



# ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS



**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**2014-15**



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## NATIONAL CHIEF PERRY BELLEGARDE

To the Chiefs and First Nations leaders:

As I write this annual report, I am six months into my term as National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations. In early 2015, I met with the Right Honourable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada; the Honourable Thomas Mulcair, Official Leader of the Opposition; Mr. Justin Trudeau, Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada; and Ms. Elizabeth May, Leader of the Green Party of Canada. I have met with most of the Provincial and Territorial Premiers. I have met with some industry leaders and Dr. David Suzuki. I have met with a former Prime Minister. I have met with the Canadians for a New Partnership. I have met with the Commissioners of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I have met with other people of influence in post-secondary education, child welfare and human rights. And my message is consistent: we need to **Close the Gap**. Now.

My commitment to *Close the Gap* is my response, as National Chief, to the persistent human rights and development gap between First Nations peoples and the rest of Canada. In recent years, Canada has ranked between 6th and 8th on the United Nations Human Development Index while First Nations fall between 63rd and 78th, depending upon the year. The gap is further confirmed by the federal government's Community Wellness Index which has said that the gap hasn't changed at all since 1981.

Now First Nations are poised to influence change.

In the wake of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's tabling of its Calls to Action, we know that on October 19th, the voting citizens in Canada will elect a new government. I remain committed to do all that I can to ensure that Closing the Gap is a commitment in each of the federal political party platforms—Conservative, NDP, Liberals, Greens and the Bloc Québécois. This is why I have called out the essential need to remove the 2% cap and create a new fiscal arrangement to the NDP and the Liberals. Requests made to present to the other parties remain outstanding. We also await and plan for the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal's decision regarding First Nations Child Welfare. Together, these three things provide the impetus for the change we all want and need for our peoples.

Over the next six months, I will continue to refine my *Closing the Gap* agenda to make these changes a reality. Together, we can build momentum for change by influencing the federal party election platforms. We can speak out and make informed choices about whether or not to vote and who to vote for in the upcoming federal election.

I want to work in partnership with you to push for action now in three key areas: **Fiscal Fairness, The Nation-to-Nation Relationship and Human Rights**.



### Fiscal Fairness

First Nations peoples have inherent rights, title and Treaty Rights recognized in the *Canadian Constitution*, yet, what do they mean? We were never meant to be poor in our homelands. First Nations peoples must truly share the lands and the resources in every sense. This must include equal opportunities to benefit from resource revenues and fiscal arrangements that support essential services on par with all Canadians.

We must work together for the immediate removal of the 2% cap on federal funding and essential services. We must work together for significant one-time investments to get our First Nations to the starting line. We must work together to restructure fiscal transfer arrangements to reflect the nation-to-nation relationship. It's time to give our peoples and Nations a vastly improved daily living experience.

### The Nation-to-Nation Relationship

We must re-store the Nation-to-Nation relationship as affirmed in the *Canadian Constitution*. That means the Crown should be working hand-in-hand with First Nations in the spirit of sharing and caring that is the essence of our Treaty Relationships and inherent Aboriginal rights and title. All current and future federal laws, policies and practices must reflect this reality.

We have been pushing for appropriate and fair revenue sharing arrangements based upon First Nations' equal rights to flourish as peoples and to equitably benefit from our territories' resources to meet our own economic, social and cultural development objectives. This is a critical part of Reconciliation.

### Human Rights

Nothing underscores the Gap more clearly than the recently released Truth and Reconciliation Report Executive Summary. It is now seven years since the Federal Government apologized for these Human Rights Violations and yet, absolutely nothing has happened. We need to give meaning to that apology. We need to address Education and Training. Housing. Infrastructure. Health. Wellness. Real Economic Development. And we need to do it now.

Implementing the first guiding principle of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission—that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples be the framework to develop and guide reconciliation work—is fundamental. And at this time, when we know that there are 1,200 missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, we will continue to push for a National Public Commission of Inquiry. In the wake of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, let us work together on responses to the Calls for Action especially those relating to the welfare and human rights of First Nations children and women. And to deliver the commitment of our Elders and knowledge keepers—that our First Nations traditions and laws be passed onto our young people, let's persist for our languages to be official languages of our provinces and territories with accompanying financial investments for bonafide revitalization work.

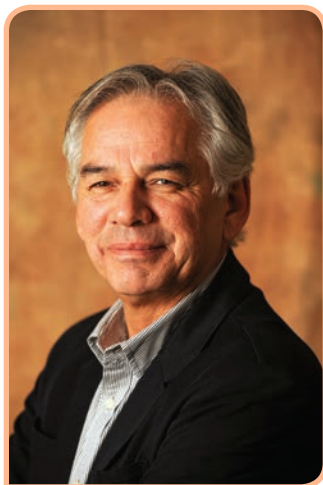
Now is the time. Now is the time for *reconciliation*. Now is the time for *action*. Across this land, people from all walks of life can help us take up the call to right a wrong that goes back more than 100 years. The future is at stake. Not just for First Nations peoples. But for Canada. Because when we achieve equality, when our children live in suitable housing and go to suitable schools, when they have the same access to health care that all Canadian children do, then all of Canada wins. Everyone wins through improved productivity, reduced poverty, and breakthrough innovation and development. This is a message that Canadians must hear and must support in order to drive the change that is needed.

We can take our rightful place in our homelands, harnessing the strength and creativity and productiveness of our peoples, who have been forced into the margins for too long. Together, we can *Close the Gap once and for all*. Please join me. Thank you.



## REGIONAL CHIEF GHISLAIN PICARD

### Quebec and Labrador



The services to our population, in both our communities and in urban centres, are a constant preoccupation for the Chiefs of the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador (AFNQL). Most particularly, the services to the most vulnerable people of our nations: our children, our elderly, our women and young girls threatened or victims of violence, our chronically ill, are becoming increasingly threatened by indifference, and the outright negligence of the federal and provincial governments.

With the indiscriminate implementation of policies which are of so-called “budgetary rigor” and which aim mostly to make them look good in the eyes of the wealthy electors, they impose blind cuts to the most vulnerable people, including the members of our nations. The budgetary uncertainty artificially created by the federal and the provincial governments, adds to the complexity and confusion which already existed in the financing of services to the First Nations. The efforts of the AFNQL to bring the two other levels of government to an effective cooperation, to a truly genuine government-to-government relationship, fall by the wayside and our populations pay a very high price for it. On the one hand, the federal government does not respect its fiduciary responsibility and transfers the problems to the province, and on the other, the province increasingly restricts the access for First Nation citizens to its programs on the pretext that they are under the responsibility of the federal government.

The provincial government has been elected for more than a year and the Premier has officially stated his intention to develop a genuine “government-to-government” relationship with the AFNQL on many occasions. In practice, however, his government continues to impose on First Nations a range of generally

applicable rules which pay no heed to our uniqueness. The AFNQL has had to react regularly to this disrespectful attitude. The Premier’s talk of cooperation is, for the time being, only talk.

Such a situation of non-respect and negligence is nothing new. It should be noted however that the situation is made considerably worse by the electoral intent to reach a “balanced budget” which is now observed both in Ottawa and Quebec.

The Chiefs of the AFNQL must now bring the two other levels of government to account in such crucial areas as health, social services, services to our women and young girls threatened or victims of violence, educational services, public safety, development of economy, and employment.

The confusion and the ineffectiveness in the services offered by the other governments and the lack of commitment to put in place solutions with our First Nation governments and institutions creates an unbearable situation for our citizens which our Chiefs will continue to tackle.

The non-compliance with Aboriginal title and Aboriginal and treaty rights remains the trademark of the federal government and of the province. One year after the historic judgment of the Supreme Court of Canada in the case of the Tsilhqot’in Nation, it appears that both the federal and the provincial governments are dedicated to avoiding the effects of this major decision by not complying with the direction provided by the highest court of the country in relation to Aboriginal title.

The federal government maintains its intransigence over the issue of processing First Nations land claims. There is probably not much progress to hope for in the light of its recent “update” on consultation.

On the provincial side, in spite of talk which supports a “government-to-government” relationship, the unilateral imposition of territorial measures directly impacting



the resources of our territories continues and is even increasing: Plan Nord, which puts aside the interests of a majority of our nations, includes strategies for forestry and maritime development and an energy policy, among many other measures that take absolutely no account of the Aboriginal title and Aboriginal and treaty rights of our nations.

The Chiefs of the AFNQL continue to affirm their willingness to cooperate with the other governments, but as things stand, they have no other choice but to denounce and counter the regressive and disrespectful attitude of the federal government and of the province.





## REGIONAL CHIEF STAN BEARDY

### Ontario



**W**ahcheeyeh! Warm greetings to elders, leadership and citizens participating in the 36th Annual General Assembly of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) on the traditional territory of the Mohawk Nation.

Having been selected Ontario Regional Chief (ORC) on June 26, 2012, my term expired on June 16, 2015. As I decided to not seek re-election as ORC, this represents my final report to the AFN Chiefs-in-Assembly. I wish the newly selected ORC

well on the AFN Executive Committee and in efforts to make Ontario and Canada a better place for First Nations.

Since the AFN Annual General Assembly (AGA) in July 2014, some of the key issues and activities that the Ontario region has been engaged in have included:

#### Provincial Activities

This year, leadership in Ontario have been working to advance a political strategy to strengthen and improve the relationship with the Liberal majority government by engaging them on a bilateral process that will result in a political accord focusing on key priorities. The accord is also intended to assist Ontario to be in a position to support First Nations as they are involved in the Council of the Federation process and other national forums.

Other efforts to strengthen the relationship with the province this year included a *Days in the Legislature* event that took place in November. This event provided a roundtable venue in which Chiefs and Councillors were able to engage in dialogue directly with eight Cabinet ministers and obtain commitments for action on their specific issues. During this time, the Ontario government made an announcement in the provincial legislature to

establish a Treaty Awareness Day and to continue on efforts on treaty education.

In April 2015, the province released its 2015-2016 budget. First Nations funding, for the most part, was not targeted and Ministry funding projections suggested that Ontario was looking to increase its support for relationship-related First Nations programming.

At the First Nations level, opportunities were made available for dialogue, planning and acknowledgement through events such as the 250th Anniversary of the Treaty of Niagara in August; a workshop on Investment Strategies for First Nation Communities (in conjunction with the Ontario Waterpower Association) and an Honouring our Leaders Gala (on the occasion of the Chiefs of Ontario's 40th anniversary) in November; a Planning Gathering for the Families of the Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls, an Ontario Minister's Roundtable on Energy, a Chiefs of Ontario Health Forum in February; and, a Chiefs of Ontario Education Conference, Youth & Elders Traditional Knowledge and Water Summit and, Environmental Assessment Webinars in March.

In addition, leadership in Ontario have been responding to provincial initiatives on taxation, youth, policing, health, justice, gaming, education, social development and the environment among others. After the October municipal elections, a campaign was embarked on to reach out to municipalities. In February, leadership in Ontario participated in a number of panels at a rural municipal conference. They will also be participating in an Ontario-wide municipal event in August.

Efforts were also made to advocate for First Nations' rights and interests during two Royal visits (in September and November), in the *First Nations in Ontario Assertion of Sovereignty – Notice of Assertion*, and when charges against First Nation citizens for exercising rights were laid. Advocacy was also provided when three CN Rail train derailments took place on First Nations' territories in February and March resulting in the spillage of millions



of gallons of crude oil being transported for export. In April, the Chiefs of Ontario submitted an application to intervene in the Supreme Court of Canada Daniels decision.

### Federal Activities

This year, a number of First Nations in Ontario made submissions to the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples examining and reporting on the challenges and potential solutions relating to infrastructure on reserves. All raised concern about major infrastructure deficits and some pointed to boil water advisories for over 10 years. 2014-2015 saw the release of documents showing Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) has been shifting half a billion dollars meant for infrastructure to try to cover shortfalls elsewhere over a six-year period (namely to social income assistance, child & family services, education, governance and emergency management). 2014-2015 also saw AANDC funding cuts to the National Child Benefit Reinvestment Budget in the Ontario region; this resulted in the demand that this budget decision be reversed.

On the issue of the *Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act* which came into force in 2013, AANDC commissioned a third-party to develop a summary of Ontario regulations. They released the report in October. This issue was discussed at the All Ontario Chiefs Conference that took place from June 16-18, 2015 which resulted in a mandate to respond. On April 2, 2015, the Advisory Status Report from Health Canada showed 58 boil water and three do-not-consume advisories in First Nation community water systems in Ontario.

Concerns on the storage and transportation of crude oil, spent fuel, nuclear waste, and radioactive material through and in traditional territories have come forward by First Nations in Ontario. The methods governments (and subsidiary bodies like the Nuclear Waste Management Organization) use to discharge the legal duty to consult First Nations are deemed inadequate for a number of reasons.

With regards to the Enbridge Line 9 Reversal, the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation was granted leave

to take their challenge of the National Energy Board's (NEB) decision to proceed with the project to court. They have invited others to intervene in this case. With regards to the TransCanada Energy East pipeline proposal, First Nations in Treaty #3 passed a resolution in February declaring that no oil or bitumen shall be transported through their territory without their free, prior and informed consent. Given these issues are national in nature, a number of First Nations leaders in Ontario have approached the AFN to coordinate a national discussion.

### AFN Executive Committee Portfolio Responsibilities on Health

In 2014-15, I was very proud to have served, once again, as the chair of the AFN Chiefs Committee on Health (CCOH). This year, health activities at the AFN have been hectic and exciting. The priority areas are many, with only a few highlighted here.

Resolution 39/2014 was passed at the December Special Chiefs Assembly, approving the draft Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) Action Plan that was developed following extensive engagement with regions and at the National Forum on NIHB in March of 2014. This resolution allows AFN health staff to pursue the activities within that Action Plan. In addition, as per Resolution 56/2012, work began on the AFN-NIHB Joint Review. A Critical Path has been approved by the Steering Committee that outlines the timelines of the Joint Review itself including the first benefit area review (Short-Term Mental Health Crisis Counselling) beginning in April 2015.

Another major focus of the AFN and the CCOH has continued to be mental wellness. As such, in late March 2015, the AFN hosted a national Mental Wellness Policy Forum in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The forum brought together over 300 delegates with nearly 700 joining on the live feed. The AFN continues to look forward to this level of enthusiastic participation in the year to come. At this year's AFN AGA we are once again hoping to generate continued discussion on First Nations health priorities including NIHB.



## Conclusion

I wish to conclude by saying it was a pleasure to work with the AFN Executive Committee, AFN Secretariat, Chiefs of Ontario Political Confederacy and Chiefs of Ontario Secretariat over the past three years. Last but not least, I wish to thank First Nations in Ontario for their tremendous support—it was truly an honour to serve as their leader.

I wish you all the best in your deliberations at this year's Annual General Assembly.

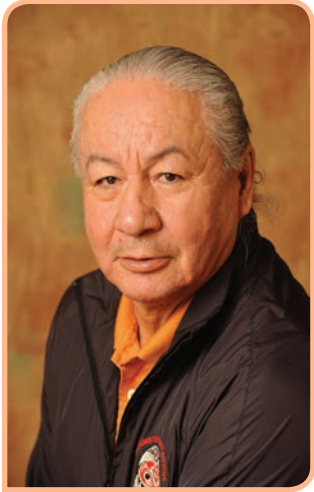
Meegwetch,

Stan Beardy



## REGIONAL CHIEF BILL TRAVERSE

### Manitoba



**B**oozhoo, Tansi, Wacheyeh and many greetings from the Manitoba region, our Grand Chiefs (Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, and Southern Chiefs Organization), First Nation Chiefs and Councillors, our Tribal Councils, Elders and Youth. We have 64 First Nations communities and 31 remote and isolated reserves in Manitoba. We have treaties 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 10 and Dakota Nations under treaty and inherent rights. We also have the Sioux Valley Dakota Nations that entered into a

self-government agreement this past year after about 25 years of negotiations with Canada.

#### **First Nation Control of First Nation Education Act**

As we all know Prime Minister Stephen Harper and former National Chief Shawn Atleo made an announcement regarding First Nations education on February 7, 2014. The announcement was hosted by Grand Chief Weaselhead at the Kainai High School, the Blood Tribe Reserve on Treaty 1 territory on February 7, 2014. The First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act would invest \$1.9 billion in new funding in First Nations education and remove the 2% funding cap. There were many questions and concerns about the announcement, especially in Treaty 1-11 regions and territories, if this agreement was one-size-fits-all. In the treaty regions we have never agreed to legislate our treaty right to education.

I requested that AMC Grand Chief Derek Nepinak send a letter of invitation to National Chief Atleo to attend the AMC Special Assembly in Thompson, Manitoba on March 4-6, 2014. National Chief Atleo agreed to attend and provide an update on the February 7th education announcement and allow for question period.

Prior to the announcement on February 7, 2014 and the AMC Assembly in early March, 2014, the National

Executive had agreed to hold a national Executive meeting in Manitoba. It was held at the South Beach Casino in Brokenhead Ojibway Nation on February 27, 2014.

The Executive had serious concerns about the announcement especially that we were excluded and had no input. It was also a matter of consent and accommodation with the Treaty 1-11 regions regarding our Crown/Treaty relationships and section 35 Treaty and Aboriginal rights. As Crown/Treaty title holders we could not allow Canada and the National Chief to agree to a one-size-fits-all approach for the First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act. Further to that the national Executive directed the National Chief by letter dated February 28, 2014 to seek confirmation on a number of matters related to the process and commitments moving forward with regard to First Nations education.

As we all know National Chief Atleo resigned suddenly on May 1, 2014 with very little explanation which was unprecedented. About the same time there was a call for an emergency Confederacy of Nations meeting to be convened as quickly as possible in Ottawa.

Shortly after National Chief Atleo resigned, there was a call for an emergency national Executive meeting to take place May 5 - 6, 2014 in Ottawa. The Executive appointed Quebec/Labrador Regional Chief Ghislain Picard as "Interim Leader" until such time that we received direction from the AFN Special Chiefs Assembly on May 27, 2014 in Ottawa. This matter was deferred to the AGA, held July 15-17, 2014 in Halifax, where the Chiefs-in-Assembly appointed Regional Chief Picard to the role of National Chief until the December 10, 2014 election.

We were also advised by the Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) Minister via e-mail that Bill C-33 would be put on hold pending clarification of AFN support.

#### **AFN Housing & Infrastructure and Water**

Since National Chief Perry Bellegarde was elected in Winnipeg in December 2014, the Regional Chief





portfolios have changed. I was reappointed as the lead on Housing & Infrastructure and Water. I look forward to the challenging work that needs to be done. The 2012 funding cutbacks have reduced the capacity of the AFN Housing Secretariat. We have lost many housing experts and technicians since then and have no capacity while we are facing a national housing and infrastructure crisis. I have reported since 2005 that there is a backlog of 85,000 units. According to a 2012 AANDC study, there will be a backlog of 130,000 units by 2030. The AFN is working with regional housing technicians to address the national housing crisis and are looking at other options including Habitat for Humanity and the Holmes Foundation, among others. As a numbered treaty region, I cannot forget that we have treaties with the Crown and maintain that we have Treaty rights to housing, not to mention water – 80 per cent of First Nations communities are under boil water advisories.

Hoping to see you all and may you have safe travels!

Regional Chief Bill Traverse



## REGIONAL CHIEF KIMBERLY JONATHAN

### Saskatchewan



**T**ansi, Aaniin, Hau koda, Edlanete! Greetings to Elders, knowledge holders, leadership and citizens. I greet you on behalf of the Indigenous Nations who are members of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN). I also express my gratitude and appreciation to the Mohawk Nation for welcoming us to their territories for the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) 36th Annual General Assembly (AGA).

I have had the honour of holding the AFN Regional Chief position for Saskatchewan since December 2014, when former FSIN Chief Perry Bellegarde was elected as our National Chief. My AFN Executive portfolios include Specific Claims, which is shared with Quebec Regional Chief Ghislain Picard, and Emergency Services. I am also a steadfast advocate for the health and well-being of our children and families. Since being elected, I have dedicated myself to ensuring that the families of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women have a voice at the regional and national levels.

#### United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

It was an honour to address the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues on April 21, 2015, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on “Youth, Self-Harm and Suicide”. This issue affects so many First Nations families and communities in Canada, and warrants the attention of all Chiefs at the AFN AGA.

The message we brought to the United Nations recognized that we are survivors of attempted genocide and we continue to experience the impacts and legacy of genocidal and racist policies. We are often not able to shield all of our children and youth from these impacts and the legacies of residential schools – this unfortunately results in high rates of youth suicide. We have some of the highest rates of suicide in the world; in some

communities we see rates approximately 800 times higher than the rate in all of Canada.

As you know, our children and youth continue to be lost to child welfare, gangs, violence, detention and jails and, in the worst of cases, suicide. These are the negative impacts of colonization, residential schools, racism, bullying, loss of language and culture; and most of all, a tragic loss of hope. In our presentation, we called on the United Nations to advocate for First Nations to be fully engaged and adequately resourced in developing and implementing solutions for our children and youth.

#### Recommendation to Create a National First Nations Children’s Commissioner

The overrepresentation of First Nations children in care continues to remain a critical priority, not only in Saskatchewan but across Canada. For most First Nations children in Canada, circumstances are not improving, they are getting worse. Dr. Cindy Blackstock, a prominent children’s activist who, along with the AFN, initiated a human rights complaint against the Government of Canada for the disparities in funding for on-reserve First Nation child welfare compared to provincial funding, has stated that there are more children in care now than at the height of the residential schools era.

The federal government has taken the position that there is no need for a National Children’s Commissioner because federal child welfare legislation does not exist. However, since Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) retains responsibility for funding child welfare on reserve a more collective approach needs to be undertaken.

Saskatchewan First Nations met with the AFN in March of 2015 to request that the AFN seek access to the Council of Federations as a first step in working jointly on the issue of overrepresentation in child welfare, however, more needs to be done.

As a first step, the Chiefs-in-Assembly of Saskatchewan is seeking our national counterparts to recommend that



AFN member nations support the creation of a National First Nations Children's Commissioner in Child Welfare to work on strategies to address issues pertaining to overrepresentation. Further, that the National Children's Commissioner should be supported by regional representatives which can be allocated by population of First Nations children in care.

### **Recommendation to Reinstate the National Policy Review Committee**

The National Policy Review (NPR) committee previously worked to review the 20-1 funding formula and make recommendations. AANDC and the AFN released the *First Nations Child and Family Services Joint National Policy Review: Final Report, June 2000 [NPR]* (McDonald & Ladd, 2000).

