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**Recognition and Reconciliation
Legislation**

**All Chiefs Assembly United in
Rejection of Proposed Legislation.
The Recognition and
Reconciliation legislation is Dead**

Chiefs and leaders came together in August in a BC All Chiefs Assembly to discuss the proposed Recognition and Reconciliation legislation. The Assembly unanimously endorsed an action strategy to be implemented by an Indigenous Title Action Group on a provincial, national and international level.

“When we travelled through the province, to the many regional sessions and community meetings, we consistently heard the deep concerns of the potential impacts of the proposed legislation on our Indigenous Title and Rights. Our people and leadership judge the Province not by their words but their continued actions that infringe on their territories and resources. The Province of British Columbia cannot and does not have jurisdiction over our Indigenous Title and Rights and as such the proposed legislation is dead,” said Grand Chief Edward John of the First Nations Summit Task Group.

“The Assembly is calling for an immediate implementation and enforcement of our Indigenous Title and Rights as called for by the United Nations’ Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,” said Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs. “Clearly the Premier and his government have not acted honourably through the course of the so-called ‘New Relationship.’ Indigenous communities demand substance not empty platitudes. Rather than breaking down the outdated legal barriers and the archaic colonial attitudes of the bureaucracy, Indigenous communities, such as the Xeni Gwet’in or those of the Common

Table, are facing deliberately constructed and illegal denial strategies of their Title and Rights in court and in their negotiations. That must stop.”

“The All Chiefs Assembly has strengthened our unity to work collectively on the outstanding and unresolved title issues of this province. We call on the Province of British Columbia to immediately change its deplorable conduct and fully implement on an honourable basis our Indigenous Title and Rights that are constitutionally recognized and judicially reaffirmed. We have reaffirmed that our Title and Rights are inherited from our ancestral origins as Indigenous Peoples and we recognize our inherit responsibility to bestow our Title and Rights to those unborn,” concluded Chief Nelson Leon, BCAFN spokesperson.

BC First Nations Fisheries Council

Summer Fisheries

The recent crisis in sockeye returns is resulting in challenges for many coastal and interior communities that will be felt over the next year. Food and commercial opportunities yielded disappointing results, and as a result many First Nations are again raising concerns that the Government of Canada is not meeting its obligations to manage the fisheries effectively and to guarantee First Nations their rights to access fish which are protected by the Canadian constitution. The First Nations Fisheries Council recently called upon Canada and B.C. to support an international Salmon Summit to look at the state of salmon fisheries in B.C. Fisheries Council co-chair Grand Chief Doug Kelly also recently met with Fisheries and Oceans Canada Minister Gail Shea in a discussion related to this year’s sockeye crisis.

A meeting took place in late August with respect to concerns about sport fishing and tensions between First Nations trying to obtain food fish and sports fishermen. Leaders of the Sport Fishing Advisory Board; Paul Sprout, the Regional Director General for the Pacific Region of Fisheries and Oceans Canada; and Grand Chief Doug Kelly met to discuss steps that could be taken on a B.C.-wide basis to help improve relationships between First Nations and Sports fishermen. More information on the meeting is available from the Council.

Program, Funding and Employment Opportunities

There are a number of program, funding, and employment opportunities currently posted on the Fisheries Council website at www.FNFisheriesCouncil.ca. For further information First Nations should consider joining the Fisheries Council listserv or participating in the Fisheries Council bi-weekly conference calls for First Nations fisheries organizations. Contact the Fisheries Council Executive Director for more information Brenda@FNFisheriesCouncil.ca.

Upcoming Fisheries Meetings

The Fisheries Council is hosting a meeting for First Nations to discuss the approach that B.C. First Nations would like to take relating to engagement in the current review of the **regulatory framework for aquaculture** on September 15, 2009 in conjunction with the UBCIC meeting. The resulting resolution will be brought to the UBCIC, Summit, and BCAFN meetings this fall. Results of the meeting will be posted on the Council website.

The **Fall Fisheries Assembly** will take place October 28 – 30, 2009 at Chehalis. The theme of the assembly will be “rights to access fisheries resources.” More information about the Assembly is on the Fisheries Council website at www.FNFisheriesCouncil.ca.

First Nations Health Council

H1N1

As part of the Tripartite relationship, an H1N1 working group was struck in July to develop a coordinated response to H1N1 in First Nations Communities in BC. The Tripartite working group has created an H1N1 Action Plan for Rural and Remote Communities to be signed off in late September. The Tripartite H1N1 Plan, the first in Canada, takes into consideration the unique needs and barriers faced by remote communities in accessing equal health care services. Remedies in the Plan include more flexible policy for prescribing and administering anti-viral medications, special consideration for immunizations, and increased coordination in surveillance efforts. In addition, many First Nations communities have brought forward the issue of lack of permanent health staff in dealing with the H1N1 crisis. In response the Health Council is partnering with First Nations and Inuit Health to offer 12 regional sessions which will train an additional 300 community members in First Aid and influenza control and prevention. Details regarding these training sessions will be sent out to all First Nations shortly.

