional amendments:
 - o There has been a lack of respect for the process and inadequate time allocated for meaningful reform discussions
 - o Accountability, proper representation, and respect for the Executive are critical
 - o Unity and equal rights across the Métis Nation is required
- Métis rights considerations:
 - o Prioritize addressing harvesting/hunting rights
 - o Ensure Métis in the South and North have the same opportunities
 - o Include the right to hunt, fish, and trap in the Constitution
 - o Historically, the MN-S was the leader of the Métis Nation
- “More time is needed on constitutional reform; a 1.5-hour meeting is insufficient to read and make suggestions, which affect the next seven generations”.

Western Region 2A

Feedback provided by participants, on the discussion topics presented at the following session:

- Saskatoon – October 28, 2019 (20 participants)
-

Constitution Preamble

- Strong families create a strong nation
- Acknowledge Métis independence
- Ensure individuals take initiative to implement change as the grassroots foundation.

Executive

- Amend Article 4.7 to clarify that:
 - o In the event of a vacancy of a President or Vice President position on the Executive, that a bi-election may be held
 - o A vacancy in the Secretary or Treasurer positions, may be filled by temporary appointment until the MNLA
- Ensure the Executive is unable to make decisions without input from the PMC.

General Assembly

- The General Assembly provides a voice to Locals and citizens
- Ensure citizens are unable to overturn decisions at the MNLA
- Ensure Local Presidents and Regional Councils represent Locals and citizens at the MNLA
- Not every decision at the MNLA can be voted on by the entire population
- Ensure effective communication between Regional Councils and their Locals.

Locals

- Research the “*Local Governance Administration Act*” for guidance on Locals
- Include a definition for Locals; utilize the *Elections Act* for reference on Locals definition
- Incorporate geographic definitions to specify which Local a citizen can join.

Métis Nation Legislative Assembly

- Clarify how Métis women obtain a seat at the PMC
- Mandate the election of a woman from each region to sit at the MNLA
- Ensure women representatives hold the same voting power as democratically elected representatives
- Consider electing women representatives
- Incorporate gender-inclusive language in the *Constitution*.

Provincial Métis Council

- Enable the President to appoint Junior Ministers across the province.

Regions

- Maintain the current system of votes per region
 - Clarify job descriptions for Regional Directors and ensure they follow directives from their regions
 - Allot each region an elected representative, allowing for a voice to smaller regions
 - Create governance workshops for Regional Directors
 - Elect a women and youth representative for each Regional Council
 - Clarify the voting impacts of the Treasurer holding two positions.
-

Urban Councils

- Enable rural councils to provide a voice on behalf of rural regions
- Urban Councils may be unnecessary in the *Constitution*.

Additional Comments

- Northwest land claim negotiations may narrow the footprint of the Métis homeland:
 - o Include the Northwest Saskatchewan Métis Council and all regions in land claim negotiations
 - o Ensure land claim negotiations are consistent with the Constitution and the MN-S
- Article considerations
 - o Article 1, change “organization” to “government” throughout the MN-S Constitution
 - o Article 3, establish Junior Ministers
 - o Article 6.1, should be amended to allow provisions for hunting, harvesting and land claims in Métis regions, to be consistent with objectives of the *Constitution*
 - o Article 7, should define what constitutes a Local, using the Elections Act as a point of reference
 - o Article 10, move citizenship to the beginning of the Constitution
 - o Article 12, women have reached parity in representation at the MNLA
 - o Article 13, omit as standalone provision; reference “Métis independence” in Preamble
 - o Article 14, Affiliates may come under MN-S governance pending the *Métis Recognition Act*
- Establish a Local Governance Administration Act to defines rules and roles for Locals
- Integrate “cyber” terms into *Constitution* to state that slander is no acceptable on social media
- A Code of Conduct could be created as a separate piece of legislation
- Ensure the *Constitution* represents the Métis Nation and includes Métis voices across the province.