The NPR found that First Nations children received 22 percent less funding for child welfare than non-First Nations children. It also identified significant problems with the structure of the 20-1 funding formula including the lack of emphasis on least disruptive measures services and the lack of funding, or insufficient funding, of expenses that are required to achieve good, equitable and culturally-appropriate social work practice. Additional recommendations called for the restoration of the inflation adjustment, the resolution of jurisdictional disputes between and within federal/provincial governments impeding services to First Nations children and a call for a special review of the 1965 Indian Welfare Agreement.

While the current Enhanced Funding Prevention Approach (EFPA) offers better funding from the previous 20-1, there are still significant challenges to the funding and it is still not on par with the funding that the provinces provide to the off-reserve partners in child welfare.

In addition to the re-instatement of the NPR committee, it is critical for First Nations leadership and First Nations Child and Family Service (FNCFS) agencies in Saskatchewan to re-state the foundation of operations and the values of our families and children. These without prejudice positions were set out in the Memorandums of Understanding when the FNCFS were developed and in the first FNCFS service agreements with the Chiefs and the Provincial Minister.

It is recommended to have the NPR re-engage to review the EFPA currently allocated by AANDC to analyze and make recommendations on the current standing of the EFPA and understand regional considerations regarding where 20-1 and EPFA may overlap.

### **National Specific Claims**

The Specific Claims Tribunal was created by legislation in 2008 with the power to make binding decisions on both liability and compensation where the Crown was in breach of its legal and Treaty obligations. The settlement of specific claims is critical to First Nations across the country, who seeking a fair process to resolve these claims in an efficient and fair manner.

The *Specific Claims Tribunal Act* committed Canada to conduct a review of the Tribunal process to be tabled with Parliament. AANDC Minister Valcourt appointed Benoit Pelletier, a professor of law at the University of Ottawa, to lead the review as his Special Representative. As part of the review, the AFN established an expert panel to hear submissions from First Nations communities and organizations across the country. The panel was chaired by Delia Opekokew, a lawyer from Saskatchewan; and included Bob Winogran, a former Department of Justice lawyer and Bryan Schwartz, a law professor from Manitoba. Both Mr. Winogran and Mr. Schwartz were on the Joint Task Force which developed the *Specific Claims Tribunal Act*.

The AFN held two sessions with the expert panel: March 10, 2015 in Toronto and March 26, 2015 in Vancouver. The information was used to develop an AFN position, which was submitted to Canada as part of the review. The AFN submission recommended that the Joint discussion between the First Nations and Canada needs to be re-established to deal with issues related to the specific claims process, and that direct and meaningful consultation with First Nations is exercised when working toward bettering the process. The overarching requirements for reform are adequate funding for First Nation applicants, for the settlements to be just and timely, and for the Tribunal to be independent and to have adequate resources to achieve its mandate. In addition, there was concern that there currently exists no mediation process, and that Canada is using the 'minimum standards' to stall the process of claims, ultimately increasing costs to First Nations.



### Emergency Management

In February 2014, Canada's Economic Action Plan 2014 provided \$40 million over five years, starting in 2015-16, for disaster mitigation on reserves to complement its November 2013 commitment to provide \$19 million for emergency preparedness activities including the development of emergency management plans for First Nation communities and to work in partnership with First Nations. We must continue working collectively to ensure that AANDC fulfills its obligations to First Nations and that First Nations – not provincial governments – receive the benefits of these programs.

### Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women

Last July, when the AFN Chiefs-in-Assembly passed Resolution 4/2014 in support of a National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, we all made a commitment to the goals of the roundtable, which included initiating dialogue with all levels of government and taking action to address the crisis of violence against Indigenous women and girls; identifying solutions and ways to reduce and eventually eliminate all forms of violence; and securing commitments from all levels of government to continue this work.

Leading up to the Roundtable, the FSIN and the Saskatchewan First Nations Women's Commission hosted three Indigenous Women's Roundtables. We felt it was crucial to provide an opportunity for our women, men, youth, and leadership to discuss solutions that could assist us in developing a strategic plan for eliminating all forms of violence against Indigenous women. We ensured that family members and Women's Commission Chiefs attended the Roundtable to provide both grassroots and leadership perspectives.

As of April 2015, the FSIN Chief and Vice Chiefs' responsibilities and mandates are set out, in part, through Commissions. FSIN Executive portfolio assignments and mandates are as follows:

#### Kimberley Jonathan Interim, Office of Chief

- AFN Regional Chief
- National Specific Claims
- National Emergency Management
- Legislative Assembly
- Executive Council/Indian Government Commission

- Health & Social Development Commission
- First Nations Women's Commission (shared with Office of 4th Vice Chief)
- Communications
- Treaty Governance Office
- Justice Commission
- Intergovernmental Relations

#### Office of the 1st Vice-Chief

- Vacant

#### Bobby Cameron

##### Office of 2nd Vice-Chief

- Education and Training Commission
- First Nations University of Canada (FNUUniv)
- Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies
- Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre
- 2015 Pow Wow
- Centre of Excellence
- Indian Resource Council
- First Nations Bank of Canada
- Economic & Community Development Commission
- Saskatchewan Indian Equity Foundation
- Lands and Resources

#### Edward Dutch Lerat

##### Office of 3rd Vice-Chief

- Sports, Culture and Recreation
- Senate
- Youth
- North American Indigenous Games

#### Heather Bear

##### Office of 4th Vice-Chief

- First Nations Women's Commission (shared with Office of Chief)
- Treasury Board
- Treaty Rights Protection Fund
- Veterans and Bold Eagle
- Gaming Commission
- Indigenous Gaming Regulations
- Independent Bands
- Urban Development





Our Treaties are sacred and must be implemented as our ancestors envisioned while keeping in mind our future generations deserve sounder, safer and better opportunities.

Respectfully, Ekosí, Pídamaya, Marsichó,

Interim Chief Kimberly Jonathan  
Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations



## HUNGÂKEBI CAMERON ALEXIS

### Regional Chief of Treaty No. 6, Treaty No. 7 and Treaty No. 8 (Alberta)



**A**ba Washded, Tansi, Oki, Edhante, Bijou, I bring greetings to all my relations from Treaties 6, 7 & 8, the ancestral lands located within what is now known as the Province of Alberta. This will be my final submission as I depart my esteemed position as the Regional Chief of Alberta and make way for our new colleague, Craig Mackinaw who was recently Chief of the Ermineskin Cree Nation and also served as the Grand Chief of Treaty 6. I made a personal decision to be near my family and my spouse;

therefore, I did not seek re-election. Throughout my term, I certainly endeavored to serve the people to the best of my abilities.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to all of you who attend AFN Assemblies, right from the gallery, exhibitors to the leaders and elders. And, of course, the AFN Executive and all the staff who continue to work through difficult times of huge funding cuts by the federal Conservative government led by The Right Honourable Stephen Harper. This government has continued to present bills in the House of Commons that will affect us now and into the future. I know that through these tumultuous times, the AFN staff and Regional Chiefs have continued to lobby and advocate on issues mandated by the Chiefs through resolution, including presentations to the Senate. It was an honour to make presentations on issues of mutual concern that affect our Indigenous beliefs with the hope that someone will hear our voice and help advocate for our causes.

I want to further express my gratitude to former National Chief Shawn Atleo and our new National Chief Perry Bellegarde; both are gifted leaders in their own right and I wish them all the best with their loved ones.

The following is a brief update on the issues and activities undertaken since our last gathering in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

#### **Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women / Policing / Justice**

As the Regional Chief responsible for the above noted portfolios, we have continually lobbied Minister of Public Safety Steven Blaney and all levels of government on the issues of missing and murdered Indigenous women, First Nations policing and justice. We must all continue to lobby for a public commission of inquiry, as the number of our missing and murdered continues to grow. We must all gather at a national forum to share information cohesively and organize a grassroots approach to deal with this situation collectively as the current federal government has no desire to deal with this problem.

I presented to various parliamentary committees on the issues of Justice, Human Rights and Bill C-583, *An Act to Amend the Criminal Code*. This bill amends the *Criminal Code* to add a definition of “fetal alcohol spectrum disorder” (FASD) and to establish a procedure for assessing individuals who are involved in the criminal justice system and who it is suspected suffer from FASD. It requires the court to consider, as a mitigating factor in sentencing, a determination that the accused suffers from FASD and manifests certain symptoms. It allows the court, to the extent FASD contributed to the offence, to consider it to be mitigating factor.

I have also attended and addressed various rallies across this country, including the National Sisters in Spirit Rally in Edmonton in October 2014 to raise public awareness of the alarmingly high rates of violence against Aboriginal women in Canada. I also attended the Edmonton Sisters in Spirit Rally In Support of the Stolen Sisters and Brothers Awareness Walk, as well as the Native Women’s Association of Canada Sisters In Spirit Vigil on Parliament Hill.



Unfortunately, I was not able to attend the National Roundtable discussions due to medical concerns; however the National Chief attended spoke on our issues and concerns.

On the issue of Policing, we have continuously lobbied the federal and provincial governments to host a National Aboriginal Policing Forum to capture all facets First Nations Policing issues across this country; however we have continually met federal bureaucrats without success in this regard.

### **Economic Development / Environment**

In relation to the Economic Partnerships Portfolio, I held the position of Co-Chair for the Working Group on Natural Resources Development (Working Group). The Working Group met frequently over the last year with the objective to consider potential ways to increase First Nations participation in natural resources development, where interest exists among nations. To facilitate this process, I provided guidance along with other members of the Working Group towards this initiative and reported on our activity to leaders and delegates at the AFN Special Chiefs Assembly (SCA) in December 2014 and the AGA in July 2014.

At the December SCA, the Chiefs-in-Assembly passed resolution 38/2014, Support for the Development of a Report on Natural Resources. This past spring, the Working Group released a report titled, *First Nations and Natural Resource Development: Advancing Positive, Impactful Change*. This report builds on discussions held with First Nations leaders, experts and industry representatives and is focused on themes of governance, prosperity, environment and finance. One of the important components of this work is that it is not considered a final word on any of the subjects discussed, but is intended to provide ideas that support the beginnings of a more comprehensive approach and dialogue. An electronic copy of the report will be provided at the July 2015 Annual General Assembly.

As part of this portfolio, and to further promote respectful and meaningful approaches to involve First Nations in the economy, labour force and resource development opportunity, I made a presentation to the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources on November 18, 2014 in regard to Bill C-43 (Economic Action Plan 2014 Act, No. 2)

on the Government of Canada's proposed Extractive Sector Transparency Measures Act. Additionally, I have made presentations to the National Aboriginal Economic Development Board on the Working Group's activity and the Petroleum Association of Canada during their education days. Other key events included the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada conference (March 2015), the Alberta Congress Board's Annual Workplace Conference (October 2014), and I observed the Mines and Ministers Meeting (August 2014).

I presented at the Ute-Tribe Energy Conference & Expo, *"An international gathering of energy proceeding Tribes, governments and companies envisioning a path forward towards a more sustainable future"*. My presentation focused on international perspectives.

We participated in a Roundtable Discussion on Temporary Foreign Worker Program Reforms with the Honourable Jason Kenny, Minister of Employment and Social Development.

Finally, I also presented on Bill C-46, An Act to amend the National Energy Board Act and the Canada Oil and Gas Operations Act. We certainly hope our interventions and concerns were heard.

### **Indian Residential Schools**

As you all know, Alberta hosted the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) last year and we are all very thankful for being allowed to do so. I wish to thank the Edmonton Oilers Hockey Club for their recognition of the TRC. I also wish to congratulate Elder Alex Janvier from the Cold Lake First Nation for the beautiful art work for the new arena in Edmonton. This beautiful piece of art will be in constant display as you enter the new facilities. It is great to see our esteemed Elder be recognized for his lifelong work.

Much like all, of you, Treaties 6, 7 & 8 have sent a delegation to the TRC closing ceremonies May 31 to June 3, 2015 in Ottawa. We pray that we all embrace reconciliation and we heal from the past and for the future of our children.

### **Regional Activities**

With respect to activities in Alberta, I attended many functions to speak and educate fellow Albertans and Canadians on our Treaties and Indigenous title and



the importance of fully implementing the Treaties and Revenue Sharing. These are important conversations, especially at a time when we have won over 206 Supreme Court cases and we have the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP). We aspire to see the UNDRIP implemented in the Province of Alberta where we have a new NDP Government led by Premier Rachel Notley who recently won a majority after 44 years of Progressive Conservative rule. It is my personal view that the former government had 44 years to address and implement the agreed upon Treaty process with Treaty 6, 7 & 8, which was never achieved.

As one of my duties I have met with the Alberta Enterprise Group, a member-based, not-for-profit business advocacy organization representing Canadian companies who employ more than 150,000 Canadians. Their mandate is connecting their members to business and decision-makers across Canada and reducing barriers for economic growth. This organization would like to build a strong First Nations component into their program and a partnership opportunity with the Assembly of First Nations.

I attended several ceremonies in 2014 to honour Canadian soldiers, including the Office of the Commander 3rd Canadian Division Support Group in CFB Edmonton to recognize the contribution of Canadian soldiers to the war in Afghanistan.

In closing, I want to sincerely thank the nations and the people we serve for their generous support at all functions and gatherings where we came together as one voice for the best interest of our people. We must continue to gather and support one another for a safe, healthy and vibrant future for our people and the oldest communities in this country which is our First Nations. On behalf of my family, we would like to express our sincere thank you for having allowed me to work with all of you.

Ish Nish,

Regional Chief Cameron Alexis





## CHIEF MAUREEN CHAPMAN

### BCAFN Spokesperson



Elders, Chiefs, delegates and guests:

Welcome to Montreal, Quebec for the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) 36th Annual General Assembly taking place on traditional Mohawk territory. As the official Spokesperson for the BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) and on behalf of the BCAFN Board of Directors, it is my pleasure to provide you with this regional update from

BC. I am an elected BCAFN Board member and Chief of Skawahlook First Nation.

In accordance with the transition plan that was adopted by consensus through BCAFN Resolution 1/2014, “Transition of Regional Chief Jody Wilson-Raybould”, I have been acting as the spokesperson of the BCAFN since January. The transition plan was put in place in recognition that the outgoing Regional Chief is a candidate in the upcoming federal election. The plan also included moving up the election for BC Regional Chief from the late fall of 2015 to June 2015. By the time this report is published, BC will have a new Regional Chief.

The focus of the BCAFN during this period of transition continues to be implementation of the *Building on OUR Success* platform consisting of four key and interrelated areas. These are:

1. **Strong and Appropriate Governance** in order to take advantage of our opportunities in implementing our Aboriginal title and rights, including treaty rights, and grow our economies by providing stable and sound governance that is transparent and accountable to our Citizens;
2. **Fair Access to Land and Resources** to ensure our peoples and our governments have access to the

resources required to support our societies including both our traditional and modern economies;

3. **Improved Education** to ensure our Citizens are able to make informed decisions about change as well as participate in our growing economies and our governments; and,
4. **Individual Health** to address the colonial health legacies to ensure our Citizens are strong and can actually benefit from and enjoy their title and rights.

In this regard, with respect to **Strong and Appropriate Governance**, First Nations in BC are actively engaging in governance reform as a prerequisite to sustainable and long-term economic and social development. Simply put, societies that govern well, do well. Not only are they poised to effectively meet the needs of their people but have established tools and mechanisms to weather the currents of social, political and economic change. This governance work is necessary both as an internal exercise to move beyond the *Indian Act*, but ultimately to reconcile land and governance rights with the Crown.

Over the course of the last year, the BCAFN released the second edition of the *BCAFN Governance Toolkit: A Guide to Nation Building* and has developed additional governance tools. Based on this premise and foresight, under the leadership of Regional Chief Jody Wilson-Raybould, and building on the collective expertise of BC First Nations, the BCAFN developed the *BCAFN Governance Toolkit* in three parts: Part 1: *The Governance Report*, Part 2: *The Governance Self-Assessment*, and Part 3: *A Guide to Community Engagement: Navigating Our Way through the Post-Colonial Door*. I am pleased to report that on June 24, 2015, we launched our latest tool, *Supporting Leaders of Change: The User's Guide to the BCAFN Governance Toolkit* (User's Guide). The *User's Guide* complements the three parts of the Toolkit by focusing on supporting leaders of change and assisting them in navigating the *BCAFN Governance Toolkit*. The *User's Guide* is a must read for any leader of change that is contemplating governance reform moving beyond band governance under the *Indian Act*.



At the BCAFN we have been very encouraged with the positive reception of the Governance Toolkit, which is a sign of the growing movement among leaders who see the importance of transitioning away from the *Indian Act* and translating legal and political victories into actual governance reform in their community. That is, where governance work is seen not only as a practical step towards improving the quality of life within our communities and for our citizens, but where Nation building and rebuilding is increasingly understood as the equal and necessary “other half” of our advocacy efforts. Each Nation must, in their own way, prepare for the day when the Crown actually recognizes Aboriginal title or the true meaning of the treaties, and is a willing partner in reconciliation. All Nations need to be ready for this day, which is already upon us following the *Tsilhqot’in* decision last year. Title has been recognized and the title lands need to be governed appropriately. And institutions created under the *Indian Act* cannot do this.

Our Political Territorial Organizations (PTOs) must also evolve beyond this “*Indian Act*” reality. Governance, including the governance of the PTOs themselves, is therefore a renewed priority. This spring marked an important milestone in British Columbia, the 10th Anniversary of the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC). Back in 2005 the First Nations Summit, Union of BC Indian Chiefs, and BCAFN, signed what we called the *Leadership Accord*. The *Leadership Accord* formalized a working partnership between the three political organizations for the purpose of jointly advancing Aboriginal title and rights, including treaty rights, and to improve the well-being of First Nations and their citizens. Reaching 10 years together affords an opportunity for self-reflection. To both celebrate successes, but also an opportunity to consider how our legal, political and social landscape has transformed and how we too must transform to best advance recognition and reconciliation. This is work that the FNLC must continue to undertake in order to best serve our Nations. Indeed, whether we actually need three provincial bodies given that the operation of the FNLC has demonstrated one could do it, is top of mind for some people in terms of the reforms that are needed. Much of this discussion centers on how best to politically organize after *Tsilhqot’in* and to reflect the legal reality of a post-*Tsilhqot’in* world.

On this note, with respect to **Fair Access to Lands and Resources**, it has been quite a year since the Supreme

Court of Canada granted the first declaration of Aboriginal title in *Tsilhqot’in*. Celebration, has now given way to the hard work of ensuring appropriate frameworks for governance and reconciliation are established to reflect this new legal reality. For the *Tsilhqot’in* people, this means forging forward and unpacking what title means for their citizens, including which laws will apply to the title lands so declared, and what institutions are required to reflect increased jurisdiction over their territories and community. This is, of course, not just the challenge and opportunity for the *Tsilhqot’in* who are currently involved in reconciliation discussions with the province of BC, but a challenge and opportunity that confronts all of our Nations.

With regard to how the *Tsilhqot’in* decision will be actualized beyond the *Tsilhqot’in* title lands, the reality is that the legal landscape has shifted and the status quo approach to the “land question” is now even more unacceptable. The numerous court victories by First Nations and the failure of the current treaty-making process in BC to deliver significant results has made it quite clear that Canada, and where appropriate the province, must move away from a policy premised on First Nations making claims to the Crown and instead be based on recognition. The changed landscape demands both BC and Canada ensure cross-government coordination in the form of a principled reconciliation framework to engage with the recognized proper Aboriginal titleholders. Federally this means moving beyond the outdated Comprehensive Claims Policy. For all parties it requires a rethink of the BC treaty process. All this is critical with respect to achieving certainty for sustainable and mutually agreed to major resource development that is being proposed in our region.

To help navigate the post-*Tsilhqot’in* world, the First Nations leadership of BC developed and adopted, by consensus, four principles at the BCAFN Special Assembly held in September, 2014. For First Nations in BC and the FNLC, the four principles are to guide engagement with the Province and Canada. The principles set out a vision for a new post-*Tsilhqot’in* approach to First Nations-Crown relations based on reconciliation and recognition. These principles are:

1. Acknowledgement that all our relationships are based on recognition and implementation of the existence of Indigenous peoples’ inherent title and rights, and



pre-confederation, historic and modern treaties, throughout British Columbia.

2. Acknowledgement that Indigenous systems of governance and laws are essential to the regulation of lands and resources throughout British Columbia.
3. Acknowledgement of the mutual responsibility that all of our government systems shall shift to relationships, negotiations and agreements based on recognition.
4. We immediately must move to consent based decision-making and title based fiscal relations, including revenue sharing, in our relationships, negotiations and agreements.

In September of last year, First Nations in BC met with Premier Christy Clark and her Cabinet and had hoped for agreement around the four principles. This was not forthcoming and to date the Government of British Columbia has not formally endorsed the four principles. In June, the FNLC met with the Office of the Premier as well as with deputy ministers from across government for a two-day session focused on meaningful and candid dialogue on re-envisioning the relationship between First Nations and the Province. The four principles were central to this dialogue as well as planning for the 2nd Annual BC Cabinet and First Nations Leaders Gathering, which will take place on September 8-10, 2015. As a result of this two-day session, deputy ministers and the FNLC are drafting terms of reference for jointly developing a BC reconciliation framework to be considered by our Chiefs.

It would appear that Canada has limited or no interest in developing a post-*Tsilhqot'in* reconciliation framework, and rather is focusing its activities on “consultation” with respect to specific major oil and gas resource development projects. This work is being coordinated though Natural Resources Canada’s Major Projects Management Office - West. Accordingly, the critical policy work that needs to be undertaken in partnership with First Nations to develop a broader reconciliation framework, that we had hoped would follow *Tsilhqot'in*, is not being undertaken. This, despite the *Report on Renewing the Comprehensive Land Claims Policy* prepared by Mr. Doug Eyford, special representative to Minister Valcourt (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada), which spoke to the need for such a framework. Ultimately, issues of major resource development, supporting First Nations governance, and true

reconciliation (which is a product of recognition and does not proceed it) are all connected.

