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# First Nations Leadership Council

## INFORMATION BULLETIN

Feedback and inquiries on these monthly bulletins are welcome; contact information is provided in the column to the left.

### New Relationship

There are five key priorities under the New Relationship: legislation (new recognition legislation and ongoing legislative development processes); consultation and accommodation (including a new consultation and accommodation framework as a key deliverable for the new year); shared decision-making; revenue sharing; and dispute resolution.

Other priorities for 2007 include: ecosystem stewardship planning; Education Forum regarding the underpinnings of provincial policy; litigation side table; and communications.

### Transformative Change Accord

Work continues between the FNLC and the province to develop a draft implementation strategy for the Transformative Change Accord. The health plan has been released, and the other sections will soon be ready to distribute to First Nations for comment and advice.

It is hoped that the federal government will fulfill its commitments under the Transformative Change Accord, and engage with the FNLC and BC to develop the comprehensive 10-year plan to improve the quality of life for First Nations in BC – including reconciling title and rights and building a new relationship based on recognition.

### Fisheries

On November 29, the FNLC hosted a Special Assembly on Fisheries in follow-up to the October 4-5 First Nations Fisheries Forum. The

purpose of the Assembly was to review and provide input into the draft BC First Nations Fisheries Action Plan, which was approved in principle via resolution of the BCAFN, UBCIC and FNS.

More than 150 delegates provided their feedback into the Plan during the Assembly, and committed to thoroughly review the document and provide any final comments to the drafting group by late January 2007.

The Plan will also be shared with federal and provincial governments, and discussion of the Plan and other fisheries matters will take place at a joint fisheries meeting in February.

### Health

#### *Health Plan and MoU:*

On November 27, 2006, the FNLC, Government of Canada and Province of British Columbia signed a First Nations Health Plan Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), and the Leadership Council and BC released a BC First Nations Health Plan. These two agreements are based on the signed tripartite Transformative Change Accord and the BC First Nations Health Blueprint and are designed to close the gaps in health outcomes that exist between First Nations and other British Columbians.

First Nations in British Columbia live an average of seven years less than other British Columbians, have a diabetes rate 40% higher than the rate of the general population, and have higher rates of youth suicide – these disparities are, in large part, a reflection of the lack of involvement of First Nations in decision-making regarding their own health care.

Recognizing the authority of First Nations over the health of our peoples through direct participation in the design and delivery of health services in and for our communities is essential to closing the gap, and is

a central theme of the MoU and Health Plan.

Some of the specific activities in the MoU and Health Plan to support the health and wellness objectives of BC First Nations, and encourage collaborative decision-making at all levels include:

- Support for local First Nation community health plans;
- Creation of an Aboriginal Health Plan for each provincial health authority that will allow for improved coordination between First Nation community health plans and plans of the health authorities;
- A tripartite process for health policy and program planning as well as the monitoring of health outcomes in First Nations communities;
- Development of curriculum and mandatory training sessions for cultural competency of health service providers;
- Coordination of efforts in chronic disease management, such as in diabetes, HIV/AIDS, cancer, and hepatitis C; and
- A spring 2007 Health Forum between First Nations, regional health authorities, health professionals and others to provide advice on the implementation of the MoU and the Health Plan.

There are a large number of other activities set out in the four key MoU and Plan areas (Governance, Relationships and Accountability; Health Promotion and Disease and Injury Prevention; Health Services; and Performance Tracking). These documents also commit the Parties to achieve specific targets, and measure and report on progress.

For copies of the MoU and Health Plan, please visit [www.bcafn.ca](http://www.bcafn.ca); [www.fns.bc.ca](http://www.fns.bc.ca); [www.ubcic.bc.ca](http://www.ubcic.bc.ca).

*National Aboriginal Health Summit* British Columbia hosted a national Aboriginal health summit on November 28, 2006. Members of the FNLC attended as part of the Premier's delegation. This summit

fulfilled Premier Campbell's commitments to improving Aboriginal health made at the First Ministers Meeting in November 2005. A number of other provinces are fulfilling similar commitments, including an upcoming economic development summit and a summit on Aboriginal Women.

#### *Conversation on Health*

The provincial government recently announced that it is holding a *Conversation on Health* until the fall of 2007 – a discussion among British Columbians on how to make British Columbia healthier, and how to improve and renew the provincial health system while strengthening the Canada Health Act. The inaugural event of this conversation was a Congress on Health hosted by Premier Campbell on October 10, and attended by the FNLC. Regional forums, toll-free telephone line, email and online discussions are available to provide feedback, and the FNLC encourages all First Nations to provide input. Please see their website at [www.bcconversationonhealth.ca](http://www.bcconversationonhealth.ca), phone 1-866-884-2055 or email [ConversationOnHealth@victoria1.gov.bc.ca](mailto:ConversationOnHealth@victoria1.gov.bc.ca).

#### **New Relationship Trust**

([www.newrelationshiptrust.ca](http://www.newrelationshiptrust.ca))

Work is ongoing by the New Relationship Trust Board of Directors to develop a strategic plan for the use of the \$100 million fund. This work is expected to conclude early in the new year.

Also early in the new year, the term of the initial Board of Directors will expire. Kathryn Teneese, Nathan Matthew, Dawn Farrell will retain their seats. An additional new four Board members (one each appointed by the province, the BCAFN, FNS and UBCIC) will be announced in the coming weeks.

#### **UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

On November 28, 2006 – after two decades of discussion and development – the slow pace of

approval of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples came to a halt at the current session of the UN General Assembly in New York. A resolution put forward by the Namibian delegation – in effect, a non-action motion on the Declaration – was supported by a majority with 82 Nation States voting in favour, 67 Nation States voting not in favour and 25 Nation States abstaining.

