



National Chiefs Report





National Chief RoseAnne Archibald

Wahcheeyay Misiway,

I am pleased to provide my first Annual Report as National Chief. I continue to focus on a strength based and heart centered approach while embodying leadership that is grounded in love and care, as well as holding space for respect in all my interactions.

As National Chief for the AFN, I am hopeful about the future, eager to put in the hard work and motivated by the momentum we have built together. I look forward to the journey ahead where we will advance First Nations Inherent and Treaty Rights and create a better future for all First Nations across Turtle Island.

This has been a challenging year for many. We are emerging from a global pandemic, wildfires, record heat waves, flooding, a federal election, and collectively grieving the little ones who did not return home from institutions of assimilation and genocide.

We have unprecedented support and empathy from non-Indigenous peoples in Canada and around the world. Through our collective grief and hardships, there comes hope and an opportunity for fundamental change. This is what we are calling *The Healing Path Forward*.

We launched a First Nations priorities document prior to the federal election called, *The Healing Path Forward*. These priorities offer a strategic direction toward positive and evolutionary change for First Nations and all Canadians.

The commitments we are seeking are not new. Further, these priorities are about how we can build a better future for everyone, one that creates greater equity and prepares us for challenges such as climate change and a post-pandemic recovery.

This is an important time for us as First Nations people across Turtle Island.

Imbedded below is my 100-day action plan report which highlights early successes and accomplishments at the beginning of my term as National Chief.



100 DAY ACTION PLAN UPDATE

November 2021

55 Metcalfe Street, Suite 1600, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6L5 • 55, rue Metcalfe, Suite 1600, Ottawa (Ontario) K1P 6L5



The 100-day plan was created in the National Chief's first week in office. The plan represents a condensed version of the National Chief's Election Platform where early successes could be realized. The goals and strategies identified for action represent a snapshot of high priority items.

The Office of the National Chief (NCO) was able to initiate and complete work on a number of platform priorities as outlined in the 100-Day Plan and *The Healing Path Forward* document. Gains were made despite challenges during the first 100 days, including: the recovery of our little ones; a hastily called federal election; new COVID waves; funding announcements; national day for truth and reconciliation; and, calls for a papal apology.

"Canada has a great deal of work to do to fulfill its promises to help build safe, vibrant communities and a more prosperous society for our Nations and therefore all of Canada."

National Chief,
RoseAnne Archibald

WOMEN, YOUTH AND 2SLGBTQQIA+ PEOPLES	
<i>National Caucus of Elected Women Leaders</i>	
GOALS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS & ACTIONS COMPLETED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reach out for funding to start elected women's leadership caucus and other supports. ✓ Develop funding proposal to submit to Minister Monsef within first 20 days. ✓ Carry out early developmental work to establish a National Caucus of Elected of Women Leaders and technical team and plan an inaugural meeting for SCA. 	<p>The NCO secured funding to start a National Caucus of Elected Women Leaders and other supports through former Minister Maryam Monsef, Women and Gender, Equality and Rural Economic Development.</p> <p>\$6.2-million was approved and \$3-million of that amount will go directly to the regional offices.</p>
<i>2SLGBTQQIA+ Peoples</i>	
GOALS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS & ACTIONS COMPLETED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Begin preparatory work to establish a 2SLGBTQQIA+ Council at the AFN by December 2021. Draft a concept paper and terms of reference to bring forward to the Executive for discussion and support. 	<p>A briefing notes was completed and presented to the AFN Executive Committee. The AFN Executive asked the Chiefs Committee on Charter Renewal to pass a motion. Due to lack of quorum, a Chief's resolution has been submitted on this item and will be brought to the SCA for final decision.</p>



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Over the course of three months in office National Chief Archibald visited numerous First Nation communities and took part in ceremonies and events in BC (20), Saskatchewan (4), Manitoba (2), southwestern Ontario (7), Quebec (10), Nova Scotia (5)



National Chief Archibald has recorded over a dozen video messages for First Nation annual general assemblies, youth and LGBTQ events and health conferences and political forums.



National Chief Archibald has also been over 25 national media interviews and brought to light atrocities of the unmarked graves with such international media as the BBC, the London Times and Al Jazeera.