Ensuring the proper mechanisms are in place to ensure fair access to lands and resources and strong and appropriate governance, is critical to reconciliation. Accordingly, a significant part of the BCAFN Strategic Action plan, grounded in implementing the four pillars, is directed to finding and developing these mechanisms. The action plan reflects the multipronged approach necessary to advancing recognition and implementation of land and resource and governance rights. The multipronged approach is encapsulated in the *BCAFN Legal/Political Strategy* which has been developed based on the direction of BC Chiefs and which pulls together different strategies to advance reconciliation (i.e., litigation, negotiation and the exercise of rights). With the energy and determination of First Nations, strides are and will continue to be made to address what cannot continue to be a land or governance “question” but must become a land or governance “answer.”

With respect to **Improved Education**, there remains much fallout in the wake of Bill C-33, the *First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act*. The controversy and strong opposition to the Bill has been at the center of the debate on education. While Bill C-33 has been shelved and will die on the order paper when the next federal election is called, ensuring our children have access to quality education remains key to the success of our Nations. The BCAFN continues to support the BC First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) in our regional efforts to address systematic educational shortfalls and improve outcomes for First Nations learners. Key to this work is ensuring the 2012 BC *Tripartite Education Framework Agreement* funding models are implemented by Canada. Also, we need to ensure improved provincial accountability for First Nations learners in the upcoming provincial review of its educational Accountability Framework. FNESC, working with our Nations, has developed 22 recommendations for the provincial review and in partnership with the FNLC continues discussions with the Province on how the provincial review will engage with our Nations. While BC will support future national efforts with respect to First Nations’ control of First Nations’ education, including any new federal legislation that may be developed in partnership with First Nations, our primary objective in BC will be to ensure that



the legislative initiatives we already have in place for this purpose are, in fact, implemented.

Under the pillar of **Individual Health**, BC First Nations continue to break new ground. The BC First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) now manages all services, which were formally run by Health Canada until transferred in October 2013. To date, the transfer has occurred smoothly and the focus moving forward is on developing and improving services that reflect First Nation priorities and needs. Recently the FNHA held its Gathering Wisdom VII Conference in Vancouver in May 2015. Gathering Wisdom brings together health professionals and First Nations leaders from across BC to discuss and share information on the design and delivery of medical programs, services and responsibilities.

Action being undertaken by BC First Nations with respect to all four pillars, (**strong and appropriate governance, fair access to lands and resources, improved education, and individual health**) speak to the incredible efforts that are underway to meet the escalating need for reconciliation. Through the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) the need for such action has been echoed throughout the country. The 94 “Calls to Action” set out in the TRC final report, remind us that, irrespective of our regional diversity, we are all moving forward as a part of a broader national project of reconciliation. Action needs to be undertaken and embraced, not only by our Nations and our citizens, but also by all governments, the churches and indeed by every single Canadian. It is now our collective responsibility to ensure the “Calls to Action” are implemented and become a springboard for the national project of true reconciliation that must now take place.

As we know very well in BC, full reconciliation for our Nations will necessarily include reconciling our Aboriginal title and inherent rights to govern ourselves, with the assumed sovereignty of the Crown and thereby taking our rightful place within federation. Whether it is the TRC’s national call for reconciliation, the changed legal onus as a result of *Tsilhqot’in*, or ongoing efforts being made in health and education, what is clear is the need for new federal and provincial policies and legislation that advance reconciliation. Beyond the good words or simply tinkering with existing programs and services, reconciliation requires legislation and policies to change. While the TRC may have concluded its work, all of us across the country,

both First Nations and non-First Nations, cannot let this moment pass without committing to ongoing bold and transformative action.

In closing, I would be remiss if I did not say something about our outgoing Regional Chief, Jody Wilson-Raybould, and thank her for her tremendous leadership and invaluable service over her two terms as Regional Chief for British Columbia. She is certainly a principled and tireless worker with a clear vision and we will ensure that the work she and other visionary leaders have championed to support our Nation rebuilding efforts, through governance reform and fair access to lands and resources, continues. We will also strive to support healthy and well-educated citizens as we continue to do our collective and individual parts to ultimately improve the quality of life for our people. Jody will certainly be missed at the regional and national AFN level and I join with our Chiefs in BC in wishing her all the best in her future pursuits; pursuits which will undoubtedly continue to be a positive force for First Nations in BC and across Canada.

Finally, on behalf of the BCAFN Board of Directors, I would like to congratulate the incoming BCAFN Regional Chief and look forward to working with him to continue the good work in British Columbia.

With that, I want to wish everyone a productive week here in Montreal, and a safe and happy summer.

Respectfully,

Chief Maureen Chapman  
BCAFN Spokesperson





## REGIONAL CHIEF MIKE SMITH

### Yukon



Warm greetings to all First Nations, Chiefs, Elders, Youth and Citizens! As Regional Chief for Yukon for the past three years, I have continued to work with Yukon Chiefs and our regional organization, the Council of Yukon First Nations.

It was business as usual with both the federal and territorial governments as our modern treaties are ignored or under attack by the territorial government. Our year began with the court challenge on Land Use Planning after an extensive

review of the Peel River watershed, whose report and recommendations were rejected by the current government. After their sham consultation in response to the Land Use Planning Commission's recommendations, the Yukon government developed their own plan. Their "plan" provided minimum protection and opened the Peel River Watershed to wholesale mining.

The year ended with intensive lobbying by the Yukon Chiefs to reject the last-minute amendments to the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* proposed by the territorial government. The amendments, which were submitted to Canada, were outside of the 5-year review and totally undermine the land claims agreement. Yukon First Nations have advised both governments that the amendments contravene our agreements and will be challenged in the courts.

We are continually forced to commence legal action – wasting our money – to defend our agreements, to implement our treaty and self-government rights, and wonder if we would have been better off without our land claims settlement.

On the national scene, it has been a year of transition – new leadership, emergence of the Confederacy of

Nations, a failed attempt to re-engage on the *First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act*, and continued downsizing of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and resources to advance First Nations' initiatives. In response, our Chiefs have elected a new National Chief, continued to lobby and meet with governments on the demand for an inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, and attended committee hearings to voice objection to the various amendments and bills which are punitive in nature and place more control with the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development over First Nation governments. While the *First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act* passed second reading in May 2014, the Minister has put it on the shelf pending First Nations support. The question of the funding promised by the government remains outstanding and the Minister has adopted the usual strategy of divide and conquer, announcing he is prepared to sign separate education funding agreements with willing First Nations.

The year ahead will continue to be a challenge for the AFN as a national organization, and the need for understanding and clear and strategic leadership must prevail over regional differences. The revitalization of the Confederacy of Nations also presents a unique challenge and opportunity for the AFN to renew and to move forward to protect our interests and rights under our Treaties, modern agreements, lands and First Nations jurisdiction. The status quo and business as usual are not acceptable.

While the majority of Yukon First Nations may be exempted from the amendments to the *Indian Act*, the *First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act* and other amendments such as the *Tackling Contraband Tobacco Act*, we are not immune from the government's overall intent to abrogate its responsibilities by delegation to provincial and territorial governments and agencies. While we do participate in "consultation" on issues such as the land use planning and environmental assessment processes, as set out in our agreements, we find that the consultation is only done to meet the minimum requirements of the law. Together with all First Nations,



Yukon First Nations bear the full burden of this federal government's anti-First Nation policies and laws.

First Nations with Agreements continue to work together on implementation, financial and fiscal negotiations, and development of a First Nations Land Title Act in Yukon. It was necessary to develop this Act since the territorial government's *Land Titles Act* required First Nations to "surrender" their self-government control and Aboriginal title.

Implementation is not only an issue for Yukon First Nations but for all First Nations with modern treaties and self-government agreements. Yukon First Nations are members of the Land Claims Agreement Coalition. Fiscal arrangements under the self-government agreements have been a contentious issue, as Canada is forcing amendments to the Agreements during negotiations to provide for formula financing.

On another matter, while our Agreements reference involvement, our governments are being isolated in areas such as education. While Yukon First Nations participate in discussions with the AFN, we find ourselves being exempted from the application of the *First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act*.

Yukon First Nations without Agreements have maintained their Aboriginal title and rights under the *Constitution* and have challenged the continued exploitation of their land and resources without their consent. Their court challenges have been successful in forcing governments and mining companies to consult and accommodate their First Nations' interests. In the Ross River First Nation case, the court found the duty to consult exists even though the relevant legislation gave essentially no discretion to the officials recording the mining claims under the *Quartz Mining Act*, which permits free entry staking on Crown land. In a further case, the court ruled that the crown's honour cannot be interpreted narrowly or technically, but must be given full effect in order to promote the process of reconciliation mandated by Section 35.1 of the *Constitution*.

First Nations are meeting with mining companies and have entered into business agreements without government involvement. These agreements do not require First Nations to surrender their rights and title, which would have been the case if the government was involved.

This is a summary report for the Yukon region, covering the major initiatives and to provide an update on our activities for the past fiscal year. Our regional organization continues to meet with all First Nations and hopes to bring all Yukon First Nations together. The work on Land Titles by participating First Nations has been a good indication of further cooperation on development and implementation of First Nation laws and control of our lands. The agreement to join in court actions and sharing of the financial costs has been a benefit to all.

Respectively submitted,

Regional Chief Mike Smith



## REGIONAL CHIEF BILL ERASMUS

### Northwest Territories



Welcome to the 36th AFN Annual General Assembly in Montreal. Much has changed and happened since the last assembly and we are pleased to be here in Mohawk territory with Regional Chief Ghislain Picard and his peoples who are hosting this great event for us.

The Dene entered into treaties with the British Crown and this year marks 116 years for Treaty #8 and 94 years for Treaty #11. We will be celebrating the 45th Dene National Assembly in Deline, NWT on July 20-24, 2015.

Over the last few years, hydraulic fracturing (fracking) has been a huge discussion in the North. The first-ever assessment of unconventional oil resources in the Northwest Territories has confirmed that there are close to 200 billion barrels of shale resources beneath the surface. The assessment estimates a volume of 145 billion barrels of shale oil within the Canol and another 46 billion barrels in the thinner Bluefish shale. Both the Canol and Bluefish plays would have to be developed through hydraulic fracturing. Fourteen exploration licenses have been granted in the Canol play since 2010-11, for a total of \$627.5 million in work-bid commitments. Seven exploration wells have been drilled since 2012, though there are no active projects currently. Husky Energy withdrew its plans to frack up to four horizontal wells near Norman Wells last winter, while ConocoPhillips has yet to target any capital funds to continuing its exploratory fracking in the area and likely won't until 2016 at the earliest, according to the company.<sup>1</sup> While the Dene of the NWT are waiting to see the new territorial government fracking regulations due out this spring, the industry has already started here. So far, there are already two exploratory frack wells operating in the NWT by Conoco-Phillips, with another 10 permitted. That's 120-300 million litres of fresh water just for Conoco-Phillips' current

wells. There are four other companies, including Husky Oil and Imperial Oil, who own leases along the Mackenzie River for future shale gas exploration.<sup>2</sup>

All of this activity brings great concern to the Dene because the boom and bust economy has never worked in the North. We need to develop an energy plan that respects sustainable development.

We would like to congratulate the Deline as it becomes the first community in the Northwest Territories to be self-governing. The community already delivers most of the services it will be delivering as a government, but the agreement will make the system more efficient. Deline has approved and endorsed its agreement along with the government of the Northwest Territories and now await the approval of the Canadian government.

The New Democratic Party won the Alberta provincial election and has a majority government, ending the Alberta Progressive Conservative 44-year reign. This will be a definite change for the Northwest Territories. Over the years, the Alberta government has been embedded in resource extraction, mainly the tar sands just south of us. With growing evidence that pollutants are causing fish deformities in the Athabasca River and Dene communities struggling to understand elevated cancer rates, 33 communities in the Northwest Territories have called for a moratorium on oil sands developments because of fears about water quality and quantity. Water is used to extract bitumen from the tar sands. In the process, it is contaminated with heavy metals. Tailing ponds at the site now hold 720 billion litres of wastewater, near the Athabasca River, which is part of the Mackenzie Water Basin flowing north to the Arctic Circle. With the NDP's track record on environmental issues in Canada, this will provide the Dene an opportunity to have our concerns heard. We welcome the new provincial government to the south of us which includes the Treaty #8 territory.

We also encourage everyone to prepare for the fall federal election which provides an opportunity for a new government. Canada needs a government that works with



First Nations to implement the section 35 rights that are affirmed in the *Canadian Constitution*.

We would like to thank AFN Regional Chief Ghislain Picard and his region who have worked hard to make this Assembly happen. We look forward to the opportunity to work in unity and make decisions that are guided by our Creator and respectful of our treaties. Mahsi Cho for your attention and the honour to work for you and our peoples. We encourage everyone to speak their minds at this assembly and to be considerate and courteous to others.

Sincerely,

Bill Erasmus  
AFN Regional Chief, NWT

<sup>1</sup> <http://norj.ca/2015/05/study-estimates-200-billion-barrels-of-shale-oil-below-nwt/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://edgeyk.com/article/fracking-facts-a-reality-check/>



## AFN ELDERS COUNCIL

**Since the inception of the National Indian Brotherhood and transition to the Assembly of First Nations, there has always been a place of honour and distinction for the Elders.**

Elders provided both spiritual and political guidance in the formation of the organization, its structures and its Charter. The Elders helped to shape AFN policies and the relationship with the federal government and other national and international organizations. During the past 35 years, the AFN's leadership has relied upon the historical and cultural knowledge of its Elders, especially in matters relating to Treaty rights and First Nation governance.

This role continues today. The AFN Elders Council includes representatives from each of AFN's 10 regions. The Elders Council continues to play an important role in all facets of the AFN and its operations.

### KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The AFN Elders Council continues to meet bi-annually at Annual General Assemblies and Special Chiefs Assemblies to discuss issues and challenges facing the Council and to bring together new ideas.

The AFN Elders Council is essential to our lives and our day-to-day business. They are the keepers of our traditions, values, languages and history. Elders are our guides to our future. They are leaders in our community; they speak with honour and with a great deal of pride. Elders are our teachers. The Elders will always encourage First Nation leaders and champions to continue to enlighten and inform forums such as the Chiefs Assemblies on their experiences, issues, successes and challenges. It is all of our responsibilities to ensure prosperity and the safety of the little ones, just as our ancestors did for us. The AFN continues efforts to acquire funds to fully integrate the input and participation of the Elders Council into all work.

At the July 2014 Annual General Assembly, the Elders Council agreed that the Elder from the host territory would hold the honour of chairing the council for the next year. As there were Assemblies in both the territory of the Mi'kmaq and the Anishinaabe in Manitoba, this honour was shared. Elder Phyllis Googoo from Nova Scotia held this position following the Annual General Assembly in July, 2014. Elder Elmer Courchene chaired the council following the December Special Chiefs Assembly.

The Elders Council would like to once again express their gratitude to resident Elder Barney Taa-eee-sim-chilth Williams of Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations for all of the guidance, wisdom and knowledge he provided to the council, AFN Executive and staff over the past five years.

### AFN Elders Council Guidelines and Protocols

The Elders Council continues to meet at Assemblies to discuss and review the "Assembly of First Nations Elders and Elders Council Guidelines and Protocols".

### AFN Tri-Council

The Elders Council continues to provide guidance and vision to AFN Tri-Council meetings with the Women's and Youth Councils.

### NEXT STEPS – MOVING FORWARD

- The AFN will continue to seek additional funding for the Elders Council from the federal government and alternative sources, to ensure First Nations cultures and perspectives are reflected in the work conducted regionally and nationally. AFN staff will continue to provide administrative support, and champion the issues as directed by the Elders Council.
- The Elders Council will continue provide guidance to the AFN Executive, staff and support the activities of the Tri-Council.





## AFN WOMEN'S COUNCIL

**The Women's Council works with the AFN Secretariat to ensure that the concerns and perspectives of First Nations women inform the work of the AFN. Council members hold portfolio responsibilities and participate in a wide range of panels, presentations and forums that are relevant to First Nations women.**

### KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The Council has been engaged in various meetings and activities that address matters of concern to First Nations women and their families. The Council Chair and co-Chair have actively participated on the Executive Committee to provide the perspective of First Nations women and to keep the Council apprised of Executive activities and discussions. Also, the Chair has been participating in monthly calls with the chairs of the Youth and Elders Councils, and the AFN Chief Executive Officer, as a way to establish improved communication between the AFN Secretariat and the Tri-Council.

The Council has been involved in a number of activities including the Chiefs Committee on Economic Development, Sisters In Spirit Vigils across the country, the Aboriginal Affairs Working group meeting in Yellowknife on May 12, 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission national event in British Columbia and the closing event that took place in Ottawa on May 31- June 3, 2015.

The Council actively engaged in the 4th National Aboriginal Women's Summit (NAWSIV) that took place in Membertou, Nova Scotia on October 20-22, 2014. The Council made a submission with recommended actions corresponding to the NAWSIV themes: Empowerment, Equity and Leadership. In addition, Council members participated in discussions that highlighted the importance of immediate action to address the challenges that have been raised at previous NAWS. The co-Chair also engaged in radio interviews pertaining to the Summit and

stressed the urgent action needed to address violence against Indigenous women and girls.

The Council participated in the closed Gathering of Families of Missing and Murdered Indigenous women on February 26, 2015. This event was an opportunity for families to come together in a respectful and private setting. Families and their support persons attended, shared experiences, and prepared for the National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and Peoples Gathering, on February 27, 2015. Council representatives also attended the National Roundtable and the Peoples' Gathering. Indigenous families and leaders, all 13 provinces and territories, and federal Ministers took part in the Roundtable. Delegates discussed and committed to ongoing dialogue and coordinated action in priority areas, including prevention and awareness, community safety, policing measures and justice responses. Specific outcomes include the commitment to hold a second National Roundtable in 2016 to assess progress. At the meeting of Aboriginal Affairs Ministers in Yellowknife, Therese Villeneuve, Chair of the Women's Council called for a national inquiry, welcomed the support of provinces and territories and called for greater transparency and improved police responses.

Unfortunately, the Council's capacity to operate is limited as funding has been significantly reduced. Thus, the Council is currently focusing in outreach and canvassing for funding opportunities that can support its important advocacy and advisory work.

### NEXT STEPS – MOVING FORWARD

- The Council will be engaging in furthering the outcomes of the National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and will be active in planning for the 2nd National Roundtable.
- The Council is highly committed to support and engage in the implementation of the Action Plan to Ensure Safety and Security for Indigenous Women and Girls.



- The Council will be discussing fundraising ideas to support its activities.
- Council members will continue to be active in their regions.
- The Council will also continue to work with the Youth and Elders Councils to continue to implement Resolution 02/2012 as well as the Tri-Council Strategic Plan.



## AFN NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL

**The AFN National Youth Council (AFN NYC) operates as a 20-member council representing First Nations youth from each of the 10 AFN regions (each region has one male and one female representative).**

**This national body, a key organ of the AFN established in the Charter, represents First Nations youth across the country on issues that impact them on a daily basis. The NYC provides insight to the AFN committees and working groups, as well as the AFN Secretariat on various youth-related issues.**

### KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

#### Youth Engagement

Building upon the discussion and key issues that were raised at the Youth Summits in Saskatoon and Halifax, the AFN NYC continues to work on supporting youth engagement with the corporate sector, NGOs, all levels of government and with First Nations leadership (local/regional/national). The NYC has developed “A Framework for Action” which is designed as a tool for those interested in engaging First Nations youth in an ethical, meaningful and innovative manner. The NYC continues to promote and discuss their framework at national and regional gatherings, such as the Aboriginal Financial Officers Association national conference held this past February in Winnipeg. Through promotional work at these gatherings, the NYC hopes to reach a large number of stakeholders that have been identified within the framework.

#### Canadian Centre for Child Protection

The AFN NYC has been supporting the efforts of the Canadian Centre for Child Protection (CCCP), in particular, their work on a public awareness campaign that aims to break the silence on child abuse. The AFN NYC will continue to provide advice and input for other public

education activities and personal safety education programs developed by the CCCP.

#### National Aboriginal Women’s Summit IV

The AFN NYC was represented at the National Aboriginal Women’s Summit which took place this past October, in Halifax. NYC members participated in numerous discussions, presentations and workshops that took place during the summit.

#### Mental Wellness

The NYC continues to support work within the AFN on mental wellness. This includes ongoing participation on the AFN Mental Wellness Committee and the First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum – Implementation Team. The NYC also contributed a statement to the AFN’s press release recognizing World Suicide Prevention Day calling for more mobilization and engagement of youth around this issue, in their communities.

#### National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Members of the AFN NYC attended the National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The NYC is exploring how they can best support moving forward on the commitments from the roundtable.

#### IndigenACTION

The AFN NYC continues to lead the way on this important initiative which seeks to make our communities healthier. Another successful run/walk was held at last year’s Annual General Assembly (AGA) in Halifax. A run/walk is also planned for this year’s AGA in Montreal and will offer a chance for youth to walk and talk with leadership from across the country.

#### 4Rs Youth Movement

The AFN NYC continues to be engaged with the 4Rs Youth Movement. This movement began as a collaboration of five national youth-serving organizations, six national Aboriginal organizations and three national charitable foundations in Canada. The movement has grown and



now includes several new partners. The goal for this movement is to change the country by changing the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth. Activities and tools are being developed that will support the effort to achieve this goal.

## NEXT STEPS – MOVING FORWARD

- The AFN NYC will share their engagement plan widely, in an effort to facilitate engagement of First Nations youth across a variety of sectors.
- The AFN NYC will continue to engage with the 4Rs Youth Movement and contribute to the development of the overall vision and subsequent activities.
- The AFN NYC will work to maintain a visible and substantial presence within the activities, meetings and conferences that are conducted through the AFN Secretariat and its various sub-committees and working groups.



## CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Welcome to the 36th Annual General Assembly (AGA) in wonderful Montreal, Quebec. It has been a busy year with the election of our new National Chief Perry Bellegarde and the renewed energy and focus this brings. I am pleased to provide this brief report on the activities of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Secretariat.

The AFN continues to face significant financial challenges as the federal government makes additional funding cuts. Over the past two years the

deep and sustained funding reductions, combined with their late notice, has impacted our financial standing. We have made a series of adjustments to address these including staff reductions, reduced allocations to all areas and increased efforts on raising our own revenue. Management is working with the Executive to develop plans to address the deficit and debt that has accumulated.

The AFN remains active in ensuring the rights and interests of First Nations are fully respected. We have continued in our human rights complaint against the federal government for their failure to provide equitable funding and services on reserve with our partner the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society and we anticipate a positive decision soon. We are intervening in the *Daniels* Supreme Court case to help ensure that First Nation rights are not eroded.