Western Region 3

Feedback provided by participants, on the discussion topics presented at the following session:

- Regina – October 29, 2019 (28 participants)
-

Constitution Preamble

- “The hub of the Red River Cart Wheel represents the backbone of the Métis Nation:
 - o Within the hub were the core values of honesty, integrity and respect
 - o The spokes of the hub include initiatives such as health and education, which are priorities that are reflective of the values of the Métis people”
- Include the freedom of Métis people to practice their own religion and spiritual beliefs.

Citizenship

- Consider allowing Métis Citizens the choice to register with dual First Nation and Métis Citizenship.
- Encourage individuals to contact their Regional Directors for assistance with registration.

Executive

- The President could recommend the appointment of a Minister of Finance, for the MNLA’s ratification.

Métis Nation Legislative Assembly

- Authorize Senators to vote at the MNLA
- Elect 12 women regional representatives, with one selected to sit at the MNLA; authorize the one selected woman representative to appoint three additional women from the North, South, and Central regions to join her at the table
- Elect one youth representative to sit at the MNLA; educate youth on Métis identity and allow opportunities for youth to share information
- Create a party system for representation at the MNLA; consider relevant costs
- Ensure freedom of speech at the MNLA
- The current MNLA process is ineffective; innovate ways to self-govern from the grassroots
- Women’s and youth issues must be represented at the MNLA.

Provincial Métis Council

- Elect regional representatives from the north, south, and central regions to form an Executive to sit on the PMC
- Authorize the PMC to recommend portfolios, after the PMC is structured in a way that it adequately represents all regions
- Consider compensating portfolio holders
- Ensure recourse for Regional Directors not communicating information between Locals and the PMC
- Establish legislation to define the Regional Director’s role and outline recourse for their non-compliance.

Regions

- Establish three regions to represent each jurisdiction: northern, southern, and central regions
- Consider the needs of different regions
- Representation by population can be achieved through northern, southern, and central regions

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- Regional Representatives are responsible for preparing citizens for programs, services, and self-governance.

Locals

- Define the roles of Locals
- Ensure Locals are not formed for financial gain
- Address Local's lack of funding to hold meetings and support their citizens.

Additional Comments

- Article considerations:
 - o Article 1, the term "organization" is outdated
 - o Article 10, authorize Métis to register with dual First Nation and Métis citizenship
 - o Article 12, women and youth issues are crucial and require representation
 - o Article 15, create the Secretariat under a Ministry mandate; appoint a Minister of Finance by the MN-S President, include a Provincial Secretary, with vote and ratification by the MNLA
- Constitutional reform should be thorough, time-intensive, and from the grassroots
- Base ideologies on the betterment of the Métis Nation
- Provide support, information, and education for Métis youth on identity and accessibility
- Provide clear information for families to communicate with their children
- Utilize technology to empower and connect Métis citizens; the MN-S website is inadequate
- Focus on economic development, schools, housing, and a united MN-S
- Submit the paid consultant review to contribute to the reform process
- Internal strife in the MN-S creates disconnection
- Rural areas experience exclusion from political processes
- Establish equal funding between rural and urban areas
- Consider the Newfoundland and Labrador models of governance regarding collaboration
- Consider other governance models when shaping Métis governance structures
- Consider world café style breakout sessions at the pre-MNLA workshops
- Ensure Regional Directors and Local Presidents communicate with the Métis in Saskatchewan
- Consider a resource hub to provide rural areas with resources, assistance, programs, and services.

Summary of Feedback

The following is a summary of feedback gathered during the 2019 Consultation Sessions

Constitution Preamble

- Showcase Métis pride and nationhood in the preamble.
- Highlight foundational values such as unity, integrity, inclusiveness, and environmental stewardship
- Stress the importance of language, culture, and spirituality in Métis identity
- Address key elements of Métis life including land use, rights, education, and gender equality
- Acknowledge Métis responsibility for and historical connection to the land
- Honour the contributions of Elders and youth in traditional activities like hunting and trapping
- Recognize robust bonds between the Métis of Saskatchewan, strong family connections, and deep kinship ties
- Ensure the *Constitution* adapts and stays pertinent for future Métis generations.