WOMEN, YOUTH AND 2SLGBTQQIA+ PEOPLES

Youth

GOALS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS & ACTIONS COMPLETED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Fully engage youth through empowerment, capacity building and leadership development. 	<p>The NCO has met with the AFN Youth Council to determine how the NCO can support their priorities. The youth have committed to a second meeting in December 2021 to outline how the NCO can advance their leadership and initiatives.</p>

“We’re no longer accepting hollow apologies! Concrete actions and changed behaviours are essential as we walk the healing path forward.”

*National Chief,
RoseAnne Archibald*



CREATE A HEALTHY BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND POLITICAL FUNCTIONS OF THE AFN

GOALS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS & ACTIONS COMPLETED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Set out a schedule of political (Executive/ Leadership Council) and administrative (Secretariat) meetings to be held for the remainder of 2021. 	<p>A strategic direction retreat was held on October 4/5 where the NCO presented a vision, values, mission statement and goals. The issue of Healthy Boundaries was also discussed. This work is ongoing.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Initiate a strategic direction planning process through the creation of a 100 Day Plan. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Hold a strategic planning retreat for the Regional Chiefs to discuss healthy boundaries and upcoming work. 	





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"I am committed to working with all parties to ensure that Canada does all it can to help us all to heal and create stronger First Nations and a stronger Canada for all of us."

*National Chief,
RoseAnne Archibald*



OBTAIN FUNDING & RESOURCES FOR THE RECOVERY OF OUR CHILDREN FROM UNMARKED GRAVES

GOALS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS & ACTIONS COMPLETED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per Resolution #01-2021, to advocate for justice and accountability for the recovery of our children from former institutions of assimilation and genocide and the appointment of an International Special Rapporteur. 	<p>In July I spoke separately with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Attorney General and Justice Minister David Lametti to ensure justice and the return of our little children home.</p> <p>In August the federal government announced \$321-million: to help Indigenous communities search burial sites at former institutions of assimilation and genocide; to support survivors healing initiatives; and, to create memorials.</p> <p>Minister Lametti indicated Canada was not prepared to appoint a Special Rapporteur however they would be appointing a Federal Interlocutor. The AFN Executive Committee has rejected the Interlocutor and continues to press for a UN Special Rapporteur.</p>



FEDERAL ELECTION

GOALS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS & ACTIONS COMPLETED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To highlight First Nation priorities and influence party platforms in the 44th Federal Election. 	<p><i>The Healing Path Forward</i> document was prepared by the AFN secretariat with input from the NCO and regional offices. It was released on August 31.</p> <p>The AFN secretariat led the development of a communications strategy with input from the NCO. It included graphics, social media posts, polls and information on candidate and party platforms.</p>



NATIONAL PROSPERITY TABLE

GOALS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS & ACTIONS COMPLETED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop funding proposal to submit to ISC CIRNA, Natural Resources Canada, and Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada within first 60 days. 	<p>The proposal was completed on October 15, 2021 and submitted to the federal government.</p> <p>There is still an opportunity for input and feedback from the AFN Executive Committee portfolio holder, and Chiefs Committee on Economic Development.</p>





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"True reconciliation is about learning, sharing and growing as a country. The more we know about where we've come from, our shared history and our responsibilities, the better we can address current challenges and find our path forward together."

National Chief, RoseAnne Archibald



A CROSS-SECTION OF EVENTS ATTENDED IN PERSON BY NATIONAL CHIEF:



- ▶ The Installation of 30th Governor General Mary Simon in Ottawa
- ▶ On August 3 in Long Plain First Nation in Manitoba National Chief was there to acknowledge and celebrate Treaty 1 signed August 3, 1871, between the Anishinaabe and Muskegon Cree peoples and the Government of Canada.
- ▶ National Chief also attended Molanossa Culture Days near Montreal Lake Cree Nation in northern Saskatchewan where they celebrated 132 anniversary of Treaty #6.
- ▶ Most recently National Chief Archibald was asked to be a keynote speaker at the National Congress of American Indians 78th Annual Convention where she reaffirmed the partnership between the AFN and the NCAI.
- ▶ National Chief held a meeting with the recently re-elected Squamish Nation Council and was on hand in Ontario for the Robinson-Huron Treaty of 1850 Gathering 'Rekindling Our Council Fire'.
- ▶ Pre-election, National Chief met with Prime Minister candidates for the Conservative, NDP and Liberal Parties to reinforce First Nation Priorities in the *Healing Path Forward* Document.
- ▶ In October National Chief met with AFN Yukon Regional Chief Kluane Adamek, Yukon Chiefs and Designates to discuss your issues of importance in the far north such as climate change, depleting Chinook salmon stock, modern day Treaties, housing, and mental health issues.
- ▶ In October National Chief Archibald visited the Union Gospel Mission and Vancouver Aboriginal Health Society in the Downtown East Side of Vancouver, ground zero for the intergenerational trauma suffered by generations of First Nations peoples.
- ▶ National Chief was invited by Hereditary Chief Tlakwagiila to gill net fish on the Leigh Creek Tributary in the Mowawachaht Muchalaht territory.
- ▶ In early September along with Chiefs/leadership in Nova Scotia, National Chief witnessed and participated in the lobster fishery as the Mi'kmaq peoples exercised their right to fish year round based on the treaties signed in the 18th century.



COVID

Recognition is extended to Regional Chief Marlene Poitras who is leading this file as the Chair of the AFN COVID-19 National Task Force. The task force has worked hard on a national response to the COVID-19 pandemic which has impacted all aspects of our lives – from our social connection, work, education, home aspects, medical care, travel, and our ability to gather in ceremony. COVID-19 has also disproportionately affected First Nations.

Some of us have lost loved ones to COVID-19, other illnesses, and mental unwellness, and some of us had to delay our traditional collective grieving processes because of the pandemic. We need to acknowledge the strain the pandemic has put on our support systems and resiliency, while also recognizing the emphasized strength of Nations and regions and the critical role they play in protecting and supporting First Nations.

The opportunity now rests with the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to co-create a healing path by ensuring equity and equality through collective action that support First Nations Inherent and Treaty Rights including rights to self-determination. We are also committed to working with all regions to build Post-Pandemic Recovery Plans for First Nations.

Vatican Papal Visit

In June, it was announced that the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) and national Indigenous organizations have been working for over two years to send a delegation of Indigenous representatives to

meet the Pope. This is now confirmed for the week of December 18, 2021.

In September, the CCCB issued an apology to the Indigenous Peoples of Canada for their role in the institutions of assimilation and genocide. Then on Sept 27, 2021, the CCCB announced a \$30 million financial pledge to support healing and reconciliation initiatives.

We have a reasonable expectation that the funds will go directly to the healing initiatives for the survivors and intergenerational survivors. Further, we have reached out to the Bishops of Canada to ensure that First Nations are part of the development of the national principles and strategy, timelines, and the public communication as stated in their announcement. Concrete actions and changed behaviour are essential as we walk the healing path.

On October 27, 2021, Pope Francis announced he would visit Canada to meet with survivors and intergenerational trauma survivors. We have called on the church to make several reparations while the Holy Father is here. These immediate actions include returning diocese land properties back to First Nations on whose traditional lands they are situated and investment into long-term healing initiatives beyond their recent commitment of \$30 million to ensure support programs and services for survivors and their descendants.

For over 100 years, the church has played a role in the destruction of the social fabric of First Nations. Now, equal time, energy and resources must be made available to rebuild our children's lives, our families and communities.



Many First Nations leaders have asked the Holy Father to renounce and formally revoke the "Inter Caetera" 1493 Doctrine of Discovery and replace it with a new Papal Bull that decrees Indigenous Peoples and cultures are valuable, worthy, and must be treated with dignity and respect. We will be sending this message to Rome in December.

The Recovery of our Children

The past year was a very difficult time for survivors and intergenerational trauma survivors who are being triggered into old hurts and trauma as we recover our little ones from unmarked graves at the many institutions of assimilation and genocide across Turtle Island.

What is hopeful about this moment is that it can serve as a turning point in our collective healing journey as we build together. We will also continue to call for accountability. Someone must be charged for the deaths of our children and there must be examinations to determine if some of these children were murdered. Canada must be held accountable for their genocidal laws and policies. Certainly, Canada must not be allowed to investigate itself.

