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First Nations Task Force

At the All-Chiefs Assembly on Recognition and Reconciliation held on August 25-28, 2009, a First Nations Task Force, composed of volunteer First Nation leaders from across the province, was established to build upon the outcomes and energy of the gathering by drafting and implementing a short-term action plan which addressed two goals:

1. Communicate the urgency and importance of raising awareness and recognition of Aboriginal title and rights at the provincial, national and international levels, as well as with the general public.
2. Strive to increase efficiency by better organizing ourselves internally as First Nations in British Columbia by working together on issues of common concern.

At the BCAFN AGA, on October 1, 2009 the Task Force presented its draft Action Plan, which was subsequently endorsed by resolution.

The Task Force is now moving forward on implementing the Action Plan by focusing its work in three key areas:

1. Political-Legal: Three-pronged strategy to achieve a) effective implementation of section 35 constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and treaty rights, court decisions, and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, b) revision of the comprehensive claims policy, and c) implementation of the duty of the Crown to negotiate in good faith and uphold its fiduciary duty.
2. Coordinated Action: Work with a PR firm to develop and implement a coordinated action strategy to raise awareness of First Nations issues.
3. Technical-Operational: Conduct a review, and develop recommendations to improve First

Nations political meetings and decision-making processes, and to enhance unity amongst First Nations.

Work in these three areas is to be supported by an overarching communications plan that is currently under development. The First Nations Task Force is issuing regular reports through this information bulletin, and by reporting to the assemblies of the BCAFN, FNS and UBCIC.

The First Nations Task Force is also working to secure resources for its work through discussions with the BCAFN, FNS and UBCIC, and by following up on First Nations commitments at the BCAFN assembly to contribute resources towards a province-wide public relations campaign. Please contact Bev Clifton Percival (Chair of the First Nations Task Force) at gwaans@gitxan.com if you are interested in making a contribution to this work.

First Nations Health Council

Health Directors Forum

Association: BC First Nations Health Directors have voted overwhelmingly in favour of the development of a First Nations Health Directors Association. 91 health directors cast their ballots November 5th at the Gathering Wisdom Forum, 79 in favour of the Association and 12 opposed. The Association's structure was developed through dialogue at the First Nations Health Directors forum held in October 2008, and refined through a survey administered to Health Directors over the past several months. Following the vote on November 5, a 13 member board of directors was appointed with directors from each of the five regions North (3 seats), Interior (3), Vancouver Island (3), Vancouver Coastal (2), and Fraser (2).

Gathering Wisdom III: The third annual Gathering Wisdom Forum drew over 400 participants representing more than 130 First Nations into a three day dialogue on the implementation of the Tripartite First Nations Health Plan. Discussion was focused on three topics: Day 1: Health Governance, Day 2: Health Actions, and Day 3: Health Directors. All conference presentations, as well as video clips of keynote speakers, are available on the Health Council website at: http://www.fnhc.ca/index.php/news/gathering_wisdom/

First Nations Health Governance: On August 31, 2009, the Principals to the Tripartite First Nations Health Plan (TFNHP) had their inaugural meeting since the signing of the Plan on June 11, 2007. At this meeting, the Federal Minister of Health, Leona Aglukkaq stated that Health Canada required a basic health governance framework agreed upon by December 2009. This message has continued to be reiterated by Minister Aglukkaq at the September 25th Principals meeting with the FNIHGC and at Gathering Wisdom III. This has created an expedited schedule for Tripartite Governance meetings and Principals meetings. The FNIHGC Co-Chairs have committed to reach a basic agreement by December 2009 that will be an agreement of commitments and processes to move forward. The FNIHGC Co-Chairs recognize the agreement must be based on the direction provided by the FNIHGC representatives and Regional Caucuses and brought back for ratification. The FNIHGC will ensure that the agreement is developed and driven by First Nations including providing room for a ratification process as determined by First Nations. Key issues moving forward, as determined by the FNIHGC, include:

- Need for full disclosure and transparency of data and information from government partners.
- Process for developing an agreement needs to be inclusive, First Nations led and driven and

not get ahead of the Regional Caucus work.

- Clarify the elements needed by the federal government in a basic agreement of commitments and processes by December 2009.
- Commitment to reciprocal accountability.
- Funding component essential to an agreement that includes funding for transition of FNIH to First Nations and the TFNHP Implementation.

