

# Introduction

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## Introduction

In March, 2006, the second triennial Aboriginal Policy Research Conference (APRC) was held in Ottawa, Canada. This conference brought together over 1,200 researchers and policy-makers from across Canada and around the world. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal delegates (representing government, Aboriginal organizations, universities, non-governmental organizations, and think tanks) came together to disseminate, assess, learn, and push forward evidence-based research in order to advance policy and program development. The conference was a continuation of the work begun at the first APRC held in November, 2002. The 2002 conference was co-hosted by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) and the University of Western Ontario (UWO),<sup>1</sup> with the participation of nearly 20 federal departments and agencies, and four national, non-political Aboriginal organizations. By promoting interaction between researchers, policy-makers, and Aboriginal people, the conference was intended to: expand our knowledge of the social, economic, and demographic determinants of Aboriginal well-being; identify and facilitate the means by which this knowledge may be translated into effective policies; and allow outstanding policy needs to shape the research agenda within government, academia, and Aboriginal communities.

The 2002 Aboriginal Policy Research Conference was the largest of its kind ever held in Canada, with about 700 policy-makers, researchers, scientists, academics, and Aboriginal community leaders coming together to examine and discuss cutting-edge research on Aboriginal issues. The main portion of the conference spanned several days, and included over fifty workshops. In addition to and separate from the conference itself, several federal departments and agencies independently organized pre- and post-conference meetings and events related to Aboriginal research in order to capitalize on the confluence of participants. Most notably, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) held its first major consultation on Aboriginal research the day after the conference ended. These consultations led to the creation of SSHRC's Aboriginal Research Grant Program which supports university-based researchers and Aboriginal community organizations in conducting research on issues of concern to Aboriginal peoples.<sup>2</sup>

## **The Impetus for the First Aboriginal Policy Research Conference**

The idea for holding a national conference dedicated to Aboriginal issues grew from simple frustration. While there are many large conferences held in Canada every year, Aboriginal issues are often at best only an afterthought or sub-theme. More frequently, Aboriginal issues are as marginalized as the people themselves, and are either omitted from the planning agenda or are begrudgingly given the odd token workshop at other national fora. While Aboriginal peoples account for only about 3% of the Canadian population, issues pertaining to them occupy a disproportionate amount of public discourse. In fact, in any given year, the Aboriginal policy agenda accounts for anywhere from 10–30% of Parliament's time, and litigation cases pertaining to Aboriginal issues have no rival in terms of the hundreds of billions of dollars in contingent liability that are at risk to the Crown. Given these and other policy needs, such as those posed by the dire socio-economic conditions in which many Aboriginal people live, it seems almost bizarre that there are so few opportunities to promote evidence-based decision-making and timely, high-quality research on Aboriginal issues. Hence, the 2002 Aboriginal Policy Research Conference was born.

In order to address the shortcomings of other conferences, the APRC was designed and dedicated first to crosscutting Aboriginal policy research covering issues of interest to all Aboriginal peoples regardless of status, membership, or place of residence. Second, the conference was designed to be national in scope, bringing together stakeholders from across Canada, in order to provide a forum for discussing a variety of issues related to Aboriginal policy research. Finally, in designing the conference, we specifically sought to promote structured dialogue among researchers, policy-makers and Aboriginal community representatives.

The first conference was seen, worldwide, as an important and successful event.<sup>3</sup> The feedback that we received from participants indicated that the conference provided excellent value and should be held at regular intervals. It was decided, given the wide scope and effort needed to organize a conference of this magnitude, that it should be held every three years. In March, 2006, the second APRC was held.

## **Aboriginal Policy Research Conference 2006**

The 2006 APRC was jointly organized by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, the University of Western Ontario, and the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC).<sup>4</sup> The 2006 APRC was intended to: (1) expand our knowledge of Aboriginal issues; (2) provide an important forum where these ideas and beliefs could be openly discussed and debated; (3) integrate research from diverse themes; (4) highlight research on Aboriginal women's issues; (5) highlight research on

urban Aboriginal issues; and (6) allow outstanding policy needs to shape the future research agenda.