As per the AFN Executive motion, the AFN will reach out to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples for the purpose of filing a human rights complaint to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, in line with the pursuit of remedies for victims of genocide.

We welcome the government's financial commitment of \$321 million to fund Indigenous-led, survivor-centric and culturally safe efforts, as we recover our

little ones from unmarked graves. However, we must ensure that First Nations take the lead on efforts to pursue justice and healing.

Fisheries

In early September, along with Chiefs/ leadership in Nova Scotia, I witnessed rights holders exercise the right to fish year-round based on the Treaty of 1752. We were surrounded by officers from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, who at one point pulled their boats from the water, yet weeks later they returned with a new tactic by punching holes in the tails of lobsters being harvested by Mi'kmaq fishers.

I visited both the east coast and west coast communities where fisheries are a source of sustenance and economic income. I met with Chiefs, Elders and First Nations citizens who have experienced threats and harassment for exerting their right to fish and who call the treatment they are receiving a form of "cultural violence."

This is a longstanding issue where my office will continue to work with and support First Nations rights holders as they exercise their Inherent and Treaty rights.

Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action

Often when governments talk about Reconciliation, they don't acknowledge that there must be Truth before Reconciliation. The truths that must be told will force us to abandon the beliefs that no longer serve us. When we nullify false narratives, the real work of building a fair and just society will move beyond aspiration to reality.

TRC Call to Action #80 has now been met with September 30th of each year being





designated as a federal statutory holiday known as the 'National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.' On this day, we honour the lives of our little ones and those who lived to tell their stories, the Survivors.

On the inaugural day, I participated in the 'Drum for the Children' event at the invitation of Kukpi7 Rosanne Casimir in Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc that called upon people around the world to gather safely to drum and sing for the missing children.

Also, the TRC Call to Action #58 is becoming more of a reality as the Pope has committed to visiting Canada.

On November 5, 2021, the AFN Executive Committee called on the federal government to take concrete action on Truth and Reconciliation by entering into a TRC Calls: Joint Action Plan with the AFN to ensure that we accelerate the implementation of all 94 TRC Calls to Action with an immediate focus on calls #53, #54, #55, and #56.

Women, Youth and 2SLGBTQIA+ Peoples

The Liberal government fulfilled their promise to hold an inquiry into the MMIWG, though the development of that National Action Plan has experienced delays. While the implementation of the 231 calls has been slow and has experienced setbacks, we can still come together to accelerate the fulfillment of those Calls for Justice in ways that are Indigenous-led, trauma-informed and survivor-centred. Ultimately our goals are to ensure that First Nations women are safe, loved, cared for, respected, and treated with dignity always.

National Caucus of Elected Women Leaders

The NCO secured funding to start a National Caucus of Elected Women Leaders (NCEWL) and other supports through Maryam Monsef, former Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development. The purpose of the NCEWL is to create a supportive environment and structure, both at the AFN and with intergovernmental relations between federal, provincial, and municipal governments, to ensure that First Nations women feel comfortable and supported as they work to implement goals they've set for their leadership. The caucus is intended to be a complimentary structure to the AFN Women's Council, to support the work that they are doing. \$6.2 million was approved for this project, with \$3 million going directly to AFN regional offices.

Youth

Staff from the NCO met with the National Youth Council to seek direction on how youth engagement can be shaped as a national priority. The youth requested time to deliberate and committed to providing a response in December after their next regularly scheduled meeting. Their response will outline how the NCO can support and advance their leadership and initiatives and it will be rolled into our national strategy moving forward.

2SLGBTQIA+ Council

In the MMIWG Final Report, Calls for Justice 18.9 tasks First Nations leadership with establishing 2SLGBTQIA+ Councils. The AFN is answering this call within our decision-making structures and processes to ensure fair representation at all levels of



First Nation governance. This also includes opportunities for 2SLGBTQIA+ voices and expertise in solving serious issues such as domestic violence, suicide, HIV/AIDS, and murdered and missing Indigenous people. NCO staff put together a draft resolution and draft amendments to the AFN Charter for consideration. These were moved and seconded by Squamish Nation and Serpent River First Nation and will come before the First Nations-in-Assembly at the December SCA for decision.