We remain engaged with the Council of the Federation to ensure that our Provincial and Territorial government partners are focused on priorities such as ending violence against Indigenous women and girls, housing, education, economic development, disaster mitigation and emergency management. Internationally, we have been very active working on the World Conference on

Indigenous Peoples, the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and on consultations leading up to the UN Climate Change meetings.

The policy work at the AFN Secretariat remains firmly rooted in the resolutions passed by Chiefs-in-Assembly. We have conducted our own review of the Specific Claims Tribunal and submitted it to government to consider. We are engaged in an extensive review of the First Nations Non-Insured Health Benefits program and how to improve it. We continued to support residential school survivors and their access to Personal Education Credits. The call for a national inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls was advanced both through the Council of the Federation and at the first National Roundtable on this matter.

Recently we have all witnessed the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) issue its summary report and 94 calls to action. As a party to the settlement agreement it was a moment of pride to see the conclusion of the TRC's work with such a momentous event. The national dialogue that has taken place as a result of the report fills us with hope that change is coming. It will be incumbent upon all of us to carry this work forward.

All of this work only happens as a result of the dedicated and professional staff that we have at the AFN. Regardless of the financial or political pressures the organization faces we can always count on their unwavering dedication and effort. I am fortunate to have the opportunity to work with them.

Finally, I would like to thank National Chief Bellegarde and the entire AFN Executive Committee for their support.

I wish you all the best for a successful AGA.

Peter Dinsdale  
Chief Executive Officer





## INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY AND ACTIVITY

**The Chiefs-in-Assembly have directed AFN engagement in international activities and mechanisms to advance First Nations rights. Therefore, the AFN is required to have an international dimension to its advocacy and activities.**

The AFN advances the rights and interests of First Nations internationally by: strategically participating in key international fora and events; forging relationships and partnerships with other Indigenous peoples and their organizations and human rights non-governmental organizations (NGOs); facilitating international political, economic, cultural, and social relationships between First Nations and foreign States; and, seeking to establish working relationships with Canada towards informing their foreign and international policy approaches and objectives on matters of shared interest.

### KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The AFN has been actively championing the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in communications with the federal government and other governments, with the private sector and with Canadians in general. More specifically, advocacy regarding the implementation of the UNDRIP is captured in policy discussions with federal officials and submissions to Parliament regarding various legislative and policy studies.

In March 2015, National Chief Bellegarde wrote a letter of support for Romeo Saganash's Private Member's Bill C-641, *An Act to ensure that the laws of Canada are in harmony with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* that includes substantive comment on why all Parliamentarians should work towards implementing the UNDRIP. National Chief Bellegarde sent an email to all MPs prior to the vote again calling for their support and attended the vote on second reading on May 6th, when it was defeated. The AFN issued a press release

the same day calling Canada out for its regressive stance on human rights issues affecting Indigenous peoples.

Additional public awareness and education efforts include press releases on notable international human rights developments such as the findings of human rights violations by Canada in respect to the issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (December 2014) and the UN Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (March 2015).

#### United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII)

The Fourteenth Session of the UN Permanent Forum occurred from April 20 to May 1, 2015. The main themes for the UNPFII were the implementation of the UNDRIP, with discussions on follow up to the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) Outcome Document, development of an Optional Protocol (OP) to the UNDRIP and a specific discussion of the mandate of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. National Chief Bellegarde delivered joint statements on both of these agenda items.

#### Human Rights Committee

Canada will be examined at the Human Rights Committee for its compliance with the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). The AFN will work to develop a "shadow report", detailing ongoing violations of the ICCPR in the areas of land rights, access to remedies, the rights of Indigenous persons with disabilities, murdered and missing Indigenous women, anti-terrorism legislation and other priority areas.

#### Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) Mandate

There will be discussions at both the UNPFII and the EMRIP on WCIP OP 28, which requires a review of all Human Rights Council mandates and a reform of the EMRIP. The EMRIP is currently under-resourced, and is generally considered to be comprised of a roster of experts that are not as strong as would be desired by



Indigenous peoples – with the exception of Chief Wilton Littlechild (Western Europe and Other Group), whose term is scheduled to end soon. As a result, starting points for reforming the EMRIP involve a wider and better selection process for Experts (including expanding the number of experts who sit on the EMRIP) and expanding the human and financial resources available to the EMRIP.

One major focus point for discussion is the extent to which the EMRIP continues ‘thematic studies’, as opposed to development of a capacity to assist States to comply with the UNDRIP by gathering information from Indigenous peoples and examining specific cases of non-compliance.

#### **World Conference in Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) Follow Up**

The National Chief attended an Indigenous expert group meeting in Geneva, in March, 2015. The purpose of the meeting was to bring together Indigenous peoples from each region and develop a plan of action to implement the WCIP, with particular emphasis on OP 28 (EMRIP mandate, above) and OP 33 – new status for Indigenous peoples at the UN. The AFN’s comments focused on the need for enhanced human and financial resources for a revised EMRIP mandate and the need for a flexible approach (and minimal government interference) to enable participation of Indigenous peoples’ representatives and institutions at UN meetings. This position flows from AFN Resolution 1/2013, which mandates the AFN to call on the UN WCIP to provide Indigenous peoples, through their representative governments and institutions, with an appropriate status for participating regularly in UN activities to achieve full and effective participation in UN fora and processes consistent with the right of self-determination, and including support for a stronger role for constitutional and customary governments in all aspects of the WCIP process.

There is a very aggressive timeline to implement the WCIP Outcome Document. In addition to discussions at the UNPFII and the EMRIP on WCIP implementation, there are a number of informal meetings which may occur throughout the spring, summer and fall. The AFN understands that substantive proposals on OP 28, OP 33 and the System-Wide Action Plan (SWAP) to implement the UNDRIP must be completed by May, 2015. These proposals will be forwarded to the Economic and Social Council for consideration in August 2015, and to the General Assembly in the fall 2015 session.

On OP 28, the AFN understands that some States are open to commencing reviews and consultations in 2015, with a view to tabling a concrete plan for reforming the EMRIP in 2016. This would allow considerable flexibility in terms of substantive positions as well as matters of procedure. States are looking for Indigenous peoples to lead on WCIP follow up. However, Indigenous peoples have had very limited opportunity to discuss many of these issues amongst ourselves.

#### **The Organization of American States (OAS) and Draft American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (DADRIP)**

Several years ago, the OAS established a Working Group to develop a Draft American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (DADRIP). Canada withdrew shortly after the UNDRIP was adopted by the UN General Assembly and several States and Indigenous peoples demanded that the UNDRIP be used as a baseline text for the DADRIP. Shortly after, the Working Group stopped meeting and negotiations for the DADRIP were placed in abeyance. The reason had little to do with Canada, and more to do with availability of resources and general frustration with the slow pace of the negotiations.

The OAS re-commenced the negotiation process in December 2014, with the first session of the year in January 2015. The OAS has been meeting on a monthly basis, with plans to complete the DADRIP by June, 2015. At this point, the DADRIP would be forwarded to the OAS General Assembly for adoption. There have been several procedural and substantive irregularities in the negotiation process. Generally, the views of Indigenous peoples in attendance at the meeting have been completely ignored. For reference, in past sessions, Indigenous peoples participated in these negotiations on equal footing with states. The inability to participate leads to substantive weaknesses with the text. For example, some of the language which has been introduced would make Indigenous rights subject to national legislation.

#### **Climate Change**

There are two major upcoming international developments on climate change. First, the OAS is organizing a Climate Summit of the Americas in Toronto, on July 7-9, 2015. The AFN has submitted comments to a group of academics who have developed a climate strategy for presentation to the Premiers. Comments have focused on recommending that any national climate



change strategy must provide adequate consideration to the rights and jurisdictions of First Nations governments, in addition to the jurisdictions of federal and provincial governments. National Chief Bellegarde will note these key points in the meeting with Premiers and National Aboriginal Leaders, scheduled to take place on July 15, 2015.

Finally, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) released draft negotiating text for a post-Kyoto climate agreement, to be negotiated in Paris later this year. Several countries have already released “Intended Nationally Determined Contributions” (INDCs - emissions reductions), including the United States and Mexico. INDCs will assist development of meaningful targets for emissions reductions under the Paris Treaty. The AFN is currently examining the draft text of the Paris Treaty.

#### **Domestic Education and Lobby Efforts**

Independently, and with members of the United Nations Coalition on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the AFN participates in and sponsors various activities to raise awareness on the rights of First Nations under international law. For example, the AFN assisted in organizing and sponsored a panel discussion on the Doctrine of Discovery which took place on June 1 at Ottawa City Hall; and in a panel discussion in the afternoon of the same day on the UN Declaration as part of events to mark the closing of the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The AFN also helped sponsor a symposium on May 20th at the University of Ottawa to raise awareness and understanding of the concept of free, prior and informed consent.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNSR) visited Canada from October 7 to October 15, 2013. The UNSR met with a number of First Nations representatives across Canada and at the AFN offices in Ottawa. An advanced unedited version of UNSR report on Canada was released on May 7, 2014. The UNSR’s report makes 15 recommendations specific to First Nations which call on Canada to improve the situation of Indigenous Peoples in Canada and to meet internationally accepted, and legally binding minimum standards. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is recommended as a common framework to address the concerns of Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

During their studies, the AFN met with Commissioners from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the UN Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) regarding the high numbers of murdered and missing Indigenous women in Canada. Both reports were released earlier this year, and found that Canada has failed to uphold its obligations to Indigenous women, including addressing root causes, and exercising due diligence in policing and investigation.

#### **NEXT STEPS – MOVING FORWARD**

- Continued awareness and pressure to implement the standards set out in the UNDRIP within the laws and policies of Canada regarding Treaties, comprehensive claims, self-government, and the full range of issues affecting First Nation and Canada relations.
- Continued monitoring of Canada’s statements and activities internationally, and counteracting inaccurate portrayals of the relationship with Indigenous peoples.
- Preparing a shadow report for and possibly attending Canada’s reporting to the Human Rights Council on its obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- Engaging in the review of the EMRIP mandate.
- Continued follow up from the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples to advance work on a new status for Indigenous peoples at the United Nations and development of a ‘System-wide Action Plan’ (SWAP) to implement the UNDRIP.
- Support First Nations perspectives and voices being heard in negotiations for a new, ‘post-Kyoto’ climate change accord.
- Continue pressure on papal and government authorities to renounce the Doctrine of Discovery (a racist legal doctrine that has underpinned colonial assertions of sovereignty including that of successor governments such as Canada).
- Further efforts to raise public awareness and push for recognition and respect of First Nations rights under international law.



## NATIONAL ADVOCACY – CANADIAN PARLIAMENT, PROVINCES AND TERRITORIES

**The AFN continued work to build strong relationships with Parliamentarians and provincial and territorial governments. Along with specific focus on building and maintaining connections between First Nation leadership, Parliamentarians and senior public servants, the AFN monitors legislation, provides information and analysis to First Nations and informs Parliament of implications of its actions on First Nations human rights, Aboriginal rights and title.**

The AFN has continued to advance First Nations' priorities with provincial and territorial governments and as part of the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group (AAWG) created in August 2009 by the Council of the Federation (CoF). This has included focused work in priority areas, such as education, economic participation, ending violence against Indigenous women and girls, housing, disaster mitigation, and children in care.

### KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

#### **Parliamentary Advocacy, Outreach and Engagement in Parliamentary Processes**

First Nations issues have once again been matters of debate in Canada's Parliament this year. During this session the AFN continued focus on the clear and consistent priorities First Nations have expressed through resolutions, asserting our rights and affirming our responsibilities and ensuring that the federal legislators respect and understand First Nations' inherent rights and jurisdiction over matters on their lands and with regards to their citizens.

During this session political representatives and secretariat staff made eight committee presentations in addition to numerous written submissions to both the House of Commons and the Senate. Notably, National Chief Bellegarde's powerful presentation on Bill C-51, *Anti-Terrorism Act*, 2015 garnered national attention regarding

First Nation concerns on continued over-surveillance and the possible criminalization of asserting their rights.

As in previous years, the AFN participated in the Pre-Budget consultation process, outlining priority areas for significant and sustained investments. The AFN actively engaged in advocacy with First Nations and parliamentarians in efforts to ensure First Nation concerns were understood, and provided clear messages that First Nations will use every avenue available to them to stop the derogation of their rights, and harm to their resources.

In addition, the AFN facilitated direct access of First Nations to Parliamentarians along with securing and supporting meetings and working with delegations – such as Chiefs of Treaty 8 in BC to advocate on the Site-C Dam and Tsilhqot'in Chiefs regarding developments in their territory.

The AFN provides weekly e-mail updates while the House of Commons is in session and these are also posted on [www.afn.ca](http://www.afn.ca).

#### **Council of the Federation / Aboriginal Affairs Working Group**

The Council of the Federation (CoF) is a body formed in 2003 consisting of all provincial and territorial Premiers. The CoF has invited leaders of the five National Aboriginal Organizations (NAOs) to meet with them in advance of their regular annual meeting every year since 2004. As a direct response to calls by the AFN at the CoF in 2009, the Premiers agreed to establish an Aboriginal Affairs Working Group (AAWG) consisting of provincial and territorial Aboriginal Affairs Ministers and NAO leaders to follow-up on work between annual meetings of the CoF. The AAWG typically meets once or twice a year to review work and make recommendations to the CoF. Officials from the NAOs and Provinces and Territories collaborate throughout much of the year in preparation for these meetings.





In July 2014, former National Chief Picard, along with the leaders of other national organizations met with Premiers and Territorial leaders in advance of the CoF meeting in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. The focus continued on Education, Ending Violence Against Aboriginal Women & Girls, Economic Development, Crisis & Emergency Management and Housing. Premiers and Territorial leaders continued their support for the call for Canada to strike a national inquiry on murdered and missing Indigenous women and supported a National Roundtable to drive towards tangible outcomes. They also agreed to focus on addressing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in child welfare.

The AAWG Ministers and National Aboriginal Leaders met in Yellowknife in May 2015. National Chief Bellegarde strongly raised the need for focusing this forum on outcomes, seeking tangible movement in priority areas and for the Provinces and Territories to increase their efforts in building relationships with First Nations and investing in improving socio-economic outcomes. The National Chief has been meeting with all Premiers one-on-one to promote their direct engagement with First Nations and seek their support for key elements of closing the gap for First Nations: support for Indigenous languages, First Nations history and rights taught in all schools, revenue sharing and child welfare.

The next meeting with Premiers will take place in Happy Valley Goose Bay, Labrador, in July 2015.

## NEXT STEPS – MOVING FORWARD

- Continue facilitating access to Parliamentarians and key decision-makers to promote respect and protection of First Nations' rights.
- Focused advocacy throughout the year.
- Continue providing timely information to First Nations on the activities of Parliament, including legislation and committee business.
- Continue to monitor key legislative initiatives, provide information to First Nations and advocate on their behalf to Members of Parliament and Senators.
- Continued work at the CoF / AAWG forums to further First Nations rights and interests.





## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

**The Communications Unit produces and distributes information designed to advance the goals and priorities of First Nations peoples and governments.**

The Unit works to ensure that the messages and perspectives of the AFN and First Nations are properly communicated and understood and that the National Chief, Regional Chiefs and other spokespeople are involved in and given the opportunity to speak publicly through media and other fora to communicate First Nation perspectives. As part of the ongoing efforts to maximize communications potential, the AFN has implemented an active social media campaign using the AFN website, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and e-mail blasts.

### KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

#### Media and Public Relations

The Communications Unit advises, prepares and implements strategic communications policy and planning for the AFN as a whole, based on clear direction and positions from First Nations, as well as strategies to advance specific initiatives and/or activities. The Unit works to develop materials and provide information to First Nations, governments, the media and general public about the AFN, its activities and positions, as well as the National Chief's agenda and priorities.

The Communications Unit prepares press releases, media advisories and statements which are distributed nationally (in English and French) to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal media, with regional distribution as applicable. The Communications Unit prepared and distributed more than 110 press releases/statements during the 2014-15 fiscal year. Communications also prepares media lines, backgrounders, op-eds, letters to the editor and editorials on current and priority issues.

The Unit prepares speaking notes for the National Chief and AFN spokespeople that are used at a variety of

events for wide-ranging audiences, including First Nations governments, groups and organizations, professional associations, national and international organizations, and federal and provincial governments. Key events since the election of the new National Chief included the National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, a presentation to the Standing Committee on Bill C-51: *Anti-Terrorism Act, 2015*, the Windigo Education Authority Education Conference, AFN Specific Claims Gathering, AFN Mental Wellness Policy Forum, Broadbent Institute Progress Summit, United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Canadian Council for International Cooperation - Canadian Association of International Development Professionals conference, the Canada 2020 Aboriginal Peoples and Economic Development conference, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission final events.

Communications seeks to raise and maintain the profile of First Nation peoples and issues through media. The Communications Unit is active in media outreach and media relations and has set up background briefings and editorial boards with media.

Over the past year, there have been several developments that have resulted in widespread national and international media coverage for the AFN, including First Nations education, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT) on First Nations Child Welfare, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, resource development, and federal legislation impacting First Nations.

#### Public Awareness and Public Education

The Communications Unit works to raise awareness and understanding of First Nation issues and the AFN's role, responsibilities and activities in this regard. The AFN understands that First Nations have different communications needs and different ways of accessing information. For this reason, the AFN uses a mix of traditional and new media to disseminate information as widely as possible, including fax, e-mail, AFN website, and social media.



The AFN issues regular updates on National Chief and AFN activities and work underway at the national office. Communiqués are distributed by fax and e-mail to all First Nations, provincial/territorial organizations (PTOs) and tribal councils, are distributed via social media, and posted online in both print and video format.

The website ([www.afn.ca](http://www.afn.ca)) is updated regularly to provide current information on AFN activities and priorities. The AFN offers live webcasting of all Assemblies and coordinates electronic distribution of daily updates to delegates during Assemblies. The AFN now has the ability to do its own in-house webcasting of events, meetings and webinars.

The AFN continues to expand its use of social media, including two Twitter accounts ([AFN\\_Updates](#) and [AFN\\_Comms](#)) with more than 32,000 followers combined and the AFN Facebook page ([Assembly of First Nations/Assemblée des Premières Nations](#)), which has close to 29,000 “likes”. Videos are posted to the Assembly of First Nations [YouTube](#) channel which has more than 300 subscribers.

Public information is also distributed to more than 1,200 subscribers through the e-mail subscription service (listserv). Users can sign up on the AFN website. Canada’s anti-spam legislation came into effect on July 1, 2014, requiring personal consent for individuals to be added to electronic distribution lists.

The Communications Unit also offers editing, desktop publishing and production coordination for the AFN Secretariat, as well as video production of messages for the AFN website, YouTube and external events.

### Communications Strategies

The Communications Unit develops and implements global AFN communications as well as targeted strategies for specific events, issues and initiatives. The Unit provides advice, recommendations and communications support to the National Chief in advancing his “Closing the Gap” priorities respecting the socio-economic and human rights situation of First Nations, and to policy areas within the AFN Secretariat. Communications advice and recommendations are also provided to communities or Nations upon request.

This past year, the Communications Unit has worked with the policy areas to develop communications plans related to First Nations Control of First Nations Education, the CHRT on First Nations Child Welfare, the National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, the Specific Claims Five Year Review, the Natural Resource Development Working Group final report launch, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission final events, and AFN Assemblies.

### Translation

The Communications Unit coordinates all French/English translation requirements to ensure that the Canadian public and First Nations are able to access and understand all public materials produced by the AFN in both French and English. As per AFN policy, all public documents that are distributed nationally (including those posted on the AFN website) are available in French and English. Translation projects during the 2014-15 fiscal year totaled more than 527,000 words.

## NEXT STEPS – MOVING FORWARD

- Ongoing media and public relations work involving media advisories, press releases, speeches, and interviews.
- Publication of Bulletins/Communiqués.
- Ongoing French translation of public materials.
- Ongoing editing and desktop publishing of AFN publications.
- Ongoing updates of the AFN website.
- Increased and enhanced use of new media such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and mobile applications.
- Increased use of in-house webcasting ability.



## IMPLEMENTING RIGHTS

First Nations have inherent Aboriginal and Treaty rights, which are also recognized and protected by Canada's *Constitution*. The Assembly of First Nations carries out advocacy to support the advancement of these rights and associated responsibilities in efforts to create the space for First Nations to implement their own rights and decisions over lands, territories and resources.



## LAND RIGHTS AND CLAIMS

**The Land Rights and Claims heading encompasses several distinct areas, most notably Comprehensive Claims, Specific Claims, and Additions to Reserves (ATR).**

The AFN has held focused sessions on these areas over the past several years at several of its Assemblies. During these sessions, a variety of issues and new resolutions were reviewed including:

- 7/1/2011 – Comprehensive Claims Policy Reform Initiative
- 26/2012 – Additions to Reserve Policy and Process Reform
- 40/2014 – Specific Claims 5-Year Review

A number of additional topics are also associated with Land Rights & Claims, including Claims Over \$150M, Landless Bands, and Modern-Day Treaty Implementation. These are reflected in various other resolutions and activities.

### KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

#### Comprehensive Claims

The reform of Canada's Comprehensive Claims Policy (CCP) has been a focal point for AFN advocacy for many years. Underlying this issue is a policy that is badly outdated, and a context that is aggravated by significant advancements in the courts that are routinely ignored as a part of the federal policy process (e.g., *Tsilhqot'in Nation*).

In 2014-15, following the Senior Oversight Committee (SOC) process of 2013, Canada did not engage the AFN in any work on CCP policy reform. Rather, the unilateral appointment of Doug Eyford led to a process of one-sided federal engagement with First Nations and stakeholders about "renewing" the CCP and developing a framework for "addressing section 35 Aboriginal rights" with no reference to relevant jurisprudence, developments in international human rights law, or even Canada's own adoption of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2010.

In an effort to respond meaningfully to this process of engagement, the AFN worked with a coalition of social justice partners (e.g., Amnesty International, Quakers, Grand Council of the Crees, etc.) to develop a submission to Mr. Eyford. This submission was made late in 2014, along with a series of meetings with Mr. Eyford to express AFN's concerns about the CCP and the process of engagement itself.

Doug Eyford's report was issued publicly on April 2, 2015, and is currently under review.

#### Specific Claims

In October 2008, the *Specific Claims Tribunal Act* (SCTA) came into force. This meant that most claimants not satisfied with Canada's response to their claims would have access to an impartial, binding tribunal. Canada's efforts to process the backlog of hundreds of claims since the Tribunal was created, however, has created significant new challenges for First Nations. While Canada claims to have cleared the claims backlog, regrettably, less than 15% of these have resulted in settlement – the vast majority have been "rejected" or have had their file "closed".