Although the 2002 APRC was quite successful, we wanted to raise the bar for the 2006 event. During and after the 2002 conference, we elicited feedback, both formally and informally, from delegates, researchers, sponsors, and participating organizations. We acted on three suggestions from these groups for improving the 2006 conference.

First, we made a concerted effort to ensure that Aboriginal youth participated in the 2006 conference, because today's youth will be tomorrow's leaders. The NAFC organized a special selection process that allowed us to sponsor and bring over 30 Aboriginal youth delegates from across Canada to the conference. The NAFC solicited the participation of Aboriginal youth with a focus on university students or recent university graduates. A call letter was sent to more than 100 of the NAFC centres across Canada. Potential youth delegates were required to fill out an application form, and write a letter outlining why they should be selected. The NAFC set up an adjudication body that ensured the best candidates were selected, and that these youth represented all the regions of Canada. The travel and accommodation expenses of these Aboriginal youth delegates were covered by the conference.

A parallel track was also put in place in order to encourage young researchers to participate at the conference. A graduate-student research competition was organized and advertised across Canada. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal graduate students were invited to submit an abstract of their research. Nearly 40 submissions were received, and a blue ribbon panel selected 12 graduate students to present their research at the conference. The travel and accommodation costs of these graduate students were also covered by the conference. The research papers of the 12 graduate students were judged by a blue ribbon panel and the top five students were awarded financial scholarships of \$1,000 to help with their studies.

Second, at the 2002 conference, research sessions and workshops were organized by the sponsors. The sponsors (government departments and Aboriginal organizations) showcased their own research, or research that they found interesting or important. At the 2002 conference, there was no venue for accepting research that was not sponsored. For the 2006 conference, we wanted to attract a broader range of research, so a call for papers was organized and advertised across Canada. Over 70 submissions were received from academics and community-based researchers. About half of these submissions were selected for inclusion in the conference program.

Third, the 2002 conference focused solely on Canadian research on Aboriginal issues. For the 2006 conference, we accepted research on international Indigenous issues, and many foreign scholars participated. In fact, the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues held one of its five world consul-

tations at the conference. This consultation brought experts on well-being from around the globe, and greatly enhanced the depth of international involvement at the 2006 APRC.

The APRC is a vehicle for knowledge dissemination. Its primary goal is to showcase the wide body of high-quality research that has recently been conducted on Aboriginal issues in order to promote evidence-based policy making. This conference is dedicated solely to Aboriginal policy research in order to promote interaction between researchers, policy-makers, and Aboriginal peoples. It is hoped that this interaction will continue to facilitate the means by which research or knowledge can be translated into effective policies.

Of course, many different groups have vested interests in conducting research, and in the production of knowledge and its dissemination. Some battle lines have already been drawn over a wide variety of controversial issues pertaining to Aboriginal research. For example, can the research enterprise coexist with the principles of “ownership, control, access, and possession (OCAP)?” Are different ethical standards required for doing research on Aboriginal issues? Does Indigenous traditional knowledge (ITK) compete with, or compliment Western-based scientific approaches? Does one size fit all, or do we need separate research, policies, and programs for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit? Many of these issues are both emotionally and politically charged. These issues, and the passion that they evoke, render Aboriginal research a fascinating and exciting field of endeavour. The APRC provides an important forum where these ideas and beliefs can be openly discussed and debated, while respecting the diversity of opinions which exist.

The APRC was designed to examine themes horizontally. Rather than looking at research themes (e.g., justice, social welfare, economics, health, governance, demographics) in isolation from one another, an attempt was made to integrate these themes together in the more holistic fashion that figures so prominently in Aboriginal cultures. By bringing together diverse research themes, we hoped that more informed policies would be developed that better represent the realities faced by Aboriginal peoples.