Citizenship

- Consolidate and clarify Métis citizenship processes by reaffirming the definition of citizenship in the *Constitution*; ensure elected officials and voters hold a valid citizenship card
- Eliminate conflicting articles in the *Citizenship Act* and the *Constitution*, specifically Article 10.4 and the Grandfather Clause, to maintain integrity and consistency
- Separate the Métis Registry from political processes; ensure Regional Representatives do not hire for the registry
- Address and streamline the citizenship application process, reduce wait times for citizenship cards, and rename “membership cards” as “citizenship cards”
- Develop efficient systems for registering Métis newborns and maintaining updated citizenship registry lists, to accurately track and manage Métis citizen numbers
- Enhance access to services and reduce barriers for obtaining Métis citizenship, reflecting a more inclusive approach and rebuilding trust with the Métis in Saskatchewan
- Provide education and equitable opportunities for funding applications, supporting Métis citizens in navigating and benefiting from available programs.

Elections

- Mandate automatic suspension of the MN-S government if elections are not held by a specified date
- Consider dissolving the MN-S government and designating a body to oversee governance during election periods
- Implement staggered elections at specific intervals to ensure continuity of governance, and set clear terms for elected officials
- Establish open ballot box elections for Locals
- Clarify that elections are not necessary to replace officials who have passed away.

Executive

- Consolidate the MN-S’ Executive under a Secretary-General position (potentially the President)
- Consider a streamlined Executive structure of only a President and Vice-President
- Appoint Executive members, including a Treasurer who will assume the role as Minister of Finance, pending MNLA ratification; restrict Executives to holding only one seat
- Reflect on historical governance models like the Laws of St. Laurent and the Buffalo Hunt to inform

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- current leadership responsibilities
 - Consider removing the Executive from the *Constitution* if it duplicates PMC functions; the Executive could have an advisory role
 - The Secretary's role could include compliance oversight for better transparency and accountability
 - Involve citizens to gather feedback that accurately represents Métis identity and history
 - Reinforce the MN-S' status as a governmental entity, not an NGO
 - Support effective communications between Local Presidents, Regional Directors, and the Executive
 - The Executive should effectively represent all Métis citizens.

General Assembly

- Restrict the ability of citizens and the General Assembly to overturn decisions made at the MNLA
- Not all decisions should require a vote from the entire MN-S citizenship

Locals

- Revise Article 7.1 to establish Locals as the core unit of Métis government
- Provide Locals with resources to hold meetings and the ability to secure funding for programs
- Legislate distinct roles, structures, and responsibilities for Locals
- Define and enforce membership quotas for Locals, possibly merging some to meet these quotas, and support Locals with consistent engagement strategies
- Incorporate clear geographic boundaries for Locals to clarify membership eligibility
- Ensure Locals are not formed for financial gain; addressing their funding needs, to support services
- Promote fair representation by adopting population-based models, adjusting membership rates at Locals, and ensuring Local Presidents in good standing are included as portfolio holders
- Initiate governance activities at the Local level before escalating them.

Métis Nation Legislative Assembly

- Enhance the MNLA's role by clearly defining its decision-making authority, improving financial management, and accountability
- Consider the MNLA's responsibilities for budget approval and ministerial appointments
- Improve meeting preparation by providing materials in advance, extending AGM notice periods, and enabling open discussion of motions at the MNLA
- Strengthen representation with elected women and youth, ensure equitable voting rights and incorporate gender-inclusive language
- Introduce a party system for structured representation at the MNLA
- Enhance freedom of speech to support grassroots self-governance, and women's and youth issues.

Provincial Métis Council

- Replace Les Filles de Madeleine with a Women's Council
- Representatives for the Métis Women of Saskatchewan and the Provincial Métis Youth Council should be elected
- Clarify PMC portfolio approval processes, stipend guidelines, and reporting responsibilities
- Improve transparency by documenting public Oath-taking and address any breaches of the Oath
- Allow the President to appoint Cabinet and Junior Ministers; a Selection Committee could review their qualifications
- Elect regional representatives to form an Executive on the PMC
- Restructure the PMC for balanced regional representation and establish legislation to define Regional Directors' roles with specific recourse for non-compliance of duties.

