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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

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 (FNLC) 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 FNLC 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. Although the FNLC works with governments to develop frameworks for issues such as shared decision-making and consultation and accommodation, these efforts are never to impede government-to-government discussions and negotiations between individual First Nations and governments.

The staff of the three participating FNLC organizations are responsible for following up on resolutions passed at their respective Chiefs' assemblies, and work together on issues where 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 respecting the autonomy of each organization in achieving progress on issues specific to their respective memberships.

National Day of Action: Solidarity for Aboriginal Justice

On June 29, 2007, the FNLC hosted a march and rally, which began at 11:00am at Vanier Park, crossed the Burrard St bridge, and concluded at Library Square. Over 500 people attended the event, including First Nations and First Nations organizations, environmental groups, interfaith groups, labour organizations and government partners. Some of the guest speakers included Jim Sinclair-BC Federation of Labour, George Heyman-BC Government Employees Union, Scott Fraser-NDP MLA and Adrienne Carr-Deputy Leader of the Green Party of Canada. This event was in solidarity with efforts of other First Nations across Canada to stand together with other Canadians to demand that the Federal Government to deal honourably with First Nations Title and Rights and to call for an end to First Nations poverty.

Federal Engagement

On May 26, the FNLC met with Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Jim Prentice and Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation Michael de Jong. A commitment has been made to develop a tripartite “new relationship” document that will set out firm commitments and action items in key areas, including the resolution of claims.

New Relationship

A joint FNLC-BC Recognition Working Group is tasked with the main deliverables from the New Relationship document – producing principles & mechanisms for: recognition & Honour of the Crown, consultation/accommodation, shared decision-making, revenue & benefit sharing, and other matters.

Other working groups achieving progress under the New Relationship include the Resolutions Strategy Side Table; Telling Our Stories Committee; Crown Land Allocation Framework Working Group;

Aquaculture Working Group; and the Ecosystem Stewardship Planning Working Group.

For three days out of each month, the FNLC meets with provincial officials to set direction, review progress and have high-level discussion on progress under the New Relationship and other matters of common concern.

Culture and Heritage

A Culture and Heritage Working Group has been created to work with BC to a) make recommendations with respect to amendments to the *Heritage Conservation Act* and b) identify culture and heritage site management possibilities within the existing legislative regime.

Fisheries

A key item in the BC First Nations Fisheries Action Plan is the establishment of a BC First Nations Fisheries Council. The FNLC was 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 was held on May 29-30, hosted by Musqueam Nation at the Crown St. Gym. Delegates to the Forum developed a “BC First Nations Fisheries Council Concept Paper”, which was adopted by resolution of the BCAFN and UBCIC in June. The FNLC will begin to make appointments to the Fisheries Council, and meet with government to discuss resourcing of the Fisheries Council, throughout the summer.

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.

These discussions resulted in a draft BC First Nations Justice Action Plan which was subsequently shared with all BC First Nations for their review and comment. The revised Action Plan was endorsed by resolution of

the BCAFN and UBCIC in June. A related resolution was passed in support of a key action item in the Action Plan – the formation of a BC First Nations Justice Council. Work will now begin to identify representatives and resources for the Justice Council.

Health

On June 11, 2007, the FNLC, Minister of Health Tony Clement, and Premier Gordon Campbell signed the Tripartite BC First Nations Health Plan in fulfillment of the commitment made in the First Nations Health Plan Memorandum of Understanding signed on November 27, 2006. The Tripartite First Nations Health Plan adopts the 29 action items of the FNLC-BC Transformative Change Accord Health Plan released in November 2006 and includes a number of key new action items. The development of the Tripartite First Nations Health Plan was informed by the April 10-11, 2007 province-wide First Nations Health Forum, attended by First Nations leaders and community health professionals, among others. The Final Report of the First Nations Health Forum has been published and will be sent to all BC First Nations and Forum attendees later this month.

Next Steps for the Tripartite BC First Nations Health Plan are as follows:

Communication Strategy: One of the first priorities to move the work of the plan forward involves the development and implementation of an effective communication strategy. The communication strategy will consist of the following:

- External Communication: A main component of the communication strategy will be to ensure effective two-way communication is established with First Nations communities in BC. This will ensure access to good information on all aspects of the plan on a timely basis for all levels of discussion and appropriate processes for input. Work with First Nations

communities will be done in coordination with the First Nations Health Council and supported by the First Nations Chiefs' Health Committee and the UBCIC Social Development Committee. External communications will also include communication with the government and the general public on First Nations health plan matters as required.

- Internal Communication: An integrated internal communication strategy is needed to ensure information can be shared with all participating organizations and team members for the health plan.

The communication strategy will include branding of the health plan, information management, information sharing, website management, regular update bulletins, presentation materials, and other communication tools and methods.