Grand Chief Ed John, who was in New York on behalf of the Assembly of First Nations, stated "Today is a very sad day for the United Nations and a very serious setback for the integrity of the newly formed Human Rights Council who urged the General Assembly to formally adopt this historic document. It now appears that the most likely outcome will be that the United Nations never formally adopts the Declaration. This is a remarkable and bizarre development."

"Canada was positioned to play a significant role in supporting the Declaration but Canada chose to actively oppose the Declaration as a member of the Human Rights Council and at the General Assembly," commented BC Regional Chief Shawn Atleo. "We share the deep frustration of all those who worked long and hard to get the Declaration to this point. We sincerely hope that the Declaration is not lost and that we can find a way in which to revitalize this important work."

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip stated, "Canada no longer enjoys a 'blue beret' reputation at the United Nations. Canada's disgraceful and disgusting conduct against Indigenous People at both the national and international levels is being noted. It is simply shameful that as a Council member of the Human Rights Council, Canada pretends to espouse the highest standards and protection of Human Rights. It is those countries who have lived with the ravages of colonialism now speak for continuing colonialism for all Indigenous Peoples."

The Declaration was adopted by the UN Human Rights Council this past June and was recommended for adoption by the General Assembly. Canada was one of few countries to vote against the Declaration in June.

A template letter is available for First Nations that wish to write to the Prime Minister to express their dismay at these developments. Please contact the member organizations of the FNLC for a copy of this template letter. More information on the Declaration is available at [www.ipcaucus.net](http://www.ipcaucus.net).

### FNLC Meeting Notes

At the recommendation of First Nations, this section of the information bulletin is to describe discussion and decisions of FNLC.

- FNLC met with the Minister of Fisheries, Loyola Hearn in Ottawa in early December
- A joint working group on consultation and accommodation has been struck to produce a draft framework for consideration
- A joint Steering Committee has been formed to oversee the planning of two First Nations Justice Forums in 2007. Stewart Phillip and Judith Sayers will participate on behalf of the FNLC
- Tentative dates for a First Nations Energy Summit are April 2-5, 2007 in either Prince George or Vancouver.
- The FNLC and other interested groups will tour the Insite safe injection site in the new year
- FNLC and BC to jointly lobby for federal engagement
- FNLC to continue discussions on land use planning with the provincial government
- Wildlife Act review and Integrated Pest Management Guidelines consultation process to be improved
- A joint working group on the *Heritage Conservation Act* and will begin work in the new year
- A First Nations Justice Forum will be convened in the spring of 2007

- Two video pilot projects are currently being produced to improve public awareness about First Nations and the New Relationship
- 6-month secondment opportunity (reporting to the FNLC and government) for a First Nations individual within the Ministry of Economic Development
- FNLC to work with BC to develop an internship program for First Nations youth
- FNLC meets regularly with the First Nations Forestry Council
- In collaboration with First Nations, BC is undertaking a project to improve the collection, reliability and accessibility of data on First Nations and Aboriginal people
- A comprehensive study on the status of First Nations and Aboriginal housing in BC is being conducted to assist in developing the Transformative Change Accord implementation strategy. This study should be complete by the end of the fiscal year.
- Meetings scheduled in new year to discuss INAC's regional strategic plan

### Education

Bill C-34: *First Nations Jurisdiction Over Education in British Columbia Act* received Royal Assent on December 12, 2006. The federal legislation provides First Nations with jurisdiction over decisions affecting First Nations K-12 students on-reserve in BC. In a rare event prior to receiving Royal Assent, Bill C-34 was passed unanimously by all parties in Parliament following third reading. Similar enabling legislation will be passed by the province in the spring to allow for full implementation of the jurisdiction agreements to begin. More information is available at [www.fnesc.bc.ca/jurisdiction/index.php](http://www.fnesc.bc.ca/jurisdiction/index.php)

### Residential Schools

On December 15, 2006, superior courts in six provinces and Yukon territory approved the residential school settlement plan. BC Supreme

Court Chief Justice Donald Brenner further called on Prime Minister Stephen Harper to apologize to First Nations for the abuses of the Indian residential school system – a position supported by the FNLC and many other First Nations across Canada. The final piece of the ratification process is approval by residential school survivors, who have six months to review the settlement plan.

The certification of the residential school settlement plan by the courts means that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission – which will ensure that all Canadians understand the impact of residential schools – will begin its work next summer. The Common Experience Payment will likely begin in the summer of 2007. For more information, visit [www.residentialschoolsettlement.ca](http://www.residentialschoolsettlement.ca)

### Calendar of Events

- **December 25:** BCAFN, FNS and UBCIC offices closed for the holidays
- **January 8:** BCAFN, FNS and UBCIC offices re-open.
- **January 30-31:** UBCIC Chiefs' Council meeting
- **March 14-16:** FNS Meeting, Squamish Nation Recreation Centre

*The First Nations Leadership Council is comprised of the political executives of the BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit, and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs:*

- *BC Assembly of First Nations Regional Chief A-in-chut, Shawn Atleo;*
- *First Nations Summit Task Group members Grand Chief Edward John, Chief Judith Sayers, Dave Porter;*
- *Union of BC Indian Chiefs President Stewart Phillip, Vice-President Robert Shintah; Chief Lynda Price*

*The Council works together to politically represent the interests of First Nations in British Columbia and develop strategies and actions to bring about significant and substantive changes to government policy that will benefit all First Nations in British Columbia.*