Regions

- The *Constitution* should address legal aspects of incorporation
- Clarify Regional Directors' responsibilities to act under regional directives
- Outline the regional structure, with 12 Regions, and 121 Locals; each should have an established office; clarify whether MN-S can modify the number of Regions
- Keep the regional voting system and address funding disparities through population-based allocations
- Elect a woman and youth representative for each Regional Council
- Categorize regions into three jurisdictions: northern, southern, and central, to ensure balanced representation and address specific regional needs
- Offer governance workshops for Regional Directors to support their readiness for self-governance.

Senate, Women and Youth

- Consider assigning the Senate to manage operations during elections; alternatively, eliminate Senate positions and integrate them into MN-S portfolios
- Align Senators' terms with the four-year MN-S election cycle
- Maintain the non-political nature of the Senate
- Clarify Senator's role definitions and responsibilities, re-examine their positions to improve governance, and recognize their historical roles in election oversight and regional representation.

Urban Councils

- Evaluate the Urban Councils; clarify their structure, purpose, and impact on regional operations
- Consider repealing Article 6 to remove Urban Councils from the *Constitution*, as their roles may overlap with other levels like Locals and Regions
- Ensure Urban Councils, if retained, function as support systems for Locals and enable rural councils to represent rural regions effectively.

Revisions

- Article 1: Change "organization" to "government" or "Nation"
- Article 2: Amend to allow all twelve regions to each elect one youth and one woman representative
- Article 3: Amend to include elected representatives from the Métis Women of Saskatchewan; the Provincial Métis Youth Council; and Junior Ministers
- Article 3.1: Amend to include an Elder representative on the MNLA
- Article 3.2: Amend to include "upon ratification at the next MNLA"
- Article 3.9: Repeal, as elected officials should not hold paid positions for the MN-S
- Article 4: Clarify to specify that the Executive comprises only a President and Vice President
- Article 5: Include a reference to the "Regional Boundaries Act"
- Article 6.1: Amend to allow provisions for hunting, harvesting and land claims
- Article 7: Amend to clearly acknowledged Locals as the core unit of Métis government
- Article 10: Replace "membership cards" with "citizenship cards"; move Citizenship up
- Article 11.2: Revise or repeal to prevent citizens from overriding MNLA decisions
- Article 13: Replace "third order of government" with "Métis distinct order of government" and remove contradictions enabling non-Métis to obtain citizenship
- Article 14: Amend if Affiliates come under MN-S governance
- Article 14A: may become redundant, due to pending agreements and Acts
- Article 15 and Article 16: Update to include the creation of a Secretariat under a Ministry mandate, appointing a Minister of Finance, and a Provincial Secretary
- Article 17: Repeal, as its objectives have been achieved.

Information Items

Documents provided for reference at the 2019 Constitutional Reform Consultation Sessions

The following items were reviewed at the Constitutional Reform Consultation Sessions, and may be requested by email from the MN-S (info@metisvoice.ca):

1. Voice of the People: 2019 Métis Nation-Saskatchewan Constitutional Reform Comment Form
2. Voice of the People: 2019 Métis Nation-Saskatchewan Constitutional Reform: Background Summary
3. Voice of the People: 2019 Métis Nation-Saskatchewan Constitutional Reform: Background Document on Governance for Dialogue on Reforming the MN-S Constitution and Related Legislation
4. Voice of the People: Reforming the MN-S Constitution and Related Legislation
5. Copy of the Laws and Regulations Established for the Colony of St. Laurent on the Saskatchewan
6. Laws of the Buffalo Hunt
7. Constitution of the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan, adopted December 3, 1993
8. Métis Nation of Saskatchewan Citizenship Act, ratified November 6, 1999
9. Excerpt from MNLA Dialogue Forums Summary Report (April, 2019)
10. Revised Terms of Reference for an Ad Hoc Committee to Review the Need for a Judicial Council/Tribunal.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

The following acronyms are referenced in these notes:

MNS	Métis Nation – Saskatchewan
MNLA	Métis Nation Legislative Assembly
PMC	Provincial Métis Council