Questions about Health Governance? Contact Derek Thompson at dthompson@fnhc.ca 604.913.2080

Non-Insured Health Benefits: Effective December 6th, 2009 Health Canada's Non-Insured Health Benefits Program (NIHB) will be moving to a new claims processor. The new claims processor, ESI Canada, takes over from First Canadian Health (FCH). ESI Canada will administer the Health Information and Claims Processing Services (HICPS) System for pharmacy, dental and medical supplies and equipment (MS&E) benefits on behalf of Health Canada's NIHB Program. All current health service providers are expected to enrol with the new claims processor. As of November 19th, dental providers representing 90% of claims and pharmacies representing 63% of claims have signed on with the new provider. Health Canada has extended the deadline for other service providers to sign on until March 31st, 2010. The First Nations Health Council is working with Health Canada to ensure continuity of service, and with the extended deadline for providers to sign on it is expected that there will be very few interruptions. FNHC and FNIH are advising communities to speak with local health service providers to facilitate a smooth transition at the local level.

Tell Us Your Story and Win Olympic Tickets: The First Nations Health Council is currently seeking submissions for a book about First Nations peoples in BC who have

triumphed, mentored, or lead in traditional and non-traditional sports, recreation, fitness, dance or any other type of physical activity.

With each story and photo submitted the writer's name will be submitted into the draw for Olympic tickets.

A total of 10 pairs of tickets will be distributed, offering BC First Nation community members the chance to share an experience at the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games. In addition to offering the opportunity to get a pair of tickets, the First Nations Health Council will provide a travel bursary for each individual attending the games. *meals and accommodations not included.* Details of this contest will be distributed by email and fax in early December.

Children & Families

This is a short update on the recent activities of the Interim First Nations Child and Family Wellness Council (IFNCFWC). For more information on the IFNCFWC, please visit <http://www.informationbc.ca/child2/>.

Indigenous Child at the Centre Action Plan: As per its mandate, the IFNCFWC revised the Action Plan to incorporate all of the feedback received from First Nations (through written submissions, breakout groups, delegate workbooks, and plenary discussions) and then welcomed additional comments from First Nations over a 10 month period. The Action Plan was then supported by resolution at the September and October BCAFN, FNS and UBCIC, meetings.

The IFNCFWC will now identify priority items under the *Action Plan* and prepare both strategic and work plans for its implementation. These priorities will be presented for consideration of BC First Nations.

Engaging Communities: The IFNCFWC regularly reports to First Nations through communiqués that have been issued since October 2008. The IFNCFWC

spokespersons also regularly report to the assemblies of the BCAFN, FNS and UBCIC, and other community meetings.

The IFNCFWC aims to undertake a regional roadshow to directly engage with communities and their leadership on children and family wellness issues. A third Child at the Centre Forum is also being planned to fully report on IFNCFWC activities, and seek advice and direction from First Nations on key issues including: priorities under the Indigenous Child at the Centre Action Plan; an organizational structure for a permanent Council; and other key emerging issues.

Engaging Partner Organizations:

The IFNCFWC is engaged in ongoing efforts to build effective working relationships and partnerships with key organizations in child and family wellness. It has met with partners such as the First Nations Early Childhood Development Council and the Indigenous Child Welfare Research Network, and is developing a protocol agreement with the First Nations Directors Forum. The IFNCFWC is also arranging a meeting with the Representative for Children and Youth, and will take the lead in implementing the Protocol agreement with the Representative on behalf of the BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit, and Union of BC Indian Chiefs.

The IFNCFWC has also been mandated to establish the Indigenous Caucus, composed of Aboriginal, technical and service organizations with expertise in child welfare matters, to provide ongoing technical advice for the implementation of the Indigenous Child at the Centre Action Plan and the Recognition and Reconciliation Protocol with the province of BC.

Engaging the Crown: The IFNCFWC has undertaken efforts to engage both the federal and provincial governments in its work. On March 30, 2009, the BCAFN, FNS, UBCIC and MCFD signed a Protocol which the IFNCFWC will

take the lead on. The Protocol was supported by First Nations Chiefs by resolution (UBCIC resolution 2008-40; BCAFN resolution 1(a)/2009; FNS resolution 0908.09). Currently, the parties are developing a workplan for the implementation of the Protocol.

The IFNCFWC prepared a draft Protocol with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada in November 2008 and is still awaiting a formal response.

Policy Issues: The IFNCFWC engages on emerging policy issues as they relate to the IFNCFWC's mandate. In particular, the IFNCFWC has been participating in both a steering committee and technical committee on Jordan's Principle with federal and provincial governments.

Organizational Development: The Terms of Reference for the IFNCFWC were adopted at the February and March BCAFN, FNS and UBCIC meetings (resolutions UBCIC 2009-06; BCAFN resolution 4/2009; FNS resolution 0309.14). The IFNCFWC has, based on its approved terms of reference, established some organizational policy to govern the conduct of its meetings, appointed two IFNCFWC spokespersons and established an IFNCFWC executive, and is in the process of hiring a Coordinator to provide technical and administrative support.

The IFNCFWC will soon undertake research and engage with First Nations on what a permanent governance structure for the Council should look like.

The IFNCFWC secured a modest amount of funding for last fiscal year and the current fiscal year to support the costs of its work, meetings and engagement with First Nations.

