

HEILTSUK WOMEN'S DECLARATION

May 15, 2015

We are Heiltsuk women. We are as strong as cedar trees.

We are the mothers who give birth to nations. We are the mothers who bring future generations into being. We are the lifeblood of our people.

We are the daughters, the grandmothers and granddaughters, the aunts and nieces, the sisters of our Nation. We make our Nation rich.

We come from the matriarchy, and our womanhood is a blessing. We are the heart of Heiltsuk ceremonies. We are the heart of Heiltsuk families.

We have the right to health and wellness, and a responsibility to ensure the health and wellness of our children and of our families. This is a principle of reciprocity.

We have the right to safety. We deserve lives that are free of emotional, verbal, physical, and sexual abuse. This is a principle of respect.

We have the right to bless and care for our loved ones, and to be blessed and cared for in turn. This is a principle of love.

We have the right to relationships that are balanced and respectful, where we have freedom as individuals. This is a principle of equality.

We have the right to a community that is vocal, aware, and supportive, with the resources in place to support us and uplift us. This is a principle of justice.

We have the right to freedom from fear and shame, to healing, and to happiness. This is a principle of joy.

We are here through the strength of our family ties. We are here through the guidance of our Heiltsuk Gvi'ilas, the teachings that have sustained our people since the time of creation.

We are here with the hands of our ancestors on our shoulders. We are here with future generations before us.

We are sacred in mind, body, and spirit. We are women of integrity who are strengthened by our Heiltsuk culture.

We honour ourselves. We honour one another.

This is consistent with the principles of our culture and the foundation of our work as Heiltsuk women and as matriarchs.

This declaration was written and affirmed in 2015 to support all Haítzaqv women and matriarchs.