On January 12, 2015, Minister Valcourt wrote to the National Chief to inform him of the appointment of Mr. Benoît Pelletier as his Ministerial Special Representative (MSR). The MSR met with some 25 First Nations and other



groups as part of his engagement process, and will use this information as a basis for a report to the Minister. Pursuant to s.41 of the SCTA, the Minister is required to file a report by October 16, 2015, based on the 5-year review that would be tabled in Parliament within 90 days of its next sitting (a federal election is expected to take place on October 19, 2015).

The establishment of an AFN independent Expert Panel process parallel to the federal MSR process has significantly broadened the discussion around specific claims and associated challenges. After hosting two hearings (Toronto and Vancouver) and receiving 23 oral presentations along with 7 distinct written submissions, the Expert Panel developed a Final Report that was tabled with the MSR, in consultation with the Chiefs Committee on Claims (CCoC), this May.

The overarching recommendation of the Expert Panel pertains to the need for an appropriate forum for re-engagement with Canada to address the problems associated with specific claims, but critics have suggested that without some form of independent oversight, Canada's willingness to follow through are unlikely to materialize. The need for "partnership" in this regard is central (e.g., between First Nations and the Crown). It is hoped that Mr. Pelletier's report to the Minister will speak to these issues, informed by submissions from the Expert Panel and others, which may lead to changes based on a submission to Parliament.

#### **Additions to Reserve**

Efforts to improve the ATR policy and process have been the subject of an AFN-Canada joint working group since late 2009. Progress on this work has been the subject of regular review by the CCoC. A draft ATR policy was released for public comment during the fall of 2013. The public response was substantial, leading to an extensive consultation and review process as the ATR policy underwent further changes, again with CCoC oversight. The draft ATR policy was submitted to Minister Valcourt early in 2014 and is still awaiting his approval.

## **NEXT STEPS – MOVING FORWARD**

- Development of an analysis of the Eyford report and ongoing advocacy relating to Comprehensive Claims Policy reform and the reconciliation and implementation of s. 35 rights.
- Advocacy and engagement in follow-up to the federal government's 5-year review of the *Specific Claims Tribunal Act* and the submission of the AFN's independent Expert Panel report.
- Ongoing advocacy regarding the Minister's review of the new ATR policy and related follow-up activities.





## ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

**The AFN seeks to support First Nations as leaders in the environment and to ensure access to information needed for sound decision-making and the exercise of First Nations' responsibilities.**

Key functions in this area have diminished with cuts to funding, but work continues on advocacy at the national and international levels to ensure a clear recognition and protection of First Nations' rights and title, information sharing, research and analysis, and knowledge dissemination to support First Nations. This has included an international submission on indicators for customary and sustainable use under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Environmental health issues, in particular, focus on generating knowledge, disseminating knowledge, and on advancing First Nations' rights and interests using knowledge on chemical exposure and other environmental health issues. This is accomplished through the First Nations Food, Nutrition and Environmental Health Study, the First Nations Environmental Health Innovation Network, and other policy-based processes such as the Chemicals Management Plan. The AFN also remains engaged with the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) to ensure First Nations have access to information for the long-term management of spent nuclear fuel waste.

### KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

#### **First Nations Food, Nutrition and Environment Study**

The First Nations Food, Nutrition and Environment Study (FNFNES) examines nutrition, traditional foods and environmental contaminants. The goal of FNFNES is to document food security and food safety issues, nutritional quality of the diet and the environmental health of First Nations citizens living on reserve. The intent is to provide information needed for the promotion of healthy environments and healthy foods for First Nations. A national baseline of background levels of key

environmental chemicals of concern and an assessment of diet quality of First Nations are this study's main objective. Results of this study are intended to be useful for the development of community-level dietary advice and food guidance for First Nations at the regional level. The information on background exposures to Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), toxic metals and pharmaceutical products is also essential for First Nations as an enabling foundation for any future food monitoring at the community level. Results of this study are also intended to empower communities to make informed decisions to address and mitigate environmental health risks. These results also included regional and national food security issues in First Nations communities.

The FNFNES is being conducted to assess the nutritional composition of First Nation diets and the environmental safety of traditional foods. To date, this study has completed data collection and subsequent reports in British Columbia, Manitoba and Ontario. In the winter of 2015, the FNFNES continued data collection in the Atlantic region and data analysis in the Alberta region. The data analysis in the Alberta region has been completed and the review of the draft community reports has nearly been completed. Initial contact for reporting back to the Alberta participating communities will be with key community representatives via conference call. The final report back process will take place after the release of the Alberta regional report/community reports with the general membership of the participating communities. In addition, the project is now working with Saskatchewan First Nations in anticipation of data collection in Saskatchewan in 2015. The methodology workshop preceding the implementation of FNFNES in Saskatchewan took place at the Wanuskewin Heritage Park in April 2015.

#### **First Nations Environmental Health Innovation Network**

One of the primary communication tools that the AFN uses to disseminate environmental health information and announcements, opportunities, documents and other Chemicals Management Plan information is the First Nations Environmental Health Innovation Network



(FNEHIN). This network is web-based and serves to connect First Nations with environmental health research tools, news, researchers, and funding opportunities. Website visits have exceeded 1,400 per month and continue to climb. A regular monthly e-newsletter is distributed to the contacts that have signed up through the website's subscription option. An example of the FNEHIN February 2015 E-Newsletter can be found at <http://www.fnehin.ca/e-newsletters/e-news-february-2015>.

FNEHIN provides a virtual platform that interconnects communities and researchers and has the objective of encouraging growth of knowledge and understanding of the impact of environmental conditions in a culturally-appropriate context.

The FNEHIN website ([fnehin.ca](http://fnehin.ca)) is a broadly valued resource for information dissemination on First Nations environmental health issues. There have been more than 24,000 visitors to the site since its inception in 2008. Providing information through the website, Facebook page, and newsletter highlights networking opportunities. This includes events, trainings, funding, and news from other communities. First Nations are brought together virtually and in person through tools such as the researcher database, LinkedIn and FNEHIN events. A FNEHIN Twitter account is expected to be launched in the 2015-2016 fiscal year.

### **Chemicals Management Plan**

The Chemicals Management Plan (CMP) is a Government of Canada initiative that is aimed at reducing the risks posed by chemicals to Canadians and their environment. The Government of Canada launched the first phase of the CMP in 2006 and subsequently launched a second phase in 2011.

The AFN signed a three-year contract with Health Canada to address the capacity concerns for First Nations involvement in the CMP. This is to be accomplished by disseminating information to First Nations regarding the CMP, supporting First Nations' perspectives into the CMP and undertaking other initiatives in order to raise awareness of the effects of chemical substances on human health and the environment and for capacity building for First Nations to participate within the CMP process.

### **Nuclear Fuel Waste**

The overall objective of the AFN engagement on nuclear waste is to ensure First Nations have access to information on the management of spent nuclear fuel as well as to ensure that the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO), industry and the Crown respect First Nations environments, peoples and rights. The AFN works on nuclear waste pursuant to AFN resolutions 51/2003 (Recognition of Nuclear Waste Management Organization Aboriginal and Treaty Right Obligations) and 39/2005 (Nuclear Waste Management Organization Dialogue Process). For 2014-2015, the AFN's engagement with the NWMO is focused on youth engagement.

Key work on the Nuclear Waste file has been focused on mobilization of a general youth engagement strategy, developed by the AFN Youth Council in 2013-2014. The NWMO is currently moving towards development of a deep geological repository (DGR) for the storage of high level nuclear waste. There are no First Nations communities which are currently under consideration to host a DGR; however a number of First Nations may be impacted by municipal sites currently under consideration. In addition, as the NWMO moves closer to selection of a site, the importance of engaging First Nations on transportation routes, supporting First Nations on consent issues, the safety of transporting spent nuclear fuel, and emergency measures related to transport, will increase in significance.

The AFN has prioritized work on the importance of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) relating to nuclear waste (and other issues) by working with a range of civil society organizations to organize a public forum on FPIC. The forum explored the legal foundations of FPIC, ways and means Indigenous peoples have used to implement FPIC, and implementation of FPIC within the corporate community.

### **NEXT STEPS – MOVING FORWARD**

- The training for the Nutrition Research Coordinators (NRCs) who will be implementing FNFNES in the participating Saskatchewan First Nations communities will take place in early August. The date for this training session has not yet been finalized.



- The Alberta region report-back process will begin (June-October 2015). Release of the Alberta Regional Report is planned for fall 2015.
- Research agreements with the participating Saskatchewan First Nations communities will be concluded from May-July 2015.
- Regularly maintain the FNEHIN website and Facebook page to continue to provide a successful virtual platform that interconnects communities and researchers and has the objective of encouraging growth of knowledge and understanding of the impact of environmental conditions in a culturally-appropriate context. Both mediums also serve as an information distribution mechanism to reach First Nations as well as general public.
- Set up a Twitter account for FNEHIN and maintain links with the website and Facebook page.
- Continue to work closely with both the Chemicals Management Plan (CMP) file and First Nations Food, Nutrition and Environment Study (FNFNES) file as the information accrued by both files closely relate to FNEHIN.
- Continue to build and maintain a CMP specific First Nations network and develop a First Nations Chemicals Management Way-Forward document / strategy.
- Re-examine the nature of the AFN-NWMO engagement, particularly as the NWMO moves into a new phase of its Adaptive Phase Management and community selection processes.
- Further engagement between the AFN Youth Council and the NWMO on further articulation and mobilization of First Nations Youth Engagement approaches for First Nations, industry and governments.



## FISHERIES

**Fisheries, aquatic and ocean resources continue to represent an integral part of the diet, socio-economic well-being and cultural survival of First Nations communities. First Nations depend on healthy watersheds in order to fully engage in economic activities like fishing, conservation of fish habitat, aquaculture, and other aquatic harvesting practices.**

The AFN's fisheries policy area works to promote First Nations' self-determination as related to aquatic resources management, fisheries governance and fisheries practices. The AFN continues to advocate for full engagement in the fisheries sector and for meaningful processes to ensure First Nations' input on fisheries legislation, policies, regulations, and management decisions.

The AFN National Fisheries Strategy responds to a broad spectrum of First Nations issues from coastal and inland areas. In accordance with the mandates received through resolutions, the strategy is aligned to respond, support and promote a broad range of priority issues by achieving a balance between sustainable economies, environmental protection and the assertion of Aboriginal rights. The centre piece of this work is focused on supporting First Nations rights to fish, to ensure that Canada recognizes and respects the inherent Aboriginal and Treaty Rights protected under the s. 35 rights of the *Constitution* and the Crown upholds the legal obligations consistent with case law.

The AFN National Fisheries Strategy continues developing with the guidance of the National Fisheries Committee (NFC) to support First Nation priorities in promoting sustainable fisheries through the recognition, protection and support for the implementation of their Aboriginal and Treaty rights. The strategy offers tools and a range of initiatives that support fisheries governance, access to resources, capacity building, and supportive activities, and continued advocacy on the implementation of Supreme Court decisions related to Aboriginal and Treaty rights to fish.

## KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

### Fisheries Act

*Fisheries Act* changes have amended some of Canada's most important environmental laws that enable them to align new policies and regulations with the government's Responsible Resource Development Plan. These policies will impact issues related to the governance and protection of aquatic resources and, in some cases, fast track project approvals on resource development and major projects. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) Fisheries Protection Provisions have been in force since November 25, 2013.

The AFN continues to provide information on policies and regulations created under amendments to the *Fisheries Act*. The AFN carried out technical briefings through an information session at the Special Chiefs Assembly in December 2014, in Winnipeg, and hosted an information session in Edmonton in January 2015. The AFN continues to advocate that the department carry out regional information sessions and conduct proper consultation processes with First Nations. The AFN will continue to provide information sessions on new developments and changes to the *Fisheries Act* during the 2015-16 year.

The impacts of changes to the Act may: (a) weaken the protection for First Nations fisheries and aquatic resources; (b) render liability unclear for damages to First Nations fisheries and aquatic resources; (c) alter the governance system from "proactive" (i.e., preventing pollution) to "reactive" (i.e., leaving it to First Nations to pursue legal options against proponents in the event of damages); (d) create a large degree of business uncertainty for activities in or near water ways (e.g., regulatory uncertainty issues for First Nations aquaculture projects or shoreline projects); and (e) potentially lower the reporting and compliance threshold for major projects.

Given the scope, content and limited engagement on the recent changes to the *Fisheries Act* and the diversity of First Nations within Canada, further discussions are





needed with rights holders to fully understand their impacts and implications. First Nations continue to express this concern, including the need for resources and capacity for inland and northern areas. As new policies and regulations emerge under the new changes to the *Fisheries Act*, First Nations are seeking capacity to identify potential infringements to their Aboriginal and Treaty Rights to fish. The AFN will continue to advocate for proper engagement, consultations and accommodation processes based on the principles of Free, Prior and Informed Consent as recognized by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

### **Aquatic Invasive Species**

On December 6, 2014, DFO published the new Aquatic Invasive Species Regulations (AIS) for a 30-day public comment period in the Canada Gazette Part 1. The proposed regulations aim to provide a suite of regulatory tools to prevent new introductions and manage the spread of aquatic invasive species. First Nations are concerned that aquatic invasive species will threaten the wild stocks that sustain their food, social and ceremonial fisheries and commercial rights.

Some of the key prohibitions within the proposed regulations include activities with import, transport, possession, and release of listed species within the regulation. Species will be added to the list by regulation which will require consultation and cost benefit analysis as well as risk assessment and capacity to administer prohibitions. The AFN will continue to disseminate information about this issue as it becomes available.

### **Species at Risk**

Environment Minister Leona Aglukkaq hosted a roundtable discussion on the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) in Ottawa on November 17, 2014. The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada posted its annual report on October 14, 2014, which included 15 aquatic species, and to which the government will post response statements shortly. These documents are available on the SARA Public Registry. The National Aboriginal Council on Species at Risk (NACOSAR) met in January 2015 in Ottawa. Chief Byron Louis sits on the NACOSAR for AFN. Currently, capacity funding has been pulled from National Aboriginal Organizations, and Environment Canada is assessing the role and function of NACOSAR. The AFN will continue to provide updates on the SARA relating to fisheries issues and disseminate information on aquatic species as it becomes available.

### **Aquaculture**

Several First Nations are well positioned to take advantage of the various aquaculture opportunities and have been successful in their business enterprises, whether shellfish or finfish farming. There are some First Nations who do not want specific aquaculture facilities in their territories who are taking up the battle to protect their wild salmon stocks. The AFN has several resolutions on aquaculture, including Resolution 83/2008, Strengthened and Renewed Mandate for the National Fisheries Strategy to fully share in Economic Opportunities; Resolution 66/2011, Successful Aquaculture Governance; and Resolution 46/2011, Duty to Consult on Aquaculture. In response this direction, the AFN is looking at establishing a Working Group that can engage on strategies to move forward on all aspects of aquaculture. It is anticipated that there will be future discussions to move these mandates forward.

### **DFO Aquaculture Activities Regulations**

The DFO Aquaculture Activities Regulations (AAR) were posted on the Canada Gazette with a 60-day comment period that ended on October 22, 2014, which allows the aquaculture industry to apply for an authorization from the Minister to exempt them from section 36 of the *Fisheries Act*. The Minister can issue a permit which will allow for the “deposit deleterious substances” into aquaculture facilities.

With limited engagement with First Nations, the AFN recommended that further discussions take place with First Nations to understand the potential impacts of depositing deleterious substances into aquaculture facilities. The AFN also recommended that the DFO extend the comment period to at least 90 days and continue efforts to undertake a transparent engagement process that provides explanations, definitions and processes to provide meaningful input for interested First Nations.

Along with the Atlantic Policy Congress (APC) and BC First Nation Fisheries Council (BCFNC), the AFN provided comments on the proposed AAR through the Canada Gazette, Part I process. There has been minimal DFO interaction with groups in central Canada. The AFN continues to provide updates and technical briefings on new developments and advocates for fully funded consultation processes with rights holders for the inland, north and coastal areas.





### Inland Fisheries

DFO has not funded Aboriginal capacity programs for inland regions. This has caused a major impediment in obtaining input, research and capacity from inland areas and northern regions. Without basic capacity, these regions are unable to effectively respond or participate in the various processes that may affect the governance, management and conservation of fish habitat policies and regulations.

Inland commercial fisheries in Canada are also linked to a Crown Corporation known as the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation (FFMC), which forces Aboriginal fishers to sell their fish to one processing plant that holds a monopoly as a market broker. A range of issues associated with the history of the FFMC has caused some prairie provinces to pull out of the FFMC, while others are looking for alternate ways to sell their fish outside the FFMC.

Inland Fisheries are interested in developing a First Nation Fisheries Co-op and inter-tribal trade between nations in North America. The AFN continues to urge DFO to create a new inland program or transparent engagement processes that provide mechanisms for dialogue that can address potential infringements on their Aboriginal and Treaty rights.

### National Fisheries Committee and National Fisheries Strategy

The AFN has updated the 1998 National Fisheries Committee (NFC) Terms of Reference to respond to Resolution 31/2014 that directs the AFN to clarify the composition, mandate and structure of the NFC to ensure that any approach to fisheries respects Treaties and sovereignty for all interested First Nations. The AFN Executive Committee will review the updated 2015 Terms of Reference for approval once finalized.

The AFN has also developed a draft work plan for the National Fisheries Strategy 2015-20 that aims to coordinate, facilitate, engage, and share information in several key areas to support First Nation governance in fisheries. Over the next year, the AFN will provide updates on regulatory and policy development on fisheries and habitat protection, Aquaculture, and Aquatic Invasive Species, the *Species at Risk Act*, and other federal regulatory and policy reforms. The AFN will continue

to provide secretariat support to the NFC and promote advocacy with continued communication and outreach.

The AFN will also work to develop a number of resource materials and user-friendly guidance documents within a multi-year strategy, as well as a five-year, long-term strategy.

## NEXT STEPS – MOVING FORWARD

### Legislative Reform

- The AFN will continue to develop various briefing materials and tools to navigate through the *Fisheries Act* changes and other legislative reforms, and advocate for specific resources for First Nation engagement and consultations.
- The AFN will continue to update National Fisheries Committee and other information networks through timely communication.

### Inland and Northern Fisheries

- The AFN is supportive of the development of an inland fisheries roundtable to discuss issues identified by their regions. The AFN continues to advocate for regional engagement and consultation processes for inland and northern First Nations.

### National Fisheries Committee

- The AFN will develop a multi-year strategy, as well as a five-year, long-term strategy based on regional priorities, guided by input provided from the National Fisheries Committee.
- The AFN will continue to promote and support the development of sustainable First Nation fisheries and other aquatic resources, which includes advocating for sound environmental practices, identifying economic development opportunities, and exploring revenue sharing regimes consistent with First Nations fisheries governance regimes.



## ACHIEVING CHANGE FOR FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

First Nations families are the core of our communities and must be supported through high quality, culturally and linguistically responsive education, culturally appropriate child welfare approaches, improved community well-being and full economic participation. First Nations people all over Turtle Island are acting now for change. As the youngest and fastest-growing population, First Nations are the leaders of today and will create the changes that must occur to ensure a better future for all of us. Collectively, we must work with and support First Nations in the rebuilding of families, clans, communities, and nations through social wellness and lifelong learning. Only then will we have an opportunity to overcome the effects of the residential school system and to restore our relationships with each other and the natural world.



## EDUCATION

### KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

#### First Nations Education Legislation

On February 7, 2014 Prime Minister Harper announced \$1.9 billion in funding for First Nations education. This included new core funding of \$1.25 billion from 2016-2017 to 2018-2019 and then increasing 4.5% annually; \$160 million starting in 2015-2016 over four years for systems development; and \$500 million over seven years beginning in 2015-2016 for infrastructure.

On April 10, 2014, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) introduced Bill C-33: *First Nations Control of First Nations Education* in the House of Commons.

On May 27, 2014, the Chiefs-in-Assembly passed Resolution 01/2014 (Advancing First Nations Control of First Nations Education), which rejected Bill C-33 and called upon the government to withdraw it immediately. The resolution also called upon the Government of Canada to negotiate a new fiscal framework and immediately release the \$1.9 billion with a 4.5% escalator until such a time as a new fiscal framework is agreed upon.

With the passage of Resolution 35/2014, First Nation leadership across Canada accepted the *Framework for a Federal Act for Funding First Nations Education*, the *First Nations-Federal Crown Terms of Reference on Federal Act Funding for First Nations Education*, and the *First Nations Processes – Federal Act for Funding First Nation Education* as working documents and the chosen path forward for First Nations education.

Resolution 35/2014 articulates that Chiefs-in-Assembly:

- Call for the implementation of the aforementioned documents through the activities and timelines therein.
- Call for the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Chief, with the assistance of the Chiefs Committee on Education (CCOE), to bring this proposal to the Government of Canada as an official outreach to

engage on an honourable process as outlined in the Framework and Terms of Reference.

- Require that First Nations Processes for decision-making as outlined in the *First Nation Processes – Federal Act for Funding First Nation Education* document be strictly adhered to throughout this process.
- Require the resulting draft *Federal Act for Funding First Nations Education* be ratified by the Chiefs-in-Assembly before being introduced into the federal House of Commons.
- Understand that the implementation of this resolution is contingent upon both the removal of Bill C-33 from the legislative process and a favourable response from the federal government of Canada and their provision of sufficient funding to undertake activities as outlined in the aforementioned documents.
- Demand that Canada honours their Constitutional obligation to the Treaty right to education.

On January 28, 2015 the National Chief met with Prime Minister Harper to share his priorities on closing the gap between First Nations and the rest of Canada as demonstrated by the United Nations Human Development Index. The National Chief lobbied for a new honourable process to address the underfunding of First Nations education, as well as seeking the commitment of the Prime Minister not to re-profile the education funding announced in budget 2014. A letter dated February 11, 2015 was sent to the Prime Minister re-affirming the issues raised in the meeting of January 28, 2015.

The AFN continues to call upon the federal government engage in an honourable process on First Nations education, to protect the \$1.2 billion in funding identified in Budget 2014 and to have this funding provided immediately to support First Nations schools. These efforts are also being made through various key meetings and with media at every opportunity.