Languages

As we move into the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-2032), we must pursue significant change. First Nations languages must be lifted up, prioritized, taught and spoken across Turtle Island.

Since the passing of the Indigenous Languages Act in 2019, the Assembly of First Nations has been working on a co-developed distinctions basis to fully implement the Act in addition to ensuring adequate and long-term funding with Canada to develop a new Funding Model to support our languages.

A key milestone in 2021 was the establishment of the Office of the Commissioner of Indigenous Languages. The Office is an independent arms-length entity which will be able to hear disputes and evaluate the adequacy of funding available for language revitalization. Stable resources are required to ensure our languages and cultures are passed on. The AFN is planning a series of engagements in January 2022 to ensure First Nations contributions are reflected and developed within the First Nations Funding Model. Recommendations from these discussions will be brought to our AGA in July 2022.

National Prosperity Table

The National First Nations Economic Growth, Prosperity, and Wealth Building Table aims to bring First Nations, government, and industry together to form strategic investments, create opportunities for long-term social transformation, and improve education and housing for First Nations across the country. The proposal aims to meet our mutual goal of creating healthy and vibrant communities.

As the first of its kind with the Canadian government, the prosperity table will create a space for First Nations' meaningful participation in the post-pandemic economic recovery in Canada by supporting Indigenous economies so they can thrive and be successful on a local, regional, national, and global level.

On October 15, 2021, a draft proposal was provided to the Chair of the Chiefs Committee on Economic Development and to the federal government for input and feedback. It was also shared with the AFN Economic Sector and followed up with a meeting that discussed how the Prosperity Table can support and align with the current activities in the Economic Sector.





Create a Healthy Boundary Between the Administrative and Political Functions of the AFN

The AFN exists to support First Nations as they strive to achieve self-reliance and self-determination. The overall goal is to ensure there is a healthy boundary between the Secretariat and the National Chiefs Office by delineating the administrative and political functions of the AFN. This will be done by eventually moving toward a non-political administrative Board of Directors and a national political Leadership Council.

This work requires adequate funding to undertake a strategic restructuring process which would include strategic planning at all levels with the Chiefs, the Chiefs Committees, the Secretariat, and the AFN Executive Committee. There is a need for a clear path, a healthy boundary that respects everyone's roles. We need to focus on progressing and upholding our rights, protecting our land, waters, and resources, while fostering the wellbeing of our peoples and communities.

A draft Resolution on this matter has been moved by Curve Lake First Nation and Tetlit Gwich'in Council.

Federal Election

We created *'The Healing Path Forward: 2021 Federal Priorities for Strengthening and Rebuilding First Nations'* to help influence the federal election and to highlight our priority areas. The plan reflects a shared vision and expression of First Nations' collective priorities at the national level.

The AFN secretariat led the development of a communications strategy with input from the NCO. It included graphics, social media posts, polls and information on candidate and party platforms. Social media posts were put out every day to help First Nations voters make an educated choice, noting that no party has the First Nations vote.

We congratulate the Liberals and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, and all the candidates who ran for office, particularly the Indigenous candidates who won and those who ran for the first time. The AFN and First Nations leadership across Turtle Island have built mainly positive relationships with the PMO and the Ministers and we are a willing partner in moving forward with this government.



Conclusion

I would like to acknowledge all the Regional Chiefs, Grand Chiefs, Chiefs and Councillors, and all levels of leadership who are making a difference across Turtle Island. I'm looking forward to our journey together as we make positive and evolutionary changes where we can realize our vision of happy healthy children surrounded by the love and care of their families, living in safe and vibrant communities.

I also want to acknowledge the NCO and Secretariat staff at the Assembly of First Nations for your support, your expertise, knowledge and particularly for your commitment. Despite the challenges we have faced, you all have done a tremendous job. You are to be commended on your dedication and work during these unprecedented times.

I am calling for us to be united in our efforts to best advocate and work for the people in our communities. As our Elders say, we must now embrace the great responsibilities and opportunities that are on the horizon. There is great hope and light as we move to rebuild, restructure and heal.

The vision for the future encompasses a healthy Assembly of First Nations organization where everyone feels safe, acknowledged and empowered.

There is a healing path forward and we will get there by working together.

Ninanaskamon!

National Chief RoseAnne Archibald