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MULTILATERAL MEETING ON THE CONSTITUTION

Recommended Proposal for a Constitutional Process

Conference

OTTAWA, Ontario
March 12, 1992

* **RECOMMENDED PROPOSAL FOR A
CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESS**

1. **OBJECTIVES**

- Overall objective of the process:
 - To prepare amendments that can be presented to Canada as a consensus package.
- A multilateral process must be established to achieve this objective successfully.

2. **THE PROCESS**

- Realistic timeframes -- a best efforts timetable to reach agreement by the end of May 1992.
- Agreement-in-principle with the establishment of working groups of officials:
 - the number and nature to be recommended by Deputy Ministers meeting together during the week of March 16;
 - working groups to address clusters of issues that favour natural linkages;
 - working groups to prepare working drafts and specific legal texts; and
 - to report back to Ministers on a regular basis.
- A sufficient number of meetings of elected and non-elected officials to carry issues forward, develop consensus and facilitate final political decision-making.
- Quebec will be encouraged to participate fully in the process.
- Process begins with first meeting, Thursday, March 12.

Timetable

- The first multilateral meeting of officials will be held during the week of March 16.
- A further Multilateral Ministers' Meeting will be held during the week of April 6.

- Subsequent to that, a series of alternating meetings of officials and Ministers will be held.
- Ministers to recommend First Ministers' Meetings to discuss constitutional renewal when they have concluded that such meetings would further the development of consensus.

Public Reporting

- Ministers' and officials' meetings will be held in private, with regular public reporting of progress.

Starting Points for Discussion

- Look at issues using the Report of the Special Joint Committee on a Renewed Canada, provincial and territorial reports as well as reports from parallel Aboriginal processes as the starting points.

Other Issues

- Officials to focus on producing best effort draft documents (including where possible draft legal texts) for consideration by Ministers and First Ministers.
- Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat to carry out support functions.

3. UNDERTAKINGS

- It was agreed that there would be no unilateral constitutional actions undertaken by any government during this process.

4. ABORIGINAL ISSUES

- While recognizing the right of governments to meet on any matter, this meeting of March 12, 1992, invited representatives of the Aboriginal peoples to be full participants in the constitutional process agreed upon.

Note: The Quebec government made available to the meeting two observers who did not participate in the deliberations or the conclusions of the meeting.