First Nations Energy and Mining Council

The BC First Nations Energy and Mining Council (FNEMC) has made substantive progress on the

development of a number of documents and issues. Once our website is running in January you will be able to access documents more readily. Here are short updates on a number of FNEMC priorities:

1. Develop a communications plan and website. The FNEMC will develop a communications plan including a website to inform First Nations, public governments, and stakeholders of the Council's work, including areas of collaboration with government and industry, information on major natural resource projects in BC and the associated regulatory and environmental assessment processes.

Update: The FNEMC is working with the First Nations Technology Council (FNTC) to include a webpage for the FNEMC in the web portal that the FNTC is building for the New Relationship Trust. The website will include a description of the FNEMC's mission and mandate; contact information; press releases; commentaries and news; publications; and links to additional information and relevant organizations.

Other communications efforts are underway to inform First Nations of the energy, mining, and carbon credit opportunities that exist. Reporting is made on a regular basis to the Chiefs at assemblies of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, First Nations Summit and BC Assembly of First Nations and to First Nations and Tribal Council meetings upon request.

2. Develop a strategic plan. The FNEMC will develop a strategic plan to implement the BC First Nations Energy and Mining Action Plans.

Update: The strategic plan draft is now completed and work is ongoing by the FNEMC to review the draft priorities.

3. Develop a First Nations-Industry Protocol. The FNEMC will

develop a protocol template for energy and mining business entities/associations to assist in developing working relationships with First Nations. The protocol may involve establishing principles and best practices for fostering effective working relationships.

Update: A draft protocol has been developed for independent power projects (IPPS) along with a traditional knowledge protocol. The FNEMC has also engaged with several industry associations; for example, the BC Bioenergy Network is interested to partner with the FNEMC, and discussions are underway toward a joint protocol that would facilitate projects with First Nations and the bioenergy sector.

4. Develop a renewable energy strategy. The FNEMC will develop a renewable energy strategy (including a bio-energy strategy) that: a) supports First Nations' long-term plans and views related to sustainable development, and b) identifies opportunities for First Nations to develop renewable energy resources (eg. solar, wind, wood pellets, cogeneration, etc.), generate employment, and create new revenue streams and economic benefit through the generation of power.

Update: The drafting of the renewable energy and bioenergy strategy is now underway. Further work on carbon credits includes a finalized information / background paper, and a finalized position paper.

5. Research and design a collaborative industry business model. The FNEMC in collaboration with economic development advisory groups will research and design First Nations capital business models that support innovation and entrepreneurship. This will include collaborating with BC Hydro and the BC Transmission Corporation to develop and document best practices for joint

ventures, technical and business training, and employment.

Update: An independent power project impact benefits agreement template has now been drafted. A traditional knowledge protocol is now completed. An economic benefits best practices model is being developed and the first draft is expected to be completed in January.

6. Conduct an economic benefits study including best practices research. The FNEMC will aim to identify the economic benefits that First Nations may derive from energy and mining sector development such as resource revenue sharing, employment opportunities, equity ownership, and others. The study will also include developing and documenting best practice approaches by working with industry and government.

Update: A paper titled, "Sharing the Wealth" has been drafted, and will be transformed into a policy paper. The FNEMC will also draft a template impact benefits agreement for mining which will be prepared.

BC First Nations Fisheries Council

The First Nations Fisheries Council hosted a fall Fisheries Assembly October 28 - 30 in Chehalis. The theme of the Assembly was "Protecting Access to our Fisheries Resources." Over 250 participants gathered to share information and to discuss ways that First Nations can protect access to their fisheries resources, both in the interior and on the coast. Information about the Assembly and all presentations are posted on the Fisheries Council website at www.FNFisheriesCouncil.ca.

The Fisheries Council structure is changing. As a follow up the resolutions passed at the FNS, UBCIC, and BCAFN meetings last spring, the Fisheries Council moved to a new structure in which membership of the Council was

increased from 6 to 14 with seats tied to a regional geographic base. At present, 9 of 14 Regions in B.C. are now represented on the Council. The Council will be following up with the remaining geographic areas in order to assess if there are supports which can be put into place to help those regions make appointments to the Council structure. The following is an update of current Council members (some areas appointed alternates but we have omitted them here for brevity): 1) Haida Gwaii . Russ Jones; 2) North Coast . Bill Shepert appointed interim; 3) Central Coast . appointment pending; 4) Northern Vancouver Island/ Mainland Inlets . John Henderson appointed; 5) South Coast Vancouver Island . Chief Allan Claxton (previous appointment which communities approve continuing for now); 6) West Coast Vancouver Island . Michelle Corfield; 7) Lower Mainland/ Coastal . no appointment pending; 8) Fraser Valley . Grand Chief Ken Malloway appointed; 9 & 10) Mid Fraser (2 positions) . no appointments pending; 11) Upper Fraser . Chief Thomas Alexis; 12) Upper Skeena . Chief Walter Joseph; 13) Columbia-Transboundary - Howie Wright (past Council continuing at present); 14) Yukon Transboundary . discussions underway. Grand Chief Doug Kelly has stepped down as one of the Council co-chairs after a term of almost two years, and the Fisheries Council gives their heartfelt thanks for his leadership and service.