This conference was also designed to ensure that gender-based issues were prominent. In addition to integrating gender-based issues with the many topics of the conference, specific sessions were designated to address issues of particular importance to policies affecting Aboriginal women. This included, for instance, a one-day pre-conference workshop on gender issues related to defining identity and Indian status (often referred to as Bill C-31). This pre-conference workshop will have its own book that will be published as a third volume of the 2006 proceedings, and the fifth volume in the *Aboriginal Policy Research* series.

The conference also gave considerable attention to the geographic divide that exists between rural and urban environments. Nearly half of the Aboriginal population lives in urban environments, yet little research or policy attention is devoted

to this fact. Specific sessions were designated to address research that has been undertaken with respect to Aboriginal urban issues.

The conference engaged policy-makers and Aboriginal people as active participants, rather than as passive spectators. By engaging these two groups, research gaps can be more easily identified, and researchers can be more easily apprised of how to make their work more relevant to policy-makers. In addition, the conference promoted the establishment of networks among the various stakeholders in Aboriginal research. These relationships will provide continuous feedback, ensuring that policy needs continue to direct research agendas long after the conference has ended.

In the end, 1,200 delegates participated at the conference from Canada and numerous countries in Europe, Asia, Latin America, North America, and the South Pacific. The conference planning included 20 federal government departments and organizations,<sup>5</sup> seven Aboriginal organizations,<sup>6</sup> four private corporations,<sup>7</sup> and the University of Western Ontario. Feedback from participants and sponsors indicates that the 2006 conference was even more successful than the previous one. This was not too surprising given that there were over 90 research workshops, in addition to the plenary sessions, where delegates met to hear presentations and discuss research and policy issues.<sup>8</sup>

## **Breaking New Ground**

While the APRC brought people from many nationalities and ethnicities together, it also provided a forum for showcasing Inuit, Métis and First Nations performing arts. The conference delegates were exposed to a wide variety of cultural presentations and entertainment. Métis fiddling sensation Sierra Nobel energized delegates with her youthful passion and the virtuosity of her music. Different First Nations drum groups energized the audience. Juno and Academy Award–winner Buffy Sainte-Marie entertained and mesmerized everyone. We saw demonstrations of Métis fancy dancing, and the skill and artistic splendour of two-time world champion hoop dancer, Lisa Odjig. We heard the rhythmic and haunting sounds of Inuit throat singers, Karin and Kathy Kettler (sisters and members of the Nukariik First Nation), and we laughed uproariously at the humour of Drew Haydon Taylor (the ongoing adventures of the blue-eyed Ojibway). The conference was indeed a place where diverse Aboriginal cultures met, and the artistic talents of the aforementioned performers were shared with delegates from across Canada and around the world.

## **Research, Policy, and Evidence-based Decisions**

It was Lewis Carroll who said, “If you don’t know where you are going, any road will get you there.”<sup>9</sup> Knowing where you are going requires a plan, and that can only be based on understanding the current and past conditions. The

first APRC, and the 2006 conference, was centred on promoting evidence-based policy making. We stated previously that, in part, our conference was designed to deal with the communication challenges that face social scientists, both inside and outside of government, policy-makers, and the Aboriginal community. Could we bring these different communities of interest together to develop a better understanding of the problems and processes that create the poor socio-economic conditions facing Aboriginal people in Canada? And equally, can we find the basis that has created the many successes in the Aboriginal community? Could we develop the co-operative relations that would foster evidence-based policy making and thereby make improvements in those conditions? And equally, can we develop those relations in order to promote the “best practices” in terms of the successes? We are acutely aware that policy-makers and researchers, both those in and out of government, too often live and work in isolation from each other. This means that the prerequisite linkages between research and policy are not always present. This linkage is something we referred to in earlier volumes as the research-policy nexus.<sup>10</sup>

Our aim has been to strengthen that research-policy nexus. The APRC is first and foremost a vehicle for knowledge dissemination, and with a “captive” audience of many senior federal policy-makers,<sup>11</sup> the conference was able to enhance dialogue between researchers and decision-makers and, ultimately, promote evidence-based decision making. More broadly, both the 2002 and 2006 conferences succeeded in helping to raise the profile of Aboriginal policy research issues, including research gaps, promoting horizontality, and enhancing dialogue with Aboriginal peoples.

