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First Nations Leadership Council

INFORMATION BULLETIN

Leadership Council

On March 17, 2005, the Regional Chief of the BC Assembly of First Nations, the Task Group of the First Nations Summit, and the political executive of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs signed the *Leadership Accord*.

The purpose of the Accord is to: affirm mutual respect; formalize a cooperative working relationship to politically represent the interests of First Nations in BC and develop strategies and actions to bring about significant and substantive changes to government policy that will benefit all First Nations in BC; and focus on a range of issues and initiatives of common interest or concern among First Nations in BC, including consultation and accommodation, national processes, and social and economic program and service issues.

Work under the Leadership Accord is guided by the following principles:

- The Parties recognize and respect each other's respective mandate;
- The Parties will be mindful that they each represent a diversity of perspectives on issues relating to Aboriginal title, rights and interests;
- The Parties commit to work to advance the interests of First Nations in political level discussions amongst themselves and with governments;
- The Parties will represent their respective memberships in any discussions that directly involve government and industry.

Through the Accord, the Parties commit to engage in an ongoing process of dialogue through regular leadership meetings to achieve the purposes of this Accord and, where possible, develop common understandings, strategies and/or positions on identified issues of mutual concern or priority. The Parties also agree to establish

working groups on identified issues of concern or priority to advance those issues politically.

The relationship established through the *Leadership Accord* remains strong. Although some successes have been achieved (New Relationship, Transformative Change Accord, New Relationship Trust, others), much remains to be done. The mandate of the First Nations Leadership Council is determined only through the mandates of each of its participating organizations – the BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit, and Union of BC Indian Chiefs – as established via resolution of their respective memberships.

The First Nations Leadership Council is a political process, not a new organization. Its purpose is to generate political power through cooperation and collaboration between the existing provincial First Nations organizations.

The First Nations Leadership Council does not have its own staff members – the staff of the three participating organizations are responsible for following up on resolutions passed at the assemblies of the BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit and Union of BC Indian Chiefs, and work together on issues for which all three organizations have a mandate.

The BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit and Union of BC Indian Chiefs are committed to maintaining unity on matters of common concern to benefit all BC First Nations, as well as to autonomy of each organization in achieving progress on issues specific to their respective memberships.

New Relationship

There are five key priorities under the New Relationship: Legislation, Policy and a Cultural Shift in Government; Consultation and Accommodation; Ecosystem Stewardship Planning (Land Use

Planning); Shared Decision-Making; and Revenue and Benefit Sharing.

Short-term deliverables targeted by the FNLC include: A recognition mechanism; improvements to the Environmental Assessment Process; Heritage Conservation Act review and amendment; Education Forum; Ecosystem Stewardship Planning Protocol; and a Gaming Revenue-Sharing Agreement.

For three days out of each month, the FNLC meets with provincial officials to set direction, review progress and have high-level discussion on these five priorities. Technical work is mainly achieved through joint working groups.

Gaming Revenue Sharing

There has been substantial progress on the BC First Nations Gaming Revenue-Sharing Initiative in recent months.

The volunteer Steering Committee of ten Chiefs and Councilors, with broad provincial representation, has worked since last fall to bring forward this important issue of sharing a portion of BC provincial gaming revenues with all BC First Nations. Armed with compelling research, these First Nations leaders presented their case for support to the BCAFN, UBCIC and FNS. All three organizations officially endorsed the need for a gaming revenue-sharing agreement. The Steering Committee was directed to proceed to the FNLC with a formal request for the Council to negotiate an agreement with the Province of BC that will annually benefit the communities of all BC First Nations.

The FNLC agreed to move forward and appointed Judith Sayers as the FNLC lead to work with the Steering Committee with the aim of securing a Gaming Revenue-Sharing Agreement. The Negotiating Team is now composed of Chief Sayers, Chief Sophie Pierre, Chief Clarence Louie, Chief Shane Gottfriedson and alternate, Chief Roland Willson. This team has also been offered support by the Ontario First Nations negotiating team, which successfully

negotiated a revenue-sharing agreement with the Government of Ontario. Over half of BC First Nations have financially invested in the operating budget of the Committee to see the gaming revenue-sharing issue brought to the point of negotiations.

BC was immediately notified of the resolutions of support for this initiative and was asked to establish a negotiating side table with the aim of announcing a Memorandum of Understanding by the end of May in commemoration of the second anniversary of the New Relationship.

The FNLC will keep First Nations posted on all developments.

Fisheries

A Joint First Nations-Federal Government Fisheries Forum was held on March 5-6, 2007. The purpose of the Forum was to present the BC First Nations Fisheries Action Plan – which was developed and endorsed by BC First Nations – to governments.

A key item in the Action Plan is the establishment of a BC First Nations Fisheries Council. The FNLC has been mandated, through resolution, to hold a province-wide meeting, open to all BC First Nations, to develop the First Nations Fisheries Council concept. This BC First Nations Fisheries Council Forum will be held on May 29-30, hosted by Musqueam Nation at the Crown St. Gym. A Fisheries Council options paper, registration form and agenda for the Forum were faxed to all BC First Nations this week. Please contact us if you did not receive these documents. We look forward to seeing you at the Forum.