On December 11, 2014 the federal government re-confirmed its 2014 budget commitment of \$500 million over seven years for school repair and construction set to begin in 2015-2016. Following the 2015 Budget, officials have confirmed the funding committed to First Nations education remains in the fiscal framework, but written confirmation has not been provided.

### Education Funding Human Rights Challenge

The AFN has worked with the First Nations Education Council (FNEC), Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN), the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN), and the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society (FNCFC) to prepare a Human Rights complaint pursuant to Section 5 of the *Canadian Human Rights Act*. The issue is that First Nations children and youth living on reserve and attending on-reserve schools across Canada are denied access to the same standard and quality of primary and secondary education programs and services to that available to children and youth living off reserve. This discrimination is historic, systemic and ongoing and affects approximately 70,000 First Nations children and young people. It is believed that potential success in the human rights case on discriminatory funding for First Nations child welfare will set a positive precedent for an education challenge.

The FNEC has taken the lead to encourage a Human Rights Complaint on Education regarding inequitable funding to First Nations schools, in conjunction with the AFN and other organizations, and has requested support from other First Nations across Canada. There is hope that more First Nations organizations will join the coalition to pursue this complaint. This tentative Human Rights Complaint has yet to be filed.

### Post-Secondary Education

Despite the fact that the AFN has not received any funding for First Nations post-secondary education over the past two fiscal years, it continues to monitor and advocate for First Nations students and communities.

In March 2010, the Government of Canada first announced plans to review the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP). Despite many discussions within the federal government on this issue, there are no changes to the program at this point.

In 2014-15, the administration of the Indian Studies Support Program (ISSP) component of the Post-Secondary Education (PSE) program was transferred from regional administration to headquarters. The program is now called the Post-Secondary Partnerships Program (PSPP) and the implications of this decision are troubling. The process evaluates proposals against national government priorities and federal labour market needs. There are no assurances that local and regional priorities will be addressed. PSPP funds are used to support the delivery of accredited post-secondary programs. This funding has long been an important funding source for Indigenous institutions of higher learning (IIHLs), capacity building programs for First Nations councils and organizations, and key First Nations programs at post-secondary institutions. The AFN will continue to monitor the impact of this change in the federal program.

The AFN strongly supports the broad application of the Indigenous Accord across elementary, secondary and post-secondary education. The AFN has finalized its work with the Association of Canadian Community Colleges on the development of the Indigenous Education Protocol for its members. This is similar to an Indigenous Accord created by Canadian Deans of Education in 2010. The Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada is currently exploring the expansion of the Indigenous Accord to the entire university sector. The Ontario Public School Boards' Association has embraced and agreed to promote national application of an Accord for elementary/secondary education.





### **First Nations Regional Early Childhood, Education, and Employment Survey (FNREES)**

Further to Resolution 19/2011, the First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC), in collaboration with the CCOE and National Indian Education Council (NIEC), and other national partners, was identified to implement a survey in 2013-2014 on early childhood development, education and employment for on-reserve and northern First Nations communities that is compliant with OCAP principles and incorporates a holistic framework. The FNREES survey staff are now collecting data in the field.

Preliminary results of the survey are scheduled to be released at the FNIGC National Conference being held November 17-19, 2015, with the final report due by March 2016.

### **First Nations Languages**

The AFN continues to highlight the need for more support for First Nations languages and culturally-relevant education. In recent years the AFN has released two key reports dealing with languages and improved education outcomes:

*First Nations Languages and Improving Student Outcomes* provides a review of current language research to examine whether language immersion or being taught in Indigenous languages facilitates the development of language and cognitive abilities, including mental flexibility, abstract thinking, and problem solving. This project provides an inventory of evidence from local, national and international sites to support Indigenous language immersion and instruction as a significant factor for improved outcomes for learners in all subject areas.

*Soul of Sovereignty: The Impact of Culturally Responsive Education on the Academic Achievement of First Nations Students* explores the importance and impact of culturally-competent teachers utilizing First Nations cultural knowledge in the elementary and secondary school experience for creating optimal learning environments so that students can maximize their learning potential and move successfully through a lifelong learning curve.

Revitalizing Indigenous languages is a key priority of the National Chief and he has raised this with the Prime Minister, all Premiers, as well as various education entities. The importance of supporting Indigenous languages was also highlighted in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

In addition, the AFN continues to monitor the work of the United Nations Expert Mechanism on the Study of Language and Culture and provide relevant documentation. Approximately 90 key documents dealing with First Nations languages and education are posted on the AFN website.

### **Early Childhood Education (ECE)**

An electronic network of First Nations Early Childhood Educators throughout Canada has been established. It is critical to continue to elevate the discussion on First Nations access to early childhood development and early childhood education programs which reflect First Nations identities and languages. Through the electronic network, the AFN provided information to brief the newly established Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) ECE Working Group to highlight issues in First Nations ECE.

### **Special Education and Student Support Services**

An analysis of a Special Education comparability report commissioned by AANDC and released during the fall of 2012 reveals that several of its recommendations may enable First Nations to provide comparable levels of inclusive second and third level supports. While not as comprehensive as a full review of Special Education on reserve might be, the report may be useful for updating and amending the Special Education Program (SEP) terms and conditions which have essentially been the same since the program was first introduced in 2003 and strengthening the case for appropriate special education programming for First Nations schools. The analysis includes the above commentary and is in the process of being finalized as an AFN response to the Department and to stakeholders.

The AFN is also working to support the National Board of the Youth Solvent Addiction Committee (YSAC) to advocate for SEP funding for students housed within these centres.





**It's Our Time First Nations Education Tool Kit**

Grounded in the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and reinforcing First Nations teachings and values, this tool kit is part of a comprehensive strategy to reach out to First Nation students, teachers, schools, and the public to create a greater awareness and understanding of First Nations' rights, histories, and cultures. It has been successfully piloted in select First Nations and non-First Nations schools in Manitoba and a full implementation plan is tentatively scheduled for the fall.

**NEXT STEPS – MOVING FORWARD**

- Continued work supporting First Nations in their efforts to further Treaty and inherent rights to education and First Nations Control of First Nations Education which includes:
  - equitable and sustainable funding for First Nations education within a lifelong learning context;
  - quality of education based on First Nations driven education systems;
  - change reflective of regional diversities;
  - First Nations driven timelines and priorities; and,
  - First Nations Language recognition and revitalization.
- Heightened advocacy in all forums for investments and programs to support revitalization of First Nations languages.
- Work to ensure that First Nations' histories, Treaties and rights, and current realities are incorporated into all school curricula.



## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

**Social development priorities pursued by the AFN follow the mandate outlined by the Social Development Policy Framework, which proposes the long-term vision of “Healthy, safe and sustainable First Nation communities by way of an inclusive, holistic and culturally-based social development system that promotes control and jurisdiction.”**

This is clearly articulated and supported through National Chief Bellegarde’s vision of *Closing the Gap*, of ensuring that First Nations have the tools and capacity to thrive, enabled by respectful fiscal and political relationships.

The impacts of federal underfunding and failure to respect these relationships have resulted in levels of child and family poverty many times the Canadian average; exceptionally high incidences of First Nation children-in-care; family violence; substance abuse; youth suicides; and chronic reliance on income assistance. In order to increase the economic and social participation and quality of life of First Nations peoples, fundamental changes are required to address the root causes and structural barriers that have impeded progress to date. Specific recommendations and calls to action for Canada to address these root causes have increased in prominence over the last year, and include reports by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the United Nations Committee to End All Forms of Violence Against Women and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

### KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

#### Income Assistance

First Nations need to be fully informed and engaged in all legislation, policies and programs that affect their lives. Directed by Resolution 37/2011, the AFN continues to call on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) to properly consult and negotiate with First Nations on the development of new policies where it relates to the Income Assistance Policy. Resolution 27/2014, directed the AFN to support the efforts of

the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi’kmaq Chiefs in their deliberations with AANDC on the negotiation of a sectoral agreement in self-government, respecting social development. The AFN has called on the Government of Canada to work with the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi’kmaq Chiefs, with the objective of developing a sectoral agreement in self-government, respecting social development.

The AFN Social Development Unit continues to support First Nations and monitor the implementation of the Enhanced Service Delivery and First Nations Jobs Fund programs which are aimed at First Nations youth between the ages of 19-24 and receiving Income Assistance. These programs are jointly delivered through AANDC and Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). The program is currently in its third year of four and according to the latest data from AANDC, delivered through 22 service centres reaching over 70 First Nations communities.

#### Assisted Living

The AFN has produced a scan of navigator models and outlined a menu of options for improving proactive client care along in First Nations assisted living; along with an analysis of each model’s potential for success based on First Nations’ experience within the Assisted Living program.

#### Family Violence Prevention

The AFN continued to press throughout the pre-budget process and the Alternative Federal Budget for increased investments in shelters and safe houses in First Nations communities. The February 27, 2015 National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls was an opportunity to raise root causes and core issues that contribute to family violence and call on all governments to work together to prevent and respond appropriately to violence when it occurs.



### Child Welfare

The AFN and the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society (FNCFCS) filed a human rights complaint on February 5, 2007, arguing that the federal government is discriminating against First Nations children by failing to provide equitable and culturally-based services on reserve. Over the past year, documents provided to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT) confirmed AANDC's underfunding of communities and that funding is continually re-allocated and taken from infrastructure budgets to supplement child welfare and social development programs. This is an unsustainable and unacceptable standard of practice, that coupled with the 2% cap on funding for essential services to First Nations, serves to undermine capacity and quality of life. The CHRT concluded its hearing into the complaint as of October 2014. A decision is expected in the fall of 2015.

### Jordan's Principle

The AFN, along with researchers from McGill University, in collaboration with UNICEF Canada, the Canadian Associations of Paediatric Health Centres, and the Canadian Paediatric Society as part of the Jordan's Principle Working Group, released *Without denial, delay, or disruption: Ensuring First Nations children's access to equitable services through Jordan's Principle*. This report reveals how bureaucratic confusion among provincial, territorial and federal governments results in First Nations children being denied necessary care and that Jordan's Principle is not being applied where it should.

The report and its recommendations underscore the critical need for a true "child first principle" of care, that would ensure equitable treatment of First Nations children as are articulated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and other federal, provincial, territorial and First Nations legislation and agreements.

### NEXT STEPS – MOVING FORWARD

- Work with provinces, territories, social justice and international partners on *Closing the Gap* in First Nations well-being outcomes that has resulted from underfunding and inappropriate fiscal and political relationships.
- Create tools to develop and enhance the capacity of social assistance providers to support clients access benefits and services.
- Build on national and international attention to rates of violence against Indigenous women and girls to push for increased investments in shelters, and the creation of prevention and awareness tools, such as the AFN video entitled "Live a Life of Integrity: Teachings and Lessons from Indigenous Male Role Models".
- Continue to seek equality for First Nations children in care, and follow-up on the results of the challenge to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal which are anticipated in the fall 2015.
- Create awareness and advance recommendations made in the recently released Jordan's Principle report *Without denial, delay or disruption: Ensuring First Nations children's access to equitable services through Jordan's Principle*.



## INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

**The AFN continues to play a central role advocating for the full implementation of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA) and to achieve the overarching principles of healing and reconciliation for former Indian Residential School (IRS) students, their families and Canadians.**

### KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

Implementation of the IRSSA is in the final stages of its mandate. The AFN continues advocacy work on behalf of former IRS students and their families as liaisons with service providers to facilitate the healing and reconciliation. National Chief Perry Bellegarde celebrated with former students and their families in Alert Bay, British Columbia in February 2015 to commemorate the demolition of the St. Michael's Indian Residential School.

#### Common Experience Payment

The Common Experience Payment (CEP) is the first individual compensation program in the IRSSA, to be paid to all eligible former students who resided at a recognized IRS. A Trust Fund of \$1.9 billion was set aside to pay out the CEP, as well as the Personal Credits if there remained a surplus of \$40 million. The December 31, 2012 audit of the Trust Fund indicated a \$323 million surplus, triggering the Personal Credits process.

There are 78,750 Survivors that were eligible for the CEP. There are a number of applications to add schools to the IRSSA currently before the courts and, if granted eligibility status, those former Indian Residential School (IRS) students would still be eligible for the CEP, Independent Assessment Process (IAP), and Personal Credits as well as ongoing participation in TRC or Commemoration activities.

#### Personal Credits

A one-time Personal Credit of \$3,000 (no cash value) was made available to CEP recipients, redeemable for either personal or group educational services provided at approved educational entities or groups. Justice Brown of the BC Supreme Court issued an Order on January 7, 2015 that established new deadlines for the Personal Credits, as follows:

- March 9, 2015 – Deadline to submit Acknowledgement Forms.
- June 8, 2015 – Deadline to submit Redemption Forms.
- August 7, 2015 – All invoices for Personal Credits are to be paid by Canada.
- August 31, 2015 – Deadline for Education/Group applications.

The AFN has four full-time regional liaisons to ensure that eligible CEP recipients are aware of the availability of Personal Credits and the application process to redeem the Credits. There have been many issues expressed with the timelines and administrative burden presented by this process. The AFN is working to assist eligible recipients as much as possible through this period and to advocate for appropriate responses to their needs and concerns.

Under the terms of the IRSSA, following the payment of Personal Credits to all eligible CEP recipients, including administration costs, all excess funds remaining in the Designated Amount Fund (DAF) will be transferred to the National Indian Brotherhood Trust Fund (NIBTF) and Inuvialuit Education Fund (IEF) to be used for educational programs under terms and conditions agreed to between Canada, NIBTF and IEF.

The AFN has established the NIB Trust Fund with an independent Board of Directors that will be responsible for administering the Trust Fund following payout of the Personal Credits. The Terms and Conditions, as well as the Administration Plan for use of these funds, were approved by the NIBTF Board on May 26, 2015. The aforementioned documents still require court approval before any funds from the DAF can be transferred to the NIBTF.



### Independent Assessment Process

The IAP is the second individual compensation program available to former students and others who were harmed at an Indian Residential School covered by the IRSSA. The IAP resolves claims of sexual abuse, serious physical abuse and other wrongful acts causing serious psychological injury. It is administered by the Indian Residential School Adjudication Secretariat (IRSAS), a quasi-judicial tribunal that operates independently from the parties to IRSSA, including the Government of Canada. A total of 37,965 IAP applications were received by the September 19, 2012 deadline, over three times the original estimate. IRSAS expects to complete IAP hearings by spring 2016 and post-hearing work by spring 2018.

As of April 30, 2015, 84% of received IAP applications have been resolved and 16% are still in progress. There have been 24,643 IAP hearings and 3,789 negotiated settlements held with a total compensation of \$2.789 billion paid out, an amount that includes lawyers' fees and disbursements.

In protecting the interests of former students, the AFN has participated in a number of hearings before the court relating to the ongoing implementation of IAP. These interventions included:

- a) **Blott and Company:** The Court Monitor reported that 77 Blott IAP claimants had received over 380 loans from various lenders for which directions to pay had been accepted or facilitated by Blott. Taking all fees and interest charges into account, it appears that 73% of these loans exceeded the criminal interest rate of 60% per annum. The BC Supreme Court decided that the integrity of the IAP and the protection of the clients required a complete transfer of files to other legal counsel. The Court ordered the removal of David Blott, David Blott Professional Corporation, Blott & Company, and any associated entity from the current or future representation of claimants in the IAP or any other process embodied in the settlement.
- b) **Manitoba Form Fillers:** Certain form fillers were retained to assist IAP claimants complete their application forms. Some of these form fillers were associated with law firms. From the evidence present to the court, IAP claimants would be charged between a 15% to 30% contingency fee to their lawyers, plus a 15% to 25% fee to the form fillers. The Manitoba Court of Queen's Bench ruled that certain (albeit large) categories of form filling contracts are in fact illegal and unenforceable. Even if not illegal, other contracts may be unconscionable and therefore voidable at the option of claimant signatories. The court held that IAP claimants are entitled to enter into contracts with form fillers for services other than legal services, so long as they are not on a contingency fee or assignment basis.
- c) **St. Anne's IRS:** St Anne's Indian Residential School is located in Fort Albany, Ontario on James Bay. St. Anne's was the site of some of the most egregious incidents of abuse within the Indian Residential School system. The Ontario Provincial Police began its investigation of St. Anne's residential school in 1992 and completed it in 1996. The OPP were given approximately 992 signed statements from about 700-750 people. In 1997, the OPP laid charges against seven former employees of St. Anne's. Canada came to be in the possession of copies of some, but perhaps not all of the OPP documents, and it failed to include information in the St. Anne's school narrative and persons of interest (POI) reports. The Ontario Superior Court of Justice ordered Canada to produce the OPP documents in its possession, the transcripts concerning incidents of abuse at St. Anne's and such other documents that do comply with the proper reading and interpretation of Canada's disclosure obligations under Appendix VIII to those preparing the Narratives and the POI Reports.
- d) **Bronstein:** The Monitor brought a Request for Direction before the court in relation to the IAP practice of Stephen Bronstein and Bronstein & Company. The BC Supreme Court agreed with the Monitor that Bronstein's conduct fell below the standard expected of legal professionals representing clients under the Settlement Agreement, and in particular, in the IAP. However, in response to these proceedings, Bronstein has demonstrated that it is capable of revising its practice in order to reach acceptable standards. Thus, the Court allowed Bronstein to continue to participate in the IAP, but under the continued supervision of its Practice Advisor who will continue to update the court on its progress. The Court noted that this was no exoneration of Bronstein, as the evidence convinced the court that were it not for the intervention of





the Monitor and the court itself, Bronstein would not have reached these acceptable standards. This decision is under appeal.

- e) **IAP Records:** The Chief Adjudicator of the IAP and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission each brought a Request for Directions about what is to happen to documents produced and prepared for the IAP (“IAP Documents”) once the IAP process comes to an end. The court was asked to determine if the documents are of historical value and be retained in archives or should they be destroyed. The Ontario Superior Court of Justice concluded that IAP Claimants were not advised of their option to archive a transcript during the early years of the IAP. As such the court ordered that all IAP records be destroyed, but only after a 15-year retention period, during which the former students of the Indian Residential Schools may choose to spare some of their documents from destruction and instead have the documents with redactions to protect the personal information of others transferred to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (“NCTR”). This decision is currently under appeal with the Ontario Court of Appeal.
- f) **Bishop Horden IRS:** Nine IAP claimants filed a Request for Directions seeking the production of records relating to Bishop Horden IRS. The Claimants allege that, based on their recollection, in the 1960s a number of adult supervisors were dismissed and/or criminally charged with various offenses. However, the school narratives and person of interest reports for Bishop Horden IRS do not include any information on these events. The hearing was held in May of 2015 and the parties are waiting for the Ontario Superior Court of Justice to render a decision.

#### **Day Scholars & Day School Class Action**

Tk'emlups te Secwepemc and Sechelt (Shíshálh) First Nation launched a class action for Day Scholars from their respective communities. A certification hearing took place before the Federal Court of Canada from April 13 - 20, 2015 regarding a proposed class proceeding for students who attended Indian Residential Schools as day scholars. Both the Tk'emlups te Secwepemc and Shíshálh Indian Bands initiated the application on behalf of all Aboriginal children who attended Indian Residential Schools as day scholars – returning home every night to their families. National

Chief Bellegarde and the AFN Executive showed their support and attended the opening of the Day Scholars litigation in April 2015 in Vancouver, and participated in a feast honouring the survivors hosted by the Squamish First Nation.

The class action law suit, which was certified on June 4, 2015, seeks compensation for those Day Scholars as they suffered the same loss of language and connection to culture as those who were resident at the schools. The suit alleges that these losses were an intentional aspect of Canada's education policy and caused serious and life-long harm to the survivors.

Resolution 21/2011 passed at Annual General Assembly in Moncton called on the AFN to provide moral, political, legal, and financial support as able to the Tk'emlups te Secwepemc and Sechelt First Nation Day Scholars and Day Students Class Action and other legal actions, using available and appropriate means such as the First Nations Rights Fund. The AFN will continue to provide political support to the Tk'emlups te Secwepemc and Sechelt First Nation Day Scholars and Day Students.

#### **Commemoration**

Commemoration is another component of the IRSSA that supported regional and national activities that honoured, educated, remembered and/or paid tribute to former IRS students, their families and communities. The Commemoration Fund, a \$20 million fund, was jointly managed by AANDC and the TRC. Funding was allocated to 144 projects, including a joint project by the AFN and the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (AHF).

Resolution 26/2010 directed the AFN to work to ensure commemorative markers were in place for each and every Indian Residential School where First Nations children were placed. The AFN and the AHF worked on a national framework to establish 139 commemorative monuments for each IRS recognized in the IRSSA.

Funding for this initiative provided for tasks performed both centrally and regionally – in and by communities and overseen by a Steering and Advisory Committee. While the AFN resolution initially defined the project as one that is exclusively First Nations in character, as a national initiative the AFN acknowledged that many Inuit and Métis children attended Indian Residential Schools and



their communities and families experienced losses akin to those suffered by First Nations.

The AFN established protocols with these organizations to ensure their active participation and support of the project. The AHF, as a partner, was also focused on healing the legacy of the residential schools for all those affected and as such was wholly inclusive in its approach.

In March 2014, five Indigenous artists came together to design the monument to honour IRS survivors. These monuments have been cast in bronze and sent to 139 communities – one for each Residential School site across Canada. Grants were given to hold Commemoration Events to inform the community about the marker, to discuss where it would be placed and how the community would use their online commemoration page.

The AFN, the AHF and the Geomatics and Cartographic Research Centre at Carleton University collaborated to create the IRS Virtual Commemoration Map to gather precise geographic information on each of the IRSSA-recognized schools and to create a space online for virtual commemoration for communities to share stories, photos and videos. The virtual map was designed to integrate and display community-contributed and controlled information on an ongoing basis. Mapping the locations of IRS was challenging as some schools have been demolished, making their physical traces difficult to locate. Others are still standing and have been re-purposed. The National IRS Mapping Project was launched in fall of 2013 to help map those IRS locations and is an ongoing project.

### Truth & Reconciliation Commission

The TRC was created through the IRSSA to produce and submit to the Parties of the Agreement a report including recommendations to the Government of Canada concerning the IRS system and experience including: the history, purpose, operation and supervision of the IRS system, the effect and consequences of IRS (including systemic harms, inter-generational consequences and the impact of human dignity) and the ongoing legacy of the residential schools.