Principals meeting

The Principals of the Tripartite First Nations Health Plan held their inaugural meeting in Victoria on August 31st, 2009. Leona Aglukkaq, Federal Minister of Health, Ida Chong, British Columbia's Minister of Healthy Living and Sport, and representatives of the First Nations Health Council (FNHC) came together to reaffirm their commitment to this agreement and to discuss further implementation of the Plan. The Plan requires the Principals to meeting on annual basis, and First Nations leaders in attendance acknowledged that high level political support is crucial to the success of the plan, and the greater goal of closing the health gap. The Federal Minister, Leona Aglukkaq, along with Provincial Minister, Ida Chong,

agreed that the Principals need to meet more frequently, and have agreed to meet again in late September.

Gathering Wisdom

The third annual Gathering Wisdom Forum will take place November 3-5, 2009 in Vancouver BC. The annual forum provides a venue for tripartite partners to gather feedback and input from communities and provide updates on the plans implementation. FNHC has added a third day to this year's forum to allow for focussed Health Governance discussions.

Day 1 – Health Governance
(For Chiefs and Health Directors)
Day 2 – Tripartite Health actions
(For Health Dir. and other health staff)
Day 3 – Health Directors
(For Health Dir. and managers)

Travel and accommodations will be covered for two members per First Nations community and Tribal Council, and one community hub representative. To register please visit: www.fnhc.ca

Past forum summary reports are available at http://www.fnhc.ca/index.php/news/gathering_wisdom/

Tourism

Aboriginal Tourism Association of British Columbia presents **Indian Summer Festival 2009** September 25 – 27, 2009 Robson Square GE Plaza, Vancouver

A Special Sales and Marketing Promotion for AtBC Members

Please join us at the 2009 Indian Summer Festival, September 25 – 27, at Robson Square GE Plaza in downtown Vancouver. This unique cultural celebration and members promotion is being produced by Aboriginal Tourism Association of British Columbia (AtBC). In addition to profiling our organization, it offers AtBC members some tremendous marketing and sales opportunities in

the heart of downtown Vancouver. Featuring a media and VIP opening reception on Friday, September 25, the 2009 Indian Summer Festival is an opportunity for AtBC members to display and promote their tourism products and services to an enthusiastic audience. In addition to showcasing distinctive Aboriginal food and entertainment, the Festival will be an opportunity to highlight the varied membership of AtBC and the broad range of Aboriginal tourism products and services available across British Columbia. Our promotion plan will help deliver both crowds and media coverage. AtBC members that are interested in participating are asked to register by September 1, 2009 in order to reserve display space at Robson Square GE Plaza. Registration includes a 6 ft. skirted table and 2 chairs with electrical power. For more information, please contact Linda Calla at (604) 921-1070 or linda@aboriginalbc.com

New Relationship Trust

The New Relationship trust will be holding a series of regional engagement session throughout October and November. The NRT supports initiatives that strengthen BC First Nations. These sessions will be an opportunity for NRT to provide an overview of our initiatives and for you to provide input to our future direction.

The dates and locations are as follows:

- Oct 13** - Prince George – Ramada Hotel
- Oct 15** – Fort St. John – Quality inn
- Oct 20** – Williams Lake – Overlander Hotel
- Oct 22** – Kamloops – Chief Louie Assembly Hall
- Oct 26** – Cranbrook – St. Eugene Mission Resort
- Oct 29** – Campbell River – Quinsam Hall
- Nov 3** – Victoria – Victoria Native Friendship Centre
- Nov 5** – Vancouver – Tsleil-Waututh Comm. Centre
- Nov 10** – Prince Rupert – Nisga'a Hall

Nov 12 – Terrace – Kitsumkalum Hall

Children & Families

What is the Interim First Nations Child and Family Wellness Council (IFNCFWC)?

The Interim First Nations Child and Family Wellness Council (IFNCFWC) was established at the Indigenous Child at the Centre II Forum held on July 21 – 23, 2008 to: amend the Indigenous Child at the Centre Action Plan; develop a workplan to advance and implement the Action Plan; and develop a Terms of Reference for a permanent IFNCFWC.

