

**NATIONAL INDIGENOUS
DEFENCE CONFERENCE**



NIDC 2026 Conference Program

Table of Contents

Welcome to NIDC 2026 3

Schedule 4

Sponsors 6

Speakers (by appearance) 11



Welcome to NIDC 2026

Háu. Tânisi. Boozhoo. Hello.

I am honoured to welcome you to this important gathering. When we held the inaugural conference in November 2024, we envisioned creating a space where Indigenous peoples could take their rightful place at the table in Canada's defence sector as leaders, partners, and valued contributors to our Nation's security.

This conference exists because we believe in action. Reconciliation cannot remain symbolic; it must be economic. With \$82B in defence investments projected over the next five years and the federal government's commitment to awarding at least 5% of contracts to Indigenous businesses, we are looking at potential opportunities of over \$4B for our communities. These are not just numbers; they represent jobs, wealth creation, and a stronger future for our Nations.

Our vision is clear: empower and amplify Indigenous prosperity in Canadian national defence.

Throughout the conference, you will hear from Indigenous leaders, defence professionals, government representatives, and industry partners. You will have opportunities to build relationships, learn about procurement pathways, and explore partnerships that can transform your businesses and communities. Most importantly, you will be part of a movement that is shifting how Canada approaches defence; one rooted in genuine collaboration, respect for treaty rights, and recognition of Indigenous knowledge and capabilities.

I grew up watching my grandfather work tirelessly for our community. He instilled in me a responsibility to create opportunities for our people. That is what drives this work. Whether you are business owner seeking supply chain connections, a community leader exploring partnerships, or a defence industry partner committed to reconciliation, you belong here.

Together, we are building an Indigenous defence economy that honours our ancestors and creates pathways for generations to come.

Phidámayaye. Ekosi. Miigwech. Thank you.

Thomas Benjoe
CEO of OneHoop

Schedule

7:00 AM -
8:00 AM

Registration & Breakfast

8:00 AM -
8:30 AM

Opening Prayer and Blessing

- Jacob Pratt - Fishing Lake First Nation
- Elder Jane Chartrand - Algonquins of Pikwakanagan

8:30 AM -
9:15 AM

Welcoming Remarks

- Chief Greg Sarazin - Algonquins of Pikwakanagan
- Thomas Benjoe - OneHoop
- Mark Sutcliffe - Mayor of Ottawa
- Sherry Romanado - Department of National Defence
- Chris Lane - EllisDon

9:15 AM -
9:30 AM

Remarks from the Governor General of Canada

- Her Excellency the Right Honourable Mary Simon, C.C., C.M.M., C.O.M., C.D., Governor General of Canada

9:30 AM -
10:15 AM

Reconciliation in Defence

- Cadmus Delorme - OneHoop

10:15 AM -
10:45 AM

Networking Break

10:45 AM -
12:00 PM

Indigenous Allies: Relationship between Indigenous Peoples and the Canadian Armed Forces

- Moderator: Michaella Shannon
- Ann Chamberlin - Department of National Defence
- Shannon Hartigan - Veteran Affairs Canada
- John Moses - Indigenous Author and Veteran
- LCdr Gary Newman - Royal Canadian Navy

**12:00 PM -
1:00 PM**

Lunch & Networking Break

**1:00 PM -
1:30 PM**

Sponsor Presentations

**1:30 PM -
2:30 PM**

Partnership and Policy: Growing Indigenous Procurement Opportunities

- Moderator: Shawn Evans
 - Judith Bennett - Department of National Defence
 - Philip Ducharme - CCIB
 - Kevin Lemke - SkyAlyne
 - Paul Macedo - Cando
-

**2:30 PM -
2:45 PM**

Networking Break

**2:45 PM -
3:45 PM**

Reinforcing the North: Strengthening Relationships and Preparing for Future Growth

- Moderator: Brandon Ringham
 - Harry Flaherty - Qikiqtaaluk Corporation
 - Tracy Fleck - Department of National Defence
 - Udloriak (Udlu) Hanson - Baffinland
 - Christy ᓂᐱᓴ Sinclair - Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.
-

**3:45 PM -
4:15 PM**

Rebuilding, Rearming, and Reinvesting in the Canadian Armed Forces

- LGen Michael Wright - Commander of the Army
-

**4:15 PM -
4:30 PM**

Closing Remarks

- Thomas Benjoe - OneHoop

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The National Indigenous Defence Conference would not be possible without the support of our sponsors. We are thankful to the organizations that are demonstrating their commitment to achieving reconciliation in Canada's defence sector.

