AFN Special Chiefs Assembly
December 9-11, 2008 Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 59/2008

SUBJECT:	MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT AT TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION EVENTS
MOVED BY:	Chief William Starr, Kispiox Band Council, BC
SECONDED BY:	Michelle Corfield, Proxy, Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation, BC
DECISION:	Carried by consensus

WHEREAS:

A. Residential school survivors deserve mental health, and safety of survivors is paramount in the healing process;

B. The Assembly of First Nations advocated for, and continues to support the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), as one of the signatories to the legal agreement;

C. The Assembly of First Nations fully supports the mandate of the TRC to document the truth of survivors, their families, communities and anyone who has been affected by the impacts of the Indian Residential Schools (IRS) legacy;

D. The TRC is responsible for: providing opportunity to share experiences; recording an accurate historical record of residential schools, supporting a commemoration initiative that will pay tribute to IRS survivors, producing a public report, and establishing a national research center;

E. The work of the TRC will offer opportunities for survivors of residential schools to share their stories publically, and this raises the need for appropriate and effective mental health supports and emotional supports;

F. Experts in mental health and traditional health have communicated that appropriate and effective supports for survivors at a large event would decrease the risk of mental health crises of participants, cluster effects of crises, and potential suicidiality; and increase the perception of safety for survivors to participate fully in such events; and

G. Media generally focus on negative events, and positive media is essential to build Canadian support for the work of the TRC, and ultimately understanding of this chapter in Canadian history.

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PHIL FONTAINE, NATIONAL CHIEF

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that:

1. Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the Assembly of First Nations to bring forward the following views to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC):
    i) The TRC should work closely with the IRS Health Supports and other appropriate resources to support TRC events and increase safety for survivors.
    ii) Mental health and emotional supports are foundational in any event planning, and should be planned collaboratively in the best interest of survivors and their families, including their safety.
    iii) The TRC respects the need for safety for survivors and would build in foundational supports that:
        (1) reflect knowledge of post-traumatic stress and traditional health;
        (2) ensures one-on-one support for individuals during the whole period of any event, and
        (3) ensures a referral system for individuals requiring continuing support after they leave and return home.

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