Moreover, in order to produce superior quality research, there is much to be gained when researchers, both in and out of government, work in co-operation on problems and issues together. Beyond just disseminating the results of research, the APRC was also about the discussion and sharing of research agendas, facilitating data access, and assisting in analysis through mutual critique and review.

We feel strongly that the highest quality research must be produced, and in turn that research must be communicated to policy-makers for consideration in formulating agendas for the future. If you wish to make policy on more than ideological and subjective grounds, then you need to help produce and use high calibre research understandings. It is simply not enough to delve superficially into issues, nor be driven by political agendas that have little grounding in the current situation. The APRC is designed to challenge ideologically driven thinking and push people past prejudice, superficiality, and subjectivity.

Policy that affects Aboriginal people is made by Aboriginal organizations, Aboriginal governments, and Aboriginal communities. It is also made by national and provincial governments and the civil service and civil society that attaches to those systems. We encourage all these peoples and bodies to embrace the realities they face with the best understandings of the world that evidence can give them.

## Volume Three—The Contents of the Proceedings

Our set of research and policy discussions presented here is simply an attempt to bring forward some of the vast quantity of first-class research presented at the conference. This set of papers represent a small sample of the contributions made at the conference.

This volume of selected proceedings from 2006<sup>12</sup> are divided into themes. Our purpose was to group research into sets of ideas where the reader might find the content complementary. In this volume (number 3 in our series) we have three sections: (1) Education and Employment Transitions, (2) Dimensions of Socio-economic Well-being and, (3) International Research.

In section one, we have a range of interesting issues related to education and transitions to employment. Ciceri and Scott (Chapter 1) note that economic security is a central issue facing Aboriginal people today. Employment represents a key source of income, provides access to income support programs (such as employment insurance and pension benefits), facilitates self-development, and enables individuals to contribute to the collective and develop social networks. Aboriginal people continue to be disadvantaged in the labour market compared to other Canadians. Using data from the 2001 census, Ciceri and Scott examine the determinants of employment among Aboriginal people in Canada in order to inform policy. They emphasize that “policies and programs must embody an understanding of the ‘network of circumstances’ surrounding an individual.”

We chose one paper that looks at the teaching level itself. Anthony N. Ezeife (Chapter 3) draws our attention to the low representation and relative poor performance of students from Indigenous cultural backgrounds in math and science courses. He examines a case study on Walpole Island, and weaves in the general problems seen across Canada, where it has been observed that Aboriginal students shy away from these courses and that a high percentage of those who do enrol often drop out, not just from math and science, but eventually out of school itself. Ezeife argues that a good way to address this problem is to adopt culture-sensitive and holistic curricula in teaching these students—an approach that was initiated in the pilot study on Walpole Island. He argues that it is both the content and the form of the teaching that is important.

White, Spence, and Maxim (Chapter 4) look at the role of social capital in determining Aboriginal educational outcomes. Social capital is defined as the networks of social relations within the milieu, characterized by specific norms and attitudes that serve the purpose of potentially enabling individuals or groups access to a pool of resources and supports. Their paper examines the impacts of social capital on Aboriginal educational attainment in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. It is innovative analysis that has raised a lot of interest as they create a new schema for evaluating this trendy theory. They find that social capital has a moderate influence and rarely acts alone. It influences outcomes for Aboriginal educational attainment in conjunction with other resources (human and economic/physical

capital). It is contingent on the context, and this can be assessed by using their four new elements/dimension schema.