Justice Forum

A BC First Nations Justice Forum took place on May 14-16, 2007, at the Coast Plaza Hotel and Suites in Vancouver, BC. This Forum was in follow-up to BCAFN resolution 13/2005 which called for a Forum to discuss concerns about the relationship between the administration of justice in BC, the legitimate aspirations of First Nations

Peoples towards greater self-government, and the overall well being of First Nation communities.

Speakers at the Justice Forum included Solicitor General John Les, Attorney General Wally Oppal, Representative for Children and Youth Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, RCMP Deputy Commissioner Gary Bass, VPD Chief Constable Jamie Graham, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and many others.

The Forum included a number of moderated sessions and breakout groups on key topics related to First Nations and Justice in BC. These discussions resulted in a draft BC First Nations Justice Action Plan which will be further developed in the coming months. A key action item is the formation of a BC First Nations Justice Council to lead the implementation of the Action Plan.

Health

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 FNLC and BC released a BC First Nations Health Plan. These two agreements are designed to close the gaps in health outcomes that exist between First Nations and other British Columbians. For copies of the MoU and Health Plan, please visit www.bcafn.ca; www.fns.bc.ca; www.ubcic.bc.ca.

A province-wide First Nations Health Forum was held on April 11-12 in Vancouver to discuss these two important agreements. The FNLC, BC and Canada received excellent advice from the health professionals and First Nations on the implementation of the agreements, and on a communications strategy with First Nations communities.

During the First Nations Health Forum, two important announcements were made. First, Premier Gordon Campbell announced the transfer of \$9.5 million to the FNLC to begin the work of implementing the 29 action items in the First Nations Health Plan. This

funding is for year one of the 10-year plan. The FNLC will work with the BC First Nations Health Council and staff to develop a budget for this year one funding, and will share information at upcoming assemblies.

Second, the appointment of Dr. Evan Adams as the Aboriginal Provincial Health Officer was announced. Dr. Adams will work with both the province and the FNLC to implement the First Nations Health Plan and the First Nations Health Plan MoU. We look forward to working closely with Dr. Adams and welcome his appointment.

Based on the advice provided to us at the First Nations Health Forum, the FNLC and the First Nations Health Council will work to finalize the tripartite First Nations Health Plan committed to in the MoU, and will develop detailed workplans for each of the action items. We will also develop a communications strategy to ensure that all BC First Nations communities are involved in this important work. We urge First Nations community health professionals to contact us if interested in providing advice through working groups on specific issues related to First Nations health.

Energy Summit

On April 2-4, 2007, the FNLC and the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council hosted a province-wide First Nations Energy Summit at the Chief Joe Mathias Centre in North Vancouver.

This Summit provided a forum for dialogue with government and industry on renewable and nonrenewable energy issues and opportunities. Guest speakers included Dr. David Suzuki, Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources Richard Neufeld, and United States Consul General Lewis Lukens.

During the Summit, First Nations delegates developed a BC First Nations Energy Action Plan to address energy sector issues. This Action Plan was faxed to all BC First Nations, with an invitation for further feedback. All feedback has been

incorporated, and a final version of the Action Plan will be presented at upcoming BCAFN, FNS and UBCIC assemblies, and will be considered for approval via resolution. An interim Energy Working Group (composed of one FNLC member and one member appointed by each of the BCAFN, FNS and UBCIC) will be responsible for implementing the Action Plan and developing the concept of a BC First Nations Energy Council.

Art Contest

The FNLC and the Provincial Health Officer are hosting an art contest for the cover design and inside pages of the next Report on Health and well-being of Aboriginal People in British Columbia due for release in November 2007. This contest is open to all Aboriginal students who are attending school in British Columbia. The winner of the contest will receive \$500 and an additional \$500 for the school that they are attending.

Technical requirements:

- Maximum size: 11x17
- Art work can be submitted in traditional or digital form
 - Traditional: Artwork can be on any surface with any medium. Use a fixative if you use chalk, pencil or pastel to avoid smudge or distortion.
 - Digital: All digital art must be submitted in high resolution (300 pixels per inch). The final digital file formats should be submitted in EPS, TIFF, JPEG (high resolution) or Photoshop (psd).

Deadline for submission: July 31, 2007. Please direct submissions or any questions to any of the BCAFN, FNS or UBCIC.

FNLC Meeting Notes

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

- A joint FNLC-BC Recognition Working Group is tasked to

produce mechanisms for recognition

- A joint FNLC-BC Working Group engages in discussions on ecosystem stewardship planning / land use planning
- A joint FNLC-BC working group on the *Heritage Conservation Act* has been struck to make recommendations on amendments to the legislation
- A group of individuals and organizations with an interest in Early Childhood Development has been meeting to produce a Memorandum of Understanding and Action Plan on this important issue; further information will be provided at upcoming BCAFN, FNS and UBCIC assemblies
- Two video pilot projects have been produced to improve public awareness about First Nations and the New Relationship
- FNLC and BC have worked to develop a new youth internship program; interns will be selected in the coming months

Calendar of Events

- **May 29-30:** First Nations Fisheries Council Forum (Musqueam Gym, Vancouver BC)
- **June 12-14:** First Nations Summit Meeting (New Aiyansh)
- **June 26-27:** UBCIC Chiefs Council (Westbank)
- **June 28:** BCAFN Assembly (Vernon)

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 Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, Vice-President Chief 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.