Since its first meeting in October 2008, the IFNCFWC has accomplished the following:

- Developed its Terms of Reference, which were approved by resolutions of the BCAFN, FNS and UBCIC
- Revised and re-circulated the Indigenous Child at the Centre Action Plan, which will be considered for adoption at the upcoming BCAFN, FNS and UBCIC meetings
- Finalized the Recognition and Reconciliation Protocol on First Nations Children, Youth and Families with MCFD
- Prepared a draft protocol with Canada and tabled it with the federal government
- Participated in meetings and discussions on policy issues such as Jordan's Principle
- Established internal governance structure, policy and principles and are hiring support staff
- Secured a modest amount of funding to support the costs of IFNCFWC work, meetings and engagement with First Nations.
- Issued a number of detailed communiqués, and reported to the BCAFN, FNS and UBCIC, and other community meetings
- Met with a number of key organizations in child and family wellness to build effective working relationships

For the remainder of the fiscal year, the IFNCFWC will be focused on the following priorities:

- Holding a third Indigenous Child at the Centre Forum to seek advice and direction from First Nations
- Preparing a workplan for the Indigenous Child at the Centre Action Plan
- Finalizing a workplan with MCFD for the Recognition and Reconciliation Protocol on First Nations Children, Youth and Families
- Participating in policy and relationship-building discussions including continuing efforts to engage the federal government, and establishing the Indigenous Caucus composed of Aboriginal, technical and service organizations with expertise in child welfare matters
- Engaging with First Nations on what a permanent governance structure for the Council should look like

For more information about the IFNCFWC, please visit our website at <http://www.informationbc.ca/child2/>.

First Nations Forestry Council

This year's forest fire season has been one of the worst, if not the most severe on record. Through our First Nations Emergency Services Society (FNESS) partners we have been monitoring the situation, which has seen many First Nations communities evacuated or threatened.

Our studies and others show clearly that the mountain pine beetle's destruction of our forests and the failure to respond with adequate forest-fuel management programs because of a lack of funding was a major contributor to these fires and the threats to communities. There is every reason to believe next year's fire season will be as severe, and possibly more disastrous for communities, if we do not move

quickly in the coming months to address this.

The Council has therefore devoted its efforts to obtain funding to allow work to proceed on fuel management work, sustainable economic development and ecosystem stewardship to make our communities safer in advance of next year's fire season.

The FNFC has taken the lead on this issue, both in the media and in political meetings, and will strive to make this a federal election issue this fall should the country go to the polls as expected. We intend to present a policy paper to the federal parties which we hope will be endorsed in election platforms, and have already received interest from the federal Liberals. We intend to visit Ottawa later this month to pursue this.

While the MPB's impacts have continued to worsen over the years, our research has shown that far from receiving the promised \$100 million year to specifically address the mountain pine beetle crisis since 2006, BC has been allocated on an annual average of \$25 million a year from the federal government.

Our First Nations communities, which under an agreement with the provincial government were expecting to receive \$20 million a year from the promised federal funding, we have received only a few million dollars since 2006 and have been allocated no new funding for the current fiscal year.

The FNFC continues to pursue finding proposals under the Community Adjustment Fund with Western Economic Diversification. We have been advised, however, that at best we will receive only a small percentage of the \$20 million we have requested.

The FNFC also continues to seek funding from the Provincial Government, but it is struggling now with a massive deficit and multiple hits to the provincial economy. As a result we have received only limited

core funding that is half of what is needed for basic operations, and have been told there is no more money available.

To compound the problem, this month's provincial budget cut BC's own MPB funding by \$18 million. The FNFC sees this cut as totally counterproductive. We need to be controlling forest fuel and making communities safer for next year, not cutting back on the limited work that has been done and risking a fire season next year that would be as bad, as and possibly even worse than this year's.

Given this environment and the fiscal realities in BC, the FNFC now sees a fall federal election and the best window of opportunity to get new funding by:

- Reminding the federal parties of the 2006 promise of funding that has not been met;
- Highlighting the need for funding now – which is greater than it was when the 2006 pledges were made;
- Obtaining political support for a renewed federal MPB programme for BC that ensures a significant percent of the funds is dedicated to our First Nations.

We are seeking the support of the Province and of municipalities for this campaign. After all, while First Nations have lost \$80 million in federal funding that they had expected, the rest of the province has lost \$320 million and would stand to gain significantly more that we would under a renewed program.

We are also seeking to place the federal government and opposition parties on the spot in terms of their commitment to BC, which is expected to be a key, possibly decisive battleground in any fall election.

The \$100 million a year that BC should be receiving to address the mountain pine beetle issues is the equivalent of what the federal government is spending to save just 71 auto jobs in Ontario (\$1.4 million

per saved job.). The \$20 million that First Nations were to receive from this funding, and which it is now seeking from other sources, is the equivalent to the cost of saving just 17 auto jobs in Ontario.

The question we will be asking is – are 103 First Nations communities and the lives and livelihoods of tens of thousands of First Nations people in BC not worth at least the same as 17 auto workers jobs in Ontario?

Calendar of Events

- September 16-18, 2009: UBCIC AGA (Harrison Hot Springs)
- September 23-25, 2009: FNS Meeting (North Vancouver)
- September 25-27, 2009: Indian Summer Festival 2009 (Robson Square GE Plaza, Vancouver)
- September 30-October 1: BCAFN AGA (North Vancouver)
- October 28-30, 2009: Fisheries Assembly (Chehalis)
- October-November 2009: NRT Regional Sessions (province-wide)
- November 3-5, 2009: Gathering Wisdom Health Forum (Vancouver)