On the issue of transitions we have two papers. Maxim and White (Chapter 2), using cycle II of the Youth in Transition Survey (YITS), explore differential patterns of school completion and transition to the workforce between predominantly urban Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth. They examine the role of students' families' values toward education, and students' levels of connectedness or engagement with schools as contributing factors to the likelihood of school completion. Of the 22,378 completed interviews, 782 individuals identified themselves as having an Aboriginal cultural or racial background. This small number made it difficult to look at all the key questions the researchers pose. The findings from this study suggest that not only are patterns of school completion different for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, but that employment patterns also differ. In particular, Aboriginal students who drop out of school often have higher relative levels of employment than their non-Aboriginal counterparts. The authors are cautious, but feel they can conclude there may be some correlation between how well students do and how much support for education is expressed by parents.

Finally, Costa Kapsalis' study (Chapter 5) attempts to determine to what extent the weaker labour market performance of Aboriginal Canadians is a result of the types of occupations they have, and why their occupations differ from other Canadians. In particular, the study examines: (1) What kind of jobs do Aboriginal workers have compared to non-Aboriginal workers? (2) What is the impact of occupational differences between the two groups of workers on wage differences? and (3) What are the main factors behind their occupational and wage differences? He finds that there are significant occupational differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal workers with Aboriginal workers under-represented in managerial and professional occupations, particularly in the private sector. He also finds that educational differences explain most of the occupational differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal workers. He looks at the policy implications and identifies some promising policy directions for changing this situation.

Section Two of the proceedings looks at socio-economic well-being. Two of the papers deal with the centrally important issue of clean potable water. Sarah Morales, one of the graduate scholarship winners, wrote a paper (Chapter 9) that begins with the understanding that the objective of the government's policy is to ensure that people living on reserves attain a level of health, and have access to water facilities, comparable with other Canadians living in communities of a similar size and location. However, Morales argues, it is these very government policies that often prevent this objective from being attained. This is mainly because these policies lack input from Aboriginal communities, and fail to take into consideration the unique circumstances and issues that these communities face. First she explores the current federal policy adopted by government to deal with the issue of safe drinking water in First Nations communities and the inad-



equacies of this policy. Secondly, she suggests two working approaches to water quality in these communities. The first is the creation of a co-management regime between the federal government and First Nations governments. The second is a recognition of an Aboriginal right to govern the water resources within their traditional territory.

Graham and Fortier (Chapter 8) also attack the water issue but from a different perspective. In their paper, "Building Governance Capacity: The Case of Potable Water in First Nations Communities," they look at potable water from a community capacity-building perspective. They present a model for capacity development that outlines the various approaches, goals, and considerations for strategies to develop capacity. They examine the advantages and disadvantages of each of the possible approaches, then apply that discussion to potable water in First Nations communities. They draw lessons from the case study. The key one is that communities in the greatest need of reform for their water systems are often the least likely to be equipped to lead such reforms.

James Ford and Johanna Wandel's paper "Responding to Climate Change in Nunavut: Policy Recommendations," (Chapter 6) examines the possibilities around using policy to reduce and moderate the potential impacts of climate change in Inuit communities in Nunavut, Canada. Their focus is on hunting, and they argue that if policy is to be successful, it has to address the non-climatic determinants of vulnerability, which are of social, cultural, and economic importance to communities. If we address these areas of vulnerability, it will give communities more capacity to cope with the coming change. Ford and Wandel discuss areas where the government can have an impact on vulnerability: expansion of cultural preservation programs, strengthening of wildlife co-management arrangements, and community involvement in shaping the nature of future economic development.

Robert M. Bone (Chapter 10) uses data from the newly created Inuit database, which was created to provide previously unavailable census data about (1) Inuit identity population, (2) Canada and the four land claim regions, and (3) those residing outside of the four Inuit land claim regions. Bone uses this data to describe the Inuit identity population by population size, age, and sex for the five Inuit regions and the urban Inuit population. This more accurate and detailed data on the Inuit population is intended to inform policies affecting the Inuit in Canada.