The TRC released an Interim Report in February 2012 which contained 20 recommendations including: funding for increased public education, the need for resources to support the promotion of First Nations languages and

cultures, enhancement of mental health support services, and using the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a framework for working towards reconciliation between First Nations and all Canadians. A Document Collection Working Group continues efforts to ensure that all relevant documents are available to the TRC to carry out its mandate. A Public Education Working Group continues to meet to discuss ways to promote the TRC's work as well as raise the profile of IRS in the public view. Both the work of the National Events Working Group and the All Party Coordinating Committee has been concluded.

The TRC was originally scheduled to have completed its mandate on June 14, 2014; however, this was extended to June 30, 2015 to allow for additional time for writing of the Final Reports as well as receiving documents from the Library and Archives Canada.

The TRC held a national closing event in Ottawa from May 31, 2015 to June 3, 2015 where a summary of the Final Report was released, along with 94 Calls to Action that call on Canada and all Canadians and governments to work on together on a comprehensive plan to close the gap in child welfare, education, health and justice outcomes; support Indigenous languages; for all governments to fully adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; and to jointly develop a new Royal Proclamation and Covenant of Reconciliation to collaboratively advance reconciliation in Canadian society. The AFN will push for all parties to formally commit to a plan to learn from the TRC findings and implement the Calls to Action.



Reconciliation Canada, a charitable project to promote reconciliation by engaging Canadians in dialogue that revitalizes the relationship between Aboriginal people and all Canadians, held events alongside the TRC final event and will continue this conversation in the future.

### Health Supports

Health Canada's Indian Residential Schools Resolution Health Support Program (IRS RHSP) provides mental health and emotional support services to former IRS students and their families before, during and after their participation in the Settlement Agreement processes. Health Canada continues to receive a \$65 million annual budget to deliver this program.

The Aboriginal Healing Foundation, which received a \$125 million endowment for five years to continue healing programs, closed on September 30, 2014. The 11 Healing Centres and five pilot projects funded by the AHF closed on December 31, 2013. The closing of the AHF has had and continues to have a devastating impact on the health and well-being of former IRS students and their families.

Resolution 18/2012 requests that the AFN provide support and assistance to seek ways for the Healing Centre programs to continue their valuable work with former IRS students. The Healing Centres have experienced a demand in services resulting from the IAP deadline as well as the TRC and Commemoration events, all which trigger trauma that requires treatment provided by the Centres. The IAP process has provisions for post-IAP wellness plans that could include specialized treatment programming such as the programs offered by the Healing Centres. Current alcohol and drug treatment programming staff are not trained to deal with trauma related to Indian Residential School issues. Normally there are long waiting lists at alcohol and drug treatment programming before anyone can access the services. The Healing Centres provide essential services to support healing, wellness and reconciliation among former IRS students, their families and within their communities.

### Advocacy & Partnerships (APIP)

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) administered the Advocacy and Public Information Program (APIP), a contribution funding program to support the sharing of information and to ensure that Aboriginal communities and former students and their families, are aware of all aspects of the IRSSA.

From 2007-2013, over \$26 million has been invested in 138 regional and national projects across Canada. In 2013-2014, AANDC entered into agreements with nine organizations for a total of \$1.34 million. APIP funding is no longer available for IRS work.

Former IRS students still require regional supports as they navigate their way through a complex IAP process as well as a complicated Personal Credits process. The loss of regional funding puts greater pressure on national organizations whose funding was also cut. The frustration felt by former IRS students and their families is not conducive to the overall goals of healing and reconciliation in the IRSSA.

## NEXT STEPS – MOVING FORWARD

- Seek commitment from all parties and governments to work with First Nations to review and learn from the work of the TRC and implement the Calls to Action for reconciliation.
- Continued support and advocacy for justice for Day Scholars and Day School students.
- Continued advocacy with and for the Healing Centres to meet the ongoing specialized treatment programming needs of former IRS students.
- Continued engagement in the implementation of the roll-out of the Personal Credits in the IRSSA as well as active involvement in ensuring the NIBTF carries out its responsibilities with any surplus funds transferred to the Trust Fund.
- Continued advocacy, as directed by AFN Executive, to protect the interests of former IRS students in Requests for Direction with the courts.
- Commitment to review the TRC Calls to Action and Final Report documents
- Continue obtaining information on IRS sites for the IRS Mapping Project and ongoing virtual commemoration.



## SAFE, SECURE AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

SSSC is comprised of areas supporting First Nation priorities in health, community and economic development, and safety of First Nations. SSSC spans a broad spectrum of activity aimed at supporting First Nations in their priorities to advance and increase First Nations' control over the development and delivery of programs, services, incentives, and policy development. Team activity generally includes:

- advocating for improved housing outcomes, increased resources for community infrastructure, and facilitating emergency management responses, mitigation, preparedness, and recovery;
- health policy analysis, communications, and advocacy to increase opportunities for First Nations to participate in and influence national health policy, health systems and programs. The critical objective driving this work is to support the protection, maintenance, promotion, support and advocate for the inherent, treaty and constitutional rights, (w)holistic health and well-being of our Nations; and
- supporting First Nation economic priorities and development principles, such as advancing sustainable/ responsible development, trade, procurement, and labour market/ labour force development.

In addition, SSSC provides technical support for AFN sustainability, sport and taxation discussions.





## HEALTH

### NON-INSURED HEALTH BENEFITS

The Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) Program provides benefit coverage for registered Indians and recognized Inuit on a limited range of medically necessary health-related goods and services that include pharmacy (certain prescription and over the counter drugs), medical supplies and equipment, vision care, dental services, medical transportation, crisis counselling, and approved services out of the country (for students and migrant workers). The AFN continues to make progress in addressing Resolution 56/2012, which called for a moratorium on cuts to the NIHB program until such time as the AFN and the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB) can conduct a joint review of NIHB in order to articulate shortcomings and identify potential efficiencies.

### KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

With direction from the National First Nations Health Technicians Network (NFNHTN) and the Chiefs Committee on Health (CCOH), the AFN has undertaken a renewed campaign to demand fundamental changes to the NIHB program. Last year the AFN advanced development of a National Action Plan on NIHB through regional roundtables, a national forum on NIHB and numerous engagement opportunities with leadership and technicians including a dialogue session at the 2014 Annual General Assembly in Halifax. At the Special Chiefs Assembly (SCA) in December 2014, the Chiefs-in-Assembly voted to make the Draft Action Plan a living document (Resolution 13/2014), enabling ongoing work on the activities within the Action Plan.

A booklet entitled *Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB): A Year in Review (2013-2014). What has been done and where are we going?* was produced and distributed at the December 2014 SCA to provide an overview of some of the work that has been completed. The booklet is also available on the AFN website at: [http://health.afn.ca/uploads/files/nihb\\_sca\\_booklet\\_final\\_en.pdf](http://health.afn.ca/uploads/files/nihb_sca_booklet_final_en.pdf). Where this booklet was primarily aimed at leadership, a similar booklet has been developed aimed at NIHB clients. This

can be found at: [http://health.afn.ca/uploads/files/nihb\\_health\\_bulletin\\_spring\\_2015\\_e.pdf](http://health.afn.ca/uploads/files/nihb_health_bulletin_spring_2015_e.pdf).

Alongside the Action Plan have been significant advances in the development of the AFN-FNIHB NIHB Joint Review, as mandated by Resolution 56/2012. The first meeting of the AFN-FNIHB Joint NIHB Review Steering Committee (JNR-SC) was held on October 7, 2014. The Steering Committee is comprised of equal representation of First Nations and FNIHB staff. The make-up and membership on the First Nations side was determined by the NFNHTN and CCOH. Significantly, the FNIHB representatives include those in positions to make decisions regarding the program including assistant deputy ministers. In addition, an Elder collectively guides the group. There have been a number of follow-up meetings, a Terms of Reference has been finalized and a Critical Path articulating how the Joint Review will proceed was approved. Early 2015 saw the development of a specific workplan review of the Short Term Mental Health Crisis Counselling benefit, which is the first to be examined. From there, Medical Transportation, then Vision and Dental followed by Medical Supplies and Equipment and Pharmacy beginning in calendar year 2016.

Beyond the Action Plan and the Joint Review, the AFN continues day-to-day work related to the NIHB program including regular communication with program staff, as well as sitting as an observer on the NIHB Drugs and Therapeutics Advisory Committee (DTAC) that provides recommendations for formulary changes to the NIHB Drug Benefits list, and the NIHB/Canadian Dental Association (CDA) Technical Working Group that provides recommendations related to dental. In terms of partnerships, the AFN has been working with numerous service provider organizations including the CDA, the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) and the Canadian Pharmacists Association (CPhA) related to their participation in the Joint Review as well as on shared priorities and projects more generally.

Finally, the AFN has been coordinating the National Navigators Network which is comprised of NIHB Client Navigators from across the country. The aim is to create





a supportive network that allows for the sharing of best practices in order to aid the Navigators in helping clients access NIHB services. Part of this coordination includes hosting two annual face-to-face meetings. These meetings also allow Navigators to meet with operational NIHB staff to identify and resolve daily irritants when possible.

### NEXT STEPS – MOVING FORWARD

- Ongoing communication with FNIHB's senior officials/committees and the NIHB Benefits Management team.
- Ongoing collaborative efforts with the CMA, CDA, CPhA, among others.
- Continued coordination role for the National Navigators Network.
- Ongoing work on communications products related to the Action Plan, Joint Review and NIHB related topics aimed at improving available information on the program.
- Continued progress on items identified in the AFN NIHB Action Plan.
- Continued progress on the AFN/FNIHB Joint Review.
- Ongoing communication with the CCOH and the NFNHTN for guidance and direction on NIHB activities.

## MENTAL WELLNESS

Mental Wellness includes the following priority areas: Mental Wellness, the National Aboriginal Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy (NAYSPS), National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program (NNADAP), Indian Residential Schools Resolution Health Supports Program (IRS RHSP), and Prescription Drug Abuse (PDA).

### A. MENTAL HEALTH

#### KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The AFN Mental Wellness Committee (MWC) was established as mandated by the NFNHTN in April 2010. The purpose of the AFN MWC is to provide technical expertise and knowledge of the national, regional and community level health issues in all of the priority areas of mental wellness. In order to provide recommendations and develop a strategic direction for the AFN, while ensuring clarity and guidance on priorities within the mental wellness unit, the committee meets face to face twice a year and participates in monthly teleconferences.

The AFN, FNIHB and Indigenous mental health leaders led a joint process to describe a First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum (FNMWC). Guided by an Advisory Committee, this process set out to map existing mental health and addictions programs and arrive at a common understanding of program strengths, gaps and emerging priorities. The result is a comprehensive framework of mental wellness services that outlines opportunities to build on community strengths and control of resources, in order to strengthen existing mental wellness programming for First Nations communities. A dialogue discussion took place at the 2014 Annual General Assembly (AGA) in Halifax, and Chiefs-in-Assembly passed a Resolution supporting the draft framework and ongoing activities.

The AFN launched the FNMWC on January 28, 2015. The FNMWC framework is comprehensive of mental wellness services across a continuum and outlines opportunities to build on community strengths and control of resources, in order to strengthen existing mental wellness programming for First Nations communities. The launch date coincided with Bell's Let's Talk Day 2015. As Bell invited the nation to join the national conversation about mental health, the AFN promoted the new national framework, in addition to supporting the conversation about ending the stigma of mental illness. The establishment of the FNMWC Implementation Team has been a key component to implementation of the framework from a social determinant of health approach. The team, co-chaired by FNIHB, the AFN and an Indigenous mental health leader, will be comprised of First Nations regional representatives, Indigenous organizations focused on mental health and addictions, and key federal departments. The team will support the ongoing implementation of the framework, and ensure transition in the system to support the provision of culturally-based, culturally-relevant, and effective mental wellness services to First Nations in the coming years.

As a part of the AFN's commitment to seeking input to the AFN Health Plan, yearly forums with a focus on different health action areas have been established. This year, the AFN hosted a Mental Wellness Policy Forum, March 25-26 2015 in Winnipeg. Under the theme "Hope, Healing, Belonging and Purpose" this event attracted delegates from First Nations communities and public, private and non-for profit sectors. The delegates enjoyed workshops and educational sessions about existing mental wellness



activities, participated in a dialogue on Non-Insured Health Benefits as it relates to mental wellness and had the opportunity to network with experts in the field. The AFN received positive and enthusiastic feedback about the forum presentations and media also took an interest in many of the presenters and their workshops. The event was well attended and almost 700 viewers participated via the webcast that took place during the forum.

The Mental Wellness Policy Forum supported the momentum of the FNMWC Framework and the Joint NIHB review. The NIHB Joint Steering Committee established a critical path that begins with a review of the Mental Health framework. A specific dialogue session on NIHB as it relates to mental wellness took place during the forum.

The AFN also worked closely with the Mental Health Association of Canada on several activities such as the Recovery Guidelines and the Mental Health Strategy for Canada: A Youth Perspective. The AFN continues to work with the Mental Health Commission of Canada to develop activities based on First Nations priorities.

#### NEXT STEPS – MOVING FORWARD

- Produce a Mental Wellness Health Bulletin for the fall 2015.
- Continue to advocate for the inclusion of provinces and territories in the First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum work and implementation activities.
- Ensure FNIHB is respecting First Nations processes and protocols on all mental wellness initiatives.
- Establish a joint work plan between the AFN and the Mental Health Commission of Canada.

## B. SUICIDE PREVENTION

The AFN continues to advocate for community-led suicide intervention programming that is inclusive of holistic and cultural approaches to wellness. As part of this work, the AFN sits on the National Collaborative on Suicide Prevention, which through collective action, information sharing and collaboration, will work together to prevent suicides and support post-vention across Canada. The Mental Health Commission of Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada, and the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention co-lead the Collaborative. The AFN has a seat on the Collaborative and is the only First Nations organization with a seat.

#### KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The NAYSPS program is part of the upstream renewal process and therefore is led by a working group comprised of FNIHB, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) and the AFN. The AFN continues to advocate for renewal of the NAYSPS to support First Nations communities. In addition to this work, the AFN continues to advocate for First Nations within the Public Health Agency of Canada Federal Framework on Suicide Prevention. In addition, the AFN continues to advise FNIHB on all aspects of the NAYSPS. This includes work underway regarding Bill C-300 and the Federal Framework on Suicide Prevention.

#### NEXT STEPS – MOVING FORWARD

- Continue to work on the expansion of the NAYSPS program and its renewal.
- Continue to work towards the development and implementation of a continuum of mental wellness services and programs.
- Continue to work with partners on the National Collaborative on Suicide Prevention.

## C. ADDICTIONS

In partnership with the National Native Addictions Partnership Foundation (NNAPF) and FNIHB the AFN continues to be a key partner in the NNADAP Renewal Process. The NNADAP Renewal Process has been instrumental in taking an approach to developing a renewed program framework that is informed by culture, evidence and needs.

The AFN continues to participate on the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA) National Advisory and the Executive Committee. The Advisory and committee met on March 20, 2015 to review the projects within CCSA and the First Do No Harm 2013 Prescription Drug Abuse Strategy. The CCSA and the AFN MWC continue to meet to review and develop projects and implementation activities related to First Do No Harm and the First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Framework.

#### KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The jointly developed First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum framework (FNIHB AFN, NNAPF, 2015) complements the *Honouring our Strengths: A Renewed Framework to Address Substance Use Issues Among*



*First Nations People in Canada* (FNIHB, AFN, NNAPF; 2011) to ensure that the unique needs of First Nations, remote, rural and isolated communities are taken into consideration. The AFN is actively engaged with partners to implement the frameworks and evaluate the impacts as the strategies move forward.

In partnership with NNAPF and Health Canada (HC), the AFN continues to be a key partner in the NNADAP Renewal Process. As directed by Resolution 23/2014 (Pay Equity Renewal Opportunities), the AFN worked with the NNAPF and Chiefs of Ontario (COO) to develop an infographic and material for a lobby package for a meeting with the Health Minister on March 31, 2015. Prescription drug abuse and wage parity within the NNADAP program was addressed at the meeting. COO has worked with FNIHB Ontario region to create a draft outline of a joint technical working group to examine NNADAP's sustainability and ability to address prevention, intervention and treatment needs in Ontario First Nations. The working group which includes both NNAPF and the AFN will initially analyze and validate the information prepared by the Ontario Regional Addictions Partnership Committee (ORAPC) as well as provide expert advice and evidence to the First Nations leaders and to the Minister of Health to further support policy and program decisions within NNADAP.

#### **NEXT STEPS – MOVING FORWARD**

- Continue to work with partners to identify implementation opportunities for NNADAP Renewal.
- Continue to work with partners to ensure wage parity is addressed.
- Continue collaboration with partners such as the CCSA to ensure implementation of the First Do No Harm Strategy.

### **D. INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS RESOLUTION HEALTH SUPPORT PROGRAM**

The Indian Residential Schools (IRS) Resolution Health Support Program (RHSP) provides mental health and emotional support services to former IRS students and their families before, during and after their participation in the Settlement Agreement processes. As it is linked to the duration of the IRS Settlement Agreement, the IRS RHSP is set to sunset in 2016, at which time there will be little to no specific funding dedicated to the healing of

IRS survivors. The AFN is advocating for the continuation of the IRS RSHP beyond 2016, as mandated by Resolution 30/2013.

The AFN worked with other parties to the Settlement Agreement and the Regional Health Support Working Group (RHSWG) to prepare for the final closing event of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that took place May 31 - June 3, 2015 in Ottawa.

#### **KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES**

The AFN developed a short discussion paper and methodology report that establishes a framework for a larger program review, which will examine the program to date; relevant background information; key informants; and relevant RHSP data, including the number of health supports used under the IRS program, amount of time health supports spent on healing initiatives with clients, and number of survivors, families, and sessions with the aim to explore the impact on NIHB and other relevant programs once the program ceases to exist as well as to advocate for the IRS RHSP to continue beyond 2016. The participating groups (service providers, service recipients, etc.) and organizations in the interviews and focus groups will be developed cooperatively with the AFN. A national review using the methodology is being developed for this fiscal year.

#### **NEXT STEPS – MOVING FORWARD**

- Continue to support activities related to advocacy of the IRS RHSP to continue beyond 2016.

### **PUBLIC HEALTH**

Public health is the approach of maintaining and improving the health of populations, as opposed to individuals, by focusing on the social, environmental, economic, and historical factors affecting health, while being based in the principles of equity, social justice, human rights and evidence-informed policy. First Nations people continue to rank lower than the general Canadian population on every indicator of social and economic well-being, and suffer disproportionately higher rates of morbidity and mortality.

Public health programs and services are designed to address population level health issues through a wholistic approach to health promotion, protection and prevention



while addressing the broader determinants of health. To improve the health of First Nations people, we must ensure all approaches, interventions, policies, and programs are reflective of First Nations autonomy, values and practices.

## KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

### A. AFN NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH EXPERTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (NPHEAC)

The AFN NPHEAC met in January and June 2015. The January meeting included discussion on: a community-based emergency care project underway in Northern Ontario; an update on the NIHB joint review process; application of the principles of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP) for the work of AFN policy analysts; injury prevention and disabilities; housing, infrastructure and emergency management; a chronic disease surveillance project underway at FNIHB; and a general update on public health files at the AFN. The June meeting focused on the formation of an AFN Public Health Wellness Framework (update of the 2006 AFN First Nations Public Health Framework) and an AFN Expanded Chronic Disease Framework.

### B. PUBLIC HEALTH PARTNERSHIPS

The AFN continues to work closely with FNIHB on various programs and initiatives including, but not limited to: Sexually Transmitted and Blood Borne Infections (STBBI), Treasury Board Departmental Evaluations, Public Health Surveillance and Data Management through the Health Data Technical Working Group (HDTWG), Program and Service Delivery Standards (PSDS), E-Health, and Emergency Preparedness and Pandemic Planning. The AFN works closely with FNIHB to ensure First Nations values, practices and approaches are respected and that programs and policies are reflected of First Nations needs.

The AFN also collaborates with various national organizations on areas of relevance to public health including, but not limited to, the National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health (NCCAH), the Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA), the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer (CPAC), the Canadian Red Cross (CRC), and the Canadian Aboriginal Aids Network (CAAN). The AFN has also been involved in the planning and development of the new Waakebiness-Bryce Institute for Indigenous

Health at the University of Toronto. Through partnerships with other national organizations the AFN works to ensure the ongoing inclusion of First Nations in the development of new strategies that aim to improve the health and well-being of First Nations people.

## NEXT STEPS – MOVING FORWARD

- Development of the AFN Public Health Wellness Framework, in alignment with the AFN Wellness Foundational Model.
- Continue to work in partnership with FNIHB on the development of policies, programs and strategies to promote First Nations well-being.
- Continue to work with national partners outside of government on the development of strategies aimed at promoting First Nations well-being.
- Continuation of NPHEAC to advise the National First Nations Health Technicians Network (NFNHTN) on matters pertaining to public health.

### C. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT & PANDEMIC PLANNING

Emergency Preparedness as it pertains to health continues to be a top priority for First Nations communities. The AFN has been actively engaged with key stakeholders both in government and civil society to ensure that all First Nations have access to appropriate prevention, mitigation and treatment resources for all possible health emergencies.

## KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The AFN is working with FNIHB on the creation of a First Nations Emergency Response Plan All Hazards Annex, a direct recommendation from the 2013 Office of the Auditor General (OAG) report on emergency management on First Nations reserves. The AFN also works closely with FNIHB during influenza season and was in close contact during the most recent international Ebola outbreak.

The AFN is also working closely with the Canadian Red Cross to finalize a Cooperative Partnership Agreement, which will focus on collaboration between the CRC and AFN in areas of emergency and disaster management, community health and prevention and safety.





### NEXT STEPS – MOVING FORWARD

- Continue to work with FNIHB on the development of the First Nations Emergency Response Plan All Hazards Annex.
- Finalize the agreement with the CRC.

## D. FOOD SECURITY

Addressing food security for First Nations communities involves addressing the broader determinants of health that act as barriers to an adequate and comprehensive continuum of resources for a community's food system. These include aspects such as income, cost of living, geography, and nutritional literacy. As per Resolution 78/2010, the AFN continues to monitor the progress of AANDC and Health Canada in the development and implementation of the Nutrition North Canada (NNC) program.

### KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The AFN is closely following the outcomes and recommendations of the 2014 OAG report on the Nutrition North Canada program, and is working with national partner organizations to address food security in Northern and remote communities.

The AFN is also supporting academic work that is looking at the relationship between food security, governance and health through partnership with academics from the First Nations Food, Nutrition and Environment Study (FNFNES).