The Fisheries Council is preparing to finalize the "Commitment to Action" agreement with DFO. The "G2A" outlines a framework for working together between the Council and DFO on a B.C.-wide scale, and includes reference to four priority areas: co-management, aquaculture, salmon shares, and Food Social and Ceremonial Sec 35 (1) protected fisheries. The Fisheries Council is actively working with DFO to develop work plans which will address both the co-management and the aquaculture priority areas.

The Fisheries Council maintains a useful website which contains

fisheries information of interest to B.C. First Nations, an internal fisheries information listserve, and hosts bi-weekly First Nations Regional Fisheries Organizations internal conference calls. The calls are open only to First Nations and involve regular updates on Council activities and the opportunity for First Nations from around B.C. to share information. Notes from the calls are all posted on the Fisheries Council website and are password protected for First Nations access only. If you are interested in being added to the listserve or want to participate in the conference calls please contact the Council at info@fnfisheriescouncil.ca

First Nations Forestry Council

The forest sector in BC is currently experiencing the lowest harvest levels ever recorded and has experienced one of the worst, if not the worst ever forest fire season. These challenging times are leading to significant discussions about Provincial forest policy proposals and solutions that will impact First Nations. First Nations communities must be part of the discussions and the proposed changes to the forest sector, both at the governance and business level.

The timing of these impacts is significant considering the Forest and Range Opportunities program with MOFR has now gone beyond the initial 5 year agreements. By March 31, 2010 over 50% of the current FRA's and FRO's will be expired. For those that have already expired the MOFR is discussing one year or partial year extensions to March 31, 2010. The Ministry of Forests is reviewing the program that supports these revenue sharing and forest tenure opportunity agreements and has confirmed that there will be a continuing commitment, but it has not been finalized. The FNFC is seeking resources to adequately engage in this discussion and we are now concerned that the new model will be proposed in a few months with little input from First Nations.

Our FORUM on First Nations in the Forest Sector was a great success.

Over 125 First Nations representatives and others gathered in Vancouver to hear the latest updates and share their experiences on Forestry initiatives and activities.

We discussed the state of the forest sector and heard from some industry speakers. From our own communities we heard about experiences in gaining control of Tree Farm Licenses as well as the efforts to acquire Community Forest Agreements.

A panel of industry experts on Carbon credits and Bioenergy discussed the opportunities and the emergence of these new forest based opportunities in BC. With new and emerging impacts to the forest land base or uses of natural resources it was abundantly clear that these activities need to be done with full participation of First Nations.

First Nations Technology Council

FNTC is hosting a meeting of their Governance Information Management Working Group December 7 and 8 to work on their Information Management Toolkit - a resource that will be posted on the FNTC website. The Toolkit will feature an IM Roadmap, an IM Framework, Guiding Principles, Draft Policies, and Definition of Competencies. FNTC is working with the First Nations Public Service to ensure that a model classification scheme that supports records and information management will also be available. Workshops to gather input on the Toolkit are being planned for the New Year.

The 6th Annual FNTC ICT Summit is scheduled for March 18-21, 2010 in Vancouver. Stay tuned for more information and contact the FNTC at Conference@fntc.info if you have suggestions for workshops that you'd like to present or have presented.

Economic Development

As reported in the October 2009 information bulletin, the draft BC First Nations Economic Development Action Plan was adopted by

resolution of the three political organizations in 2008. Current priorities being undertaken pursuant to the Action Plan include:

- conducting an environmental scan to determine the economic status of First Nations communities and economic opportunities for First Nations;
- developing an inventory of economic development related tools, programs, and supports;
- creating an economic development SWAT team to provide support and advice to communities;
- developing a program for executive/leadership exchanges;
- developing a resource website and resource centre to house all information;
- developing BC procurement legislation; and
- nurturing relationships, relationship/partnership agreements, information-sharing, resource pooling and communications/networking.

Work on these priorities is resourced through the contributions of First Nations and other partner organizations that have geared their existing resources towards the priorities established by First Nations in the Economic Development Action Plan.

The Economic Development Working Group, along with the New Relationship Trust and Aboriginal Tourism BC, participated in a series of regional engagement sessions throughout October and November. The Working Group received good feedback from First Nations on these ongoing efforts.

Calendar of Events

December 8-10: AFN Special Chiefs Assembly (Ottawa)