Another paper in this section is by Jessica Ball and Ron George, "Policies and Practices Affecting Aboriginal Fathers' Involvement with Their Children." This paper offers Aboriginal fathers' perspectives on how policies and practices of federal and provincial agencies in community programs affect their involvement with their children. They argue that Aboriginal fathers have been especially excluded, both as a stakeholder group and as a resource for their children. The authors explore fathers' stories utilizing qualitative methods. They conclude that the Aboriginal fathers' stories suggest the potential for a new generation of positively involved Aboriginal fathers that urgently needs to be recognized and supported through policy reforms and resources to put policies into practice.

Mary-Jane Norris, in her “Aboriginal Languages in Canada” paper (Chapter 11) discusses the current state of First Nations, Inuit and Métis languages. She explores recent trends focusing on community-level indicators in relation to the need for community-driven language planning and strategies. Norris assesses the long-term trends over the past twenty years, and future prospects for both maintaining and revitalizing languages. Lastly, the chapter outlines policy issues that address the challenges of protecting and promoting Aboriginal languages.

The third section is a sample of the international papers that were delivered at the conference. The section begins with the remarks from Ms. Elsa Stamatopoulou, Chief, Secretariat of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, followed by the remarks of Eric Guimond, Acting Director of the Strategic Research and Analysis Directorate, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (Chapter 12). They situate the current important investigation and dialogue around creating indicators of well-being that could be used worldwide to assess our human condition.

Ms. Stamatopoulou states that

the Permanent Forum strongly believes that indicators and disaggregated data are important, not just as a measure of the situation of Indigenous peoples, but as a vital strategy in improving their lives by capturing their aspirations and world views, promoting development with identity, protecting and promoting their cultures and integrity as Indigenous peoples and empowering them to utilize such information to their benefit. I am confident to state today that what we heard with the most clarity in the discussions we held is that unless Indigenous peoples themselves participate fully and effectively in data collection and the establishment of indicators, efforts will likely be incomplete, baseless, or irrelevant, and essentially provide too fragile a foundation for wise policies, including public resource allocations.

Mr. Guimond develops the case for concluding that “developing indicators is an important task for Canada and for all of us around the world. We have to base these indicators on sound research, careful assessment, and analysis. When we develop these indicators, we have to use them in the process of understanding the realities facing peoples around the world, and to make worthwhile effective policy.”

Brenda Dyack of Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) and Romy Grenier of River Consulting in Australia present their work, “Natural Resource Management and Indigenous Well-being.” (Chapter 13) In that paper, they review six research case studies in Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, which seek to quantify the benefits that Indigenous people derive from natural resource management. While each project involves collaborative work among researchers and Indigenous people and groups, they have taken different routes to providing evidence of the benefits that are generated by natural resources. They look at six different approaches, and do a critique of the methodological and analytical approaches used in the six studies surveyed. The objective is to demonstrate that a diversity of valuation methods exist that can support research, and

that can in turn support evidence-based policy development. They make some specific policy observations.

Whetu Wereta and Darin Bishop of Statistics New Zealand present the work to date on a draft framework for statistics that apply to the Maori people (Chapter 14). Work began in 1995 when the Maori Statistics Forum set up a working party to formulate terms of reference for the development of a Maori Statistics Framework. The terms of reference made it clear that the framework had to be “centred on Maori people and their collective aspirations” and further, that it should be “linked to Maori development.” This paper traces some of the problems and solutions they have encountered.