First Nations Health Plans: The Tripartite First Nations Health Plan supports the development of First Nations community health plans. Work will begin immediately to ensure support is provided for each First Nations community in BC to have an up-to-date community health plan that sets out a comprehensive approach to addressing the health issues of the community.

New governance structure for First Nations Health Services in BC: The Tripartite First Nations Health Plan sets out the agreement of the Parties to create and implement a new structure for the governance of First Nations health services in BC. Included in this work is the development of a First Nations Health Governing Body within three years of signing the Tripartite First Nations Health Plan. This governing body is intended to ensure effective participation of First Nations in key functions of governance over health services. Work will be initiated through the First Nations Health Council to design and implement a

process for First Nations involvement and support for this initiative.

Workplan for the Tripartite First Nations Health Plan: An initial work plan is required within six months (by December 2007). Work is underway to set priorities, establish effective approaches, and determine budgets and other resource requirements. In the interim, short-term contracts will be used to bring on support as required to move the work forward.

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.

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

Early Childhood Development

A group of individuals and organizations with an interest in Early Childhood Development (including the FNLC, First Nations Education Steering Committee, First Nations Schools Association, Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreements, First Nations Health Council, BC Aboriginal Child Care Society and others) has been meeting to discuss ways to improve coordination and collaboration amongst themselves, to improve the lives of BC First Nations children. The group ("BC First Nations Early Childhood Development Council") has produced a Memorandum of Understanding that was approved at the June BCAFN meeting. The Council has also been mandated to develop a draft BC First Nations Early Childhood Development Action Plan for review and consideration of BC First Nations.

Energy

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

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 was approved by resolution of the BCAFN and UBCIC in June. An interim Energy Working Group (composed of one FNLC member and one member appointed by each of the BCAFN, FNS and UBCIC) will be created to develop a plan for creating a BC First Nations Energy Council and begin the work of implementing the Action Plan.

Technology

UBCIC and AFN recently passed resolutions mandating the First Nations Technology Council (FNTC) to begin work on a First Nations Common Services Organization (FNCSO), with the initial function being Common Network Support, including the provision of Internet Services. Many communities have been unsuccessful in getting a local Internet Service Provider (ISP) to provide services to them and do not have the resources to run their own ISP. The FNCSO would aggregate demand from small communities to develop a sustainable organization that could also provide 'last mile' connection to community buildings as well as technical support. The same resolution will be presented to the First Nations Summit Chiefs in the fall.

FNTC recently hosted a Think Tank on Technical Training to gather input to improve future delivery of A+/Network+ technician training. Participants included representatives from Nicola Valley Institute of Technology, University of British

Columbia, Thompson Rivers University, Community Health Associates, students from the two FNTEC/First Nations Education Steering Committee pilot programs and FNTEC members. Input will be used to develop a business case that takes a community view on technical capacity building as well as to develop a proposal for funding for on-going technician training.

FNTEC's Integrated Information Management Working Group has a number of projects in progress including improving data gathering for Active Measures, planning a land referral process/systems workshop, and seeking funding for an Integrated Information Management Forum to define a 'roadmap' for a community information management process.

UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is now being considered for adoption at the 61st session of the United Nations in New York. The Declaration provides minimum international standards for the survival, dignity and wellbeing of the world's Indigenous Peoples and is a critical instrument to remedy the primordial injustices caused by colonization.

Despite "no" votes from Canada and Russia, the declaration was approved by majority on June 29, 2006 by the Human Rights Council, which subsequently recommended adoption of the Declaration by the UN General Assembly.

Although Canada has long supported the Declaration, and participated in its development over two decades, it has recently changed its position, now stating that it cannot support the Declaration as it is "inconsistent with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, our Constitution Act, previous Supreme Court decisions, the National Defence Act and policies under which we negotiate treaties."

With opposition voiced by Canada and Russia, other countries have now begun to raise objections and propose amendments to the Declaration. On June 6, 2007, the UN General Assembly appointed a mediator to facilitate discussions between States and Indigenous peoples on the Declaration. His report was to be submitted by July 15, 2007.

Indigenous peoples believe that the existing text of the Declaration is already a compromise and are fully opposed to any changes to the text.

There may be a vote before mid-August by the UN General Assembly to adopt the Declaration.

FNLC Meeting Notes

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

- Working group to be struck on renewal of the provincial Wildlife Act
- FNLC working with key partners to develop a Housing and Infrastructure Memorandum of Understanding and Action Plan
- FNLC to work with BC and other key partners to develop a BC First Nations Public Service Action Plan Framework
- FNLC to work with BC and other key partners to develop a BC Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy
- FNLC is currently developing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Representative for Children and Youth
- FNLC has developed a template Declaration / Protocol to sign with First Nations organizations to improve coordination and collaboration on all matters
- FNLC participating in Cabinet Committee on Climate Change
- FNLC and BC have developed a new youth internship program
- FNLC is hosting a meeting of key economic development partners with the aim of increasing coordination and collaboration in

the development of a BC First Nations Economic Development Strategy

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.