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Indigenous partnership is an essential part of how we work. On the Future Fighter Capability Project at CFB Cold Lake, and under the guidance and collaboration of the local First Nations, we have established initiatives designed to generate opportunities in employment, training, and subcontracting. Our PAIR Bronze Certification reflects established practices in Indigenous engagement, and our commitment to Indigenous reconciliation, supported by our Socio-Economic Development & Indigenous Relations team, the Indigenous Vendor Database, and the Indigenous Employee Circle.

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Breakfast



Lunch



Refreshment



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Reception



Lounge



Media

Speakers (by appearance)



Chief Greg Sarazin
Algonquins of Pikwakanagan



His Worship Mark Sutcliffe
Mayor
City of Ottawa



Sherry Romanado
Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of
National Defence



Her Excellency the Right Honourable Mary
Simon, C.C., C.M.M., C.O.M., C.D.
Governor General Of Canada



Chris Lane
Senior Vice President
EllisDon



Cadmus Delorme
Founder & Partner
OneHoop Advisory Services



Thomas Benjoe
Partner & CEO
OneHoop Advisory Services



Michaella Shannon
Emcee and Moderator



Ann Chamberlin
Indigenous Policy Advisor
Department of National Defence



Shannon Hartigan
Manager, Indigenous Veteran Engagement
Veteran Affairs Canada



John Moses
Indigenous Author and Veteran



LCdr Gary Newman CD
National Military Co-Chair
Defence Indigenous Advisory Group



Shawn Evans
Vice President
EllisDon



Judith Bennett
Associate ADM Materiel
Government of Canada



Philip Ducharme
VP, Entrepreneurship & Procurement
CCIB



Kevin Lemke
General Manager
SkyAlyne



Paul Macedo
Communications Director
CANDO



Brandon Ringham
Director, Consulting & Professional Services
OneHoop Advisory Services



Harry Flaherty
CEO
Qikiqtaaluk Corporation



Tracy Fleck
Director General of Indigenous Affairs
Department of National Defence



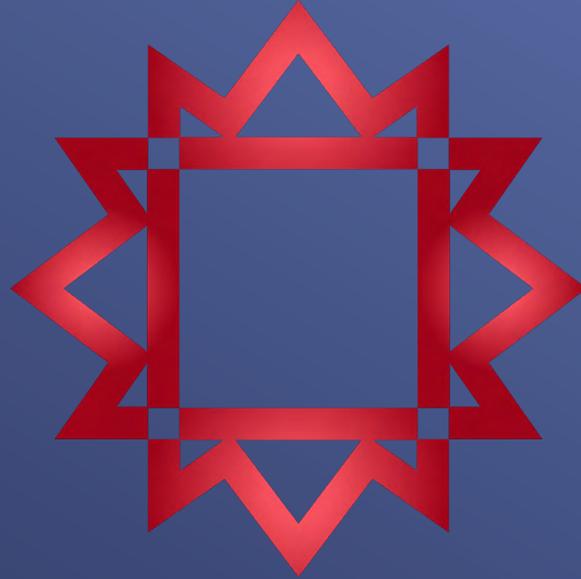
Udlu Hanson
VP, Community & Strategic Development
Baffinland



Christy ᓂᐱᓴ Sinclair
Sr. Advisor, Arctic Sovereignty & Security
Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.



LGen Michael Wright
Commander of the Canadian Army and
Chief of the Army Staff



NATIONAL INDIGENOUS DEFENCE CONFERENCE

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