John Taylor, Director of the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research at The Australian National University, Canberra, shares his work on “The Impact of Australian Policy Regimes on Indigenous Population Movement: Evidence from the 2001 Census” (Chapter 15). The aim of this paper is to examine recent patterns and trends in Indigenous population movement against this background of policy shift to see if there are any discernible impacts on mobility behaviour. If so (or if not), what does this mean for the likely future distribution of the Indigenous population? In short, has the new policy regime in Australia achieved a mobilization (literally) of the Indigenous population? He concludes that “although a significant shift in the Indigenous policy environment commenced in the mid-1990s, this appears not to have impacted on Indigenous mobility behaviour, at least not up to 2001. Thus, while the intent of government policy is to move towards a convergence in socio-demographic trends, there appears little evidence of this so far in Australia.”

In the last paper in this book, Kalugina, Soboleva, and Tapilina (Chapter 16) share results of a pilot project, Optimizing Social Policy in the Siberian Federal District (SFD), conducted in partnership with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Carleton University, and the Institute of Economics and Industrial Engineering at the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences. This project is an attempt to develop an effective system to coordinate the activities of all levels of government in order to improve labour market participation and quality of life among Indigenous peoples of Siberia. The target region is Tomsk Oblast, or province, where the Indigenous people called the Selkup reside. They provide general guidelines for policy makers.

## Endnotes

- 1 More specifically, the conference was organized by the Strategic Research and Analysis Directorate, INAC and the First Nations Cohesion Project, the Department of Sociology at UWO. Dan Beavon and Jerry White acted as conference co-chairs from their respective organizations.
- 2 One of the other funding bodies for academic research, the Canadian Institute of Health Research, also has a program (the Institute of Aboriginal Peoples' Health) that supports research to address the special health needs of Canada's Aboriginal peoples.
- 3 The Canadian government commented on the importance of the APRC in a speech to the United Nations in Geneva on July 22, 2003. More specifically, see the statement by the observer delegation of Canada to the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations, Twenty-First Session, July 21–25, 2003.
- 4 Consequently, there were three conference co-chairs: Dan Beavon, Director of the Strategic Research and Analysis Directorate, INAC; Jerry White, Professor of Sociology and Senior Advisor to the Vice President at the University of Western Ontario; and, Peter Dinsdale, Executive Director of the National Association of Friendship Centres.
- 5 The federal departments and organizations provided funding support at three different levels. Gold: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Department of Justice Canada, Status of Women Canada, Health Canada, Veterans Affairs Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation, Correctional Service Canada, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Canadian Council On Learning, Canadian International Development Agency, Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Canadian Institutes of Health Research. Silver: Canada Economic Development, Policy Research Initiative, Canadian Heritage. Bronze: Natural Resources Canada, Statistics Canada.
- 6 National Association of Friendship Centres, Aboriginal Healing Foundation, First Nations Statistical Institute, National Aboriginal Housing Association, Indian Taxation Advisory Board, National Aboriginal Forestry Association, National Aboriginal Health Organization.
- 7 Public History, Canadian North, VIA Rail Canada, and Canada Post.
- 8 There were also four all-day pre-conference workshops organized, which attracted nearly 300 delegates. These four pre-conference workshops included: Harvard University's research model on Aboriginal governance; Aboriginal demographics and well-being; Bill C-31 and First Nation membership; and records management for First Nations.
- 9 This famous quote is actually a paraphrase of what the Cheshire cat said to Alice in Carroll's book, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Chapter 6, Pig and Pepper, 1865.
- 10 The research-policy nexus is built on the foundation of dialogue and discourse between those making policy and those discovering and interpreting the evidence that should underscore it. When superior quality research is produced and used in making policy, this completes the structure.
- 11 While there are many Canadian cities with larger Aboriginal populations, in terms of both proportions and absolute numbers, Ottawa was selected as the most logical conference site because it would have otherwise been difficult to engage the participation of such a large number of senior federal policy-makers. In many ways, the conference was about educating and exposing this group to the vast array of research that has been done on Aboriginal issues.
- 12 We are also publishing a third volume from the 2006 conference (number 5 in our series) which will deal with the issues arising from the legislation known as Bill C-31. These are issues related to identity, membership, and defining populations.