### NEXT STEPS – MOVING FORWARD

- Continue to monitor the outcomes and recommendations from the 2014 OAG report on NNC.
- Continue to work in partnership with national partners to address the complex issues associated with food security.

## E. SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED AND BLOOD BORNE INFECTIONS (STBBI)

First Nations continue to be overrepresented in STBBIs and are acquiring HIV at a disproportionately higher rate than the general Canadian population. In particular, the rates among First Nations women and young First Nations adults (under 30 years of age) are much higher than those

observed in general Canadian population. Two-thirds of new infections among First Nations are acquired through injection drug use, a proportion that is two times higher than seen in Canada overall. Indigenous peoples in Canada have much higher rates for new HIV diagnoses than Indigenous peoples in the US, Australia and New Zealand.

### KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

Since 2013 the AFN has been working in close partnership with FNIHB to develop a National Framework to address STBBIs on reserve.

The AFN works with the CAAN to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C among Indigenous people in Canada. Every year the AFN participates in the planning and events held during Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week (AAAW), and for the first time this year participated in CAAN's Hep C campaign, which was held in May. Together with CAAN, the AFN participated in the 2014 International AIDS conference and the International Indigenous pre-conference on HIV/AIDS.

The AFN is a member of the Canadian National Aboriginal Working Group on HIV & AIDS (CNAWGHA) and works to raise awareness of issues of HIV/AIDS in First Nations communities. CNAWGHA is composed of various national organizations working in the area of HIV/AIDS in Indigenous communities in Canada. The AFN continues to explore partnerships that can support and strengthen efforts to address the unique needs of First Nations.

### NEXT STEPS – MOVING FORWARD

- Continue to work with FNIHB on the development of a National Framework to address STBBIs for First Nations on reserve, which is aimed to be launched on December 1, 2016 (World AIDS Day).
- Continue to work in partnership with CAAN and CNAWGHA to raise the awareness of STBBIs among First Nations in Canada.

## F. FNIHB DEPARTMENTAL EVALUATIONS

The AFN has ongoing participation in all FNIHB departmental evaluations along with ITK and the HC-PHAC Evaluation Directorate (ED). These departmental evaluations are mandated by Treasury Board (TB), and occur for all FNIHB programs every five years. In 2014 the AFN finalized a Protocol for Departmental Evaluations





between AFN, ITK and FNIHB, which is now in effect and appended to the AFN-FNIHB Engagement Protocol. The evaluation protocol will be reviewed annually to assess its effectiveness.

### KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

Evaluations currently underway include the Health Service Integration Fund (HSIF), Mental Wellness, Non-Insured Health Benefits, Environmental Public Health, and Health Planning and Quality Management. The AFN reviews all scoping decks, methodologies, data collections tools and preliminary findings for all evaluations.

### NEXT STEPS – MOVING FORWARD

- Continue to work collaboratively with the ED on all FNIHB departmental evaluations
- Assess protocol annually to increase effectiveness and utility.
- Continue discussions of how to include AFN in the Management Response Action Plan (MRAP) process of evaluations.

## G. EHEALTH

eHealth, the use of information management and communication technologies in health services, is an area of development that offers potential tools and strategies to improve effectiveness of health services for First Nations. Recent years have seen investments in eHealth for the general Canadian population on the part of Canada Health Infoway and provincial/territorial ministries of health, however because of jurisdictional uncertainties, these initiatives have tended to exclude First Nations health services. While Health Canada has made modest investments in First Nations initiatives, sustainable infrastructure and support investments for First Nations communities have lagged behind. First Nations are keenly aware of the importance of leading the eHealth revolution.

The AFN is positioned to support the realization of the First Nations eHealth vision. Through disciplined and structured planning, sustained engagement and the continued support of key partners, First Nations can look forward to many eHealth successes ultimately supporting better health outcomes.

### KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

There is a need in most regions and communities for national eHealth development support that encompasses national advocacy, policy development, informational and best practices support, as well as relationship and capacity building. The AFN has an eHealth policy analyst to manage this file and move the eHealth agenda forward. As such, the AFN has a seat on the eHealth Departmental Broadband Connectivity Advisory Committee. The purpose of this committee is to provide an information sharing opportunity to broadly discuss connectivity in First Nations communities in order to leverage opportunities across the federal government offered to improve broadband connectivity within First Nation environments.

Health Canada made the commitment to Treasury Board to implement electronic medical/health records (EMR/EHR) in 100 First Nations communities by 2017-2018, and has drafted a report regarding its approach to implementing EMRs. FNIHB regions are looking at the growing demand and significant investments in EMRs have become part of the standard of care for health care providers across Canada, replacing paper records and allowing for more efficient management of complex patient health information. At this time, FNIHB's community-based health professionals who deliver primary care services are using paper records and lack electronic access to physician EMRs and provincial diagnostic lab information.

### NEXT STEPS – MOVING FORWARD

- Continue to promote the AFN First Nations eHealth Strategy Framework.
- Continue to support the regions to work with the provinces and territories to develop sustainable, interoperable eHealth applications and advocate for increased broadband connectivity in First Nations communities to operate these health information systems.
- Strengthen the AFN's relationship with eHealth stakeholders including COACH: Canada's Health Informatics Association, Infoway and F/P/T partners.



## H. CANCER

The incidence of cancer continues to increase faster in First Nations communities than in the general Canadian population. It is the third most common cause of death in First Nations men and the second most common cause in First Nations women. Lung cancer is the most common type of cancer followed by prostate and colorectal for men and breast and colorectal for women. With the increasing incidence and prevalence of cancer amongst First Nations, there is an increasing need for services and benefits.

### KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The AFN continues to work at a national level raising awareness of the cancer care continuum while working collaboratively with the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer (CPAC) to advance work on the “First Nations, Inuit and Métis Cancer Control Strategy”. CPAC is now past the mid-point of their second mandate, which is due to end by 2017. Preliminary discussions are taking place to determine what the Partnership might do with another mandate. In the area of First Nations, Inuit and Métis work to advance the Action Plan, priorities for a new mandate include patient identification, cancer screening and traditional health supports.

An environmental scan on cancer screening is planned to start in summer of 2015. Two additional environmental scans will soon be taking place as well. One scan will be reviewing current First Nations, Inuit and Métis patient identification practices, and another will be a scan on traditional health supports.

CPAC will be organizing and hosting an All Partners Forum (APF) and Knowledge Exchange meeting this October. The goal of the APF would be to share best practices with all First Nations, Inuit and Métis cancer partners across Canada and not just those working with CPAC. The purpose and structure of the Forum will be brought to the AFN governing body for review and approval.

In response to gaps in screening for cancer and the journey of AFN leadership, the AFN partnered with Ontario Regional Chief Stan Beardy to develop a cancer screening video called “Early Detection – The path to a good life”. The AFN has also produced a Health Bulletin on Cancer to raise awareness and provide resources to

community members and health care providers alike. The Bulletin was distributed at the AFN National Mental Wellness Forum and can also be found on AFN website.

### NEXT STEPS – MOVING FORWARD

- Continue to partner on the implementation of the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Action Plan on Cancer Control raising the profile of cancer as an emerging crisis for First Nations.
- Continue the development of resources to complement the work of the regions and to increase awareness of cancer-related issues.
- Foster new relationships and create partnerships with other national cancer organizations such as the Canadian Cancer Society and the Canadian Cancer Action Network.

## I. DIABETES

The rate of diabetes is three to five times higher for First Nations than the general Canadian population. Rates of diabetes among First Nations are expected to rise significantly in the future given that risk factors such as obesity, physical inactivity, tobacco usage, and nutritional challenges are also increasing.

### KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

Diabetes activities have focused around exploring new partnerships and working with current partners to maximize knowledge exchange and use of resources. The AFN has been engaged in the evaluation and continued advocacy for the renewal of the Government of Canada Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative (ADI) program to continue supporting health promotion and diabetes prevention activities and services. The National Aboriginal Diabetes Association (NADA) and the Canadian Diabetes Association (CDA) continue to have a strong partnership working collaboratively and strategically on diabetes issues. The AFN has recently reached out to NADA and the CDA to discuss a partnership and collaborative work moving forward. Both organizations have welcomed the opportunity to collaborate with the AFN with the goal of fostering mutually supportive partnerships.

The AFN has also provided direction to Health Canada in its efforts to develop a National Chronic Disease Prevention Management (CDPM) Framework. The framework is intended to be used by health care providers



and administrators working in First Nations communities, as well as FNIHB regional and national policy and program staff to support health planning and strengthen chronic disease prevention and management for First Nations living on-reserve and in the North. It is designed to build on the strengths of current programs and services and support appropriate integration within and between programs and among jurisdictions. The framework is also intended to facilitate a common understanding of areas of transformation and provides guidance to communities to adapt and optimize strategies based on their own priorities.

The AFN will soon be developing its own expanded model for chronic diseases, which will fall within a broad AFN wellness model. Preliminary discussions will take place during the NPHEAC meeting in June 2015.

#### **NEXT STEPS – MOVING FORWARD**

- Continue work with Health Canada supporting the renewal of ADI.
- Continue to build a relationship with NADA and the CDA to advance work on shared priorities.
- Proceed with the development of an Expanded Model for Chronic Diseases.

### **J. TOBACCO**

The misuse of commercial tobacco has been shown to be a major risk factor of chronic diseases. Smoking increases the risk for diabetes by 50 per cent and lung cancer is the most common type of cancer amongst First Nations.

#### **KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES**

There have been no resources available to support implementation of the 2011 AFN National First Nations Tobacco Control Strategy Action Plan. The federal government continues to move forward with its Federal Tobacco Control Strategy with some First Nations communities participating in awareness and cessation initiatives. There remain significant concerns about potential infringement of rights and jurisdiction, in particular as it relates to economic development of both traditional and commercial tobacco.

#### **NEXT STEPS – MOVING FORWARD**

- Provide continued advocacy, policy direction and advice on tobacco issues with particular focus on the

infringement of rights, including providing a legal analysis of the concerns.

### **CHILDREN'S HEALTH**

The AFN continues to advocate at the regional, national and international levels for increased culturally-appropriate prevention and intervention strategies and programming that will lead to improved outcomes for First Nations children and youth.

#### **A. CHILDREN'S NUTRITION**

The AFN continues to raise awareness of the need for a universal school nutrition program and promotes organizations such as ONEXONE and the National First Nations Breakfast Program. The AFN participates on the ONEXONE National Advisory Council to discuss national issues and ways to expand the program. As of the 2014-2015 school year, the breakfast program now serves 32 sites and 4,500 students.

#### **B. PARTNERSHIPS**

Working in partnership with other non-governmental organizations such as the Canadian Paediatric Society (CPS) ensures that the issues affecting First Nations children remain a priority with the federal government. The AFN continues to be an active member of the CPS First Nations/Inuit Health Committee. Due to cutbacks from FNIHB, site visits to First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities, which were previously funded, may be at risk unless an alternative funding source is found.

The AFN participated as a Planning Committee member for the International Meeting on Indigenous Child Health, which was held April 20-22, 2015 in Ottawa.

#### **C. FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER (FASD)**

The AFN conducted an FASD Environmental Scan, which identifies the strengths, challenges and opportunities available for parents and children, families, schools and First Nations communities affected by FASD. It sought to clarify the roles of the family members, communities and the provincial and federal governments. The methodology for collecting information for this environmental scan



was to review the literature, knowledge and resources available to discover FASD best practices and community-based supports and diagnostics in Canada. Key informant interviews were conducted, as well as separate in-depth interviews to collect knowledge and experiences from members of near urban, remote/ isolated and northern First Nations communities in order to gain a better understanding of FASD through “Community Snapshots”.

## KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The AFN continues to advocate for children’s health issues. An important focus for children’s health has been ensuring a smooth transition during the Renewal of the Upstream Investments which includes the Aboriginal Head Start On Reserve (AHSOR) outreach component which is \$5 million per year; the Maternal Child Health (MCH) Program which is \$27 million per year; and the Children’s Oral Health Initiative (COHI) which is \$6 million per year.

## NEXT STEPS – MOVING FORWARD

- Once appropriate approvals are completed, the FASD Environmental Scan will be translated and posted on the AFN website.
- The AFN will participate on the Planning Committee for the next International Meeting on Indigenous Child Health conference to be held in 2017.

## HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE (HCC) PROGRAM

Established in 1999, the First Nations and Inuit Home and Community Care Program (FNIHCCP) was designed to assist First Nations and Inuit communities to meet the increasing home care demands of community members living with chronic and acute illnesses. This in-home care enables First Nations to receive the required care in familiar surroundings and for the person requiring the care to be close to family, friends and community as long as possible in order to maintain some personal independence.

### A. PALLIATIVE CARE

The Home and Community Care program, funded by FNIHB and delivered under agreement by communities, provides some home-based care, but stagnant funding

levels make it difficult to include palliative care which is currently considered a non-essential, supportive service element. Palliative care was made an AFN priority at the NFNHTN meeting of June 4-5, 2013 in Halifax and was affirmed through Resolution 7/2013. This resolution includes advocating for additional funding for palliative care and engaging and collaborating with other organizations with similar interests in order to move this issue forward.

The AFN partnered with the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association (CHPCA), the Way Forward (TWF) Initiative and Lakehead University to provide a communications role in the sharing of a culturally-appropriate Advance Care Planning (ACP) tool. First Nations will be able to use this tool if appropriate and modify to meet the unique needs of their community.

The AFN organized an Advance Care Planning workshop at the Mental Wellness Policy Forum held in March 2015 in Winnipeg.

## B. FIRST NATIONS SENIORS STRATEGY

First Nations face increasing barriers and access to health services and programs. First Nation seniors are particularly vulnerable with many living at or below the poverty line and residing in very small isolated communities. Less than 1% of First Nations have adequate long-term care facilities in their communities. As well, due to chronic diseases, many First Nation seniors require long-term care at an earlier age than the general population. The management of chronic diseases also means that First Nation seniors are living longer. Currently, First Nations Home and Community Care is part of the overall Continuum of Care, however it lacks a focus on palliative/end-of-life care (which has recently been prioritized) and other emerging issues such as dementia.

The AFN is developing an expanded model for Home and Community Care, Continuing Care, Long-term Care and Palliative Care/First Nations Senior Strategy. Other issues which will be integral to this strategy include cancer and chronic diseases, disabilities, Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB), and the intergenerational effects of residential schools.





## C. NIHB

The AFN HCC Partners continue to request that NIHB be made a priority. HCC nurses witness the impacts on community members when they encounter lengthy approval processes at the end of one's life, a diminished formulary and poorer quality equipment such as canes and wheelchairs for the community's most vulnerable clients. The AFN continues to bring forward these concerns in the NIHB Joint Review Process.

## D. INTEGRATION

The AFN supports those First Nations communities who wish to integrate their AANDC Assisted Living program and Health Canada's HCC program; however the AFN is opposed to a top-down approach by the federal government making it mandatory for every community. First Nations need to be at the table in any discussions between the two departments.

### NEXT STEPS – MOVING FORWARD

- The AFN will continue to develop the expanded model for Home and Community Care, Continuing Care, Long Term Care and Palliative Care/First Nations Senior Strategy and obtain proper approval processes.
- The AFN will continue to advocate for increased HCC funding and funding for palliative care for First Nations communities.
- The AFN will be involving the AFN HCC Partners/nurses in the NIHB Joint Review Process to hear their concerns.
- The AFN will translate and post Lakehead University's Advance Care Planning tool on the AFN website for First Nations community use.

## STRATEGIC POLICY

In 2014/15 the AFN continued to pursue a long-term vision of First Nations control of First Nations health systems with sustainable, reliable and equitable investments from the federal government.

### KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

A major development has been the signing of the *AFN-First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB) Engagement*

*Protocol*. This protocol outlines how FNIHB and AFN will work together to ensure First Nations regions and communities are engaged in policy development, and ensuring FNIHB respects the AFN health governance process and the timelines associated with it.

Similarly, the AFN also developed a document called *Working with Health at the AFN: Principles and Processes* for both government partners and outside organizations. This document provides a high-level description of the AFN and its mandate, and describes the governance processes related to AFN Health. Most importantly, this document provides a list of principles to guide groups or individuals seeking to work with the AFN on health. This document can be found on the AFN website.

In March the AFN coordinated First Nations participation in the Health Minister's Panel on Healthcare Innovation and provided a submission articulating a number of recommendations aimed at making health systems more responsive to First Nations realities. The AFN awaits the Panel's report.

In addition, the AFN Wellness Foundational Plan is in the final stages of development. The plan seeks to articulate the key elements pursued by the AFN in supporting the development of comprehensive, responsive and culturally-rooted First Nations health systems.

### NEXT STEPS – MOVING FORWARD

- In light of federal budget cuts to the AFN and regions, continue to advocate for adequate resources to address the health issues that First Nations are facing including resources for capacity to address ongoing work and emerging health issues.
- Development of the AFN Health and Wellness Model: A (W)holistic Policy and Planning Document (2015-2016).
- Development of a Health Communications Strategy including an awareness campaign on health issues impacting First Nations.
- Continue to build the relationship with FNIHB through the AFN-FNIHB Engagement Protocol.
- Continue to monitor the Canada Common Funding Agreements as they relate to health services and program delivery in communities.





## ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIPS

**The Economic Partnerships portfolio focuses on Economic Development, Revenue Sharing options, Labour Force and Human Resources Development, and Connectivity. This portfolio area also assists AFN efforts in regard to organizational revenue opportunities.**

In the past several years, the Chiefs-in-Assembly have passed national resolutions on the importance of resource revenue sharing, new investments, e-community, procurement, inter-nation trade, sustainability, wealth creation, and recently a report dealing with natural resource development as it relates to First Nations involvement.

### KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

#### Natural Resources and Revenue Sharing

A Working Group on Natural Resources Development (Working Group) was launched in December 2013. The Working Group was to examine ways First Nations can fully share in natural resource development projects, where interest among First Nations rights holders may exist. The Working Group consisted of four members. The AFN Chiefs Committee on Economic Development (CCED) recommended two First Nations participants. Additionally, two participants were named by the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC).

The Working Group benefited from Chiefs-in-Assembly discussion and guidance at the July 2014 and December 2014 assemblies. During the 2014 Annual General Assembly in Halifax, First Nations members of the Working Group hosted an information session and then later participated on a plenary panel where leaders were asked whether the project was a priority and requested advice on this topic. Individual, community and industry experiences shared by First Nations leaders, experts and industry representatives during two working sessions held in November 2014 provided the Working Group with further information.

At the December 2014 Special Chiefs Assembly in Winnipeg, an update on the Working Group's activity and preliminary observations was provided to the Chiefs-in-Assembly. Following the update, the First Nations leadership deliberated on and passed Resolution 38/2014, Support for the Development of a Report on Natural Resources. Resolution 80/2011, Resource Revenue / Benefit Sharing with First Nations, was kept close at hand as the Working Group conducted its work and throughout the process.

The Working Group has prepared a report titled, "First Nations and Natural Resource Development: Advancing Positive, Impactful Change" (March 2015). Importantly, they noted that the report is not intended as a final word on any of the subjects discussed. It aims to provide a starting point for a more comprehensive dialogue. The report has been submitted to the National Chief, the AFN Executive Committee and to the Minister of AANDC. The Working Group has proposed to meet with the CCED at their next meeting. The report is available on the [Working Group website](#) and is intended for all First Nations and the general public to consider.

The report's thematic areas, observations, and recommendations focused on four central topics: governance, environment, prosperity, and finance. Among their recommendations, the Working Group has called for immediate action to:

- undertake a more comprehensive dialogue among First Nations governments, federal, provincial, and territorial governments, and others to advance discussions on the four main themes (governance, environment, prosperity, and finance) of the report, leading to actions and a road map to facilitate meaningful First Nations involvement in natural resource development in Canada;
- convene a national discussion on resource revenue sharing as a best means to eliminating socio-economic disparities;
- establish a knowledge and information resource to assist and enable First Nations who may be seeking information and technical resources; and



- hold an international forum on trade and international partnerships to support First Nations involvement in resources development, trade, business partnerships and access to markets.

The report's *observations and recommendations for further dialogue* were organized into four themes: governance, environment, sustainability and prosperity and finance.

The Working Group remarked on communicating and implementing the First Nation vision on natural resource development as part of its governance theme; this theme included reinforcing good practices to engage early and often; developing and implementing well-defined, durable governance models; and establishing more executive-level interchange and board membership options.

On the environmental theme, the Working Group noted the importance of strengthening First Nation involvement in the environmental management process; working with First Nations Elders and experts with land-use knowledge; and supporting First Nations to develop/maintain the capacity to collect/manage environmental data and land use information for the purposes of long-term and cumulative impact reporting and management.

Regarding the sustainability and prosperity theme, the Working Group reiterated the importance of a national dialogue on resource revenue sharing. In addition the Working Group commented on promoting the value and benefits of partnering with First Nations; targeting human resource strategies and policies; and establishing directories of First Nations business and workforce profiles.

The Working Group's final theme on finance identified exploring and implementing effective lending and borrowing instruments as critical; establishing models to invest first in First Nations and pooling of resources; and a recommendation to hold an international forum as a way to promote First Nations trade and international partnerships.

### **First Nations and Energy Development**

Energy development opportunities and the regulation of energy proposals continue to be of great interest and concern in First Nation territories in every part of the country. At their April 2015 meeting, the National Chief and AFN Executive discussed holding a national

conference on energy and resource development with a focus on First Nations' approaches to economic development and the role, rights and jurisdiction (including consent requirements), of First Nations in development regulation to ensure environmental protection and sustainable, responsible development.

The proposed conference also would be an opportunity to examine issues such as:

- Approaches to implementing the *Tsilhqot'in* decision, and the broad need to re-examine federal and provincial/territorial regulatory regimes to properly take into account First Nations inherent rights and title, including the right to self-determination recognized under international human rights law;
- First Nations' involvement in clean energy development and transmission projects;
- Process, rights and policy issues arising from pipeline development proposals across different territories;
- Revenue and benefit sharing, regional/national development planning, engagement approaches by industry, the First Nations work force, capital markets, and financial instruments.

Issues of an international nature such as markets, awareness and investment were also raised for consideration as part of this event. The National Chief and Executive supported the concept and recommended that work on this event begin.

Aligned with the National Chief and AFN Executive's discussion, the CCED approved in-principle (November 2013) a request to examine an economic signature event on topics such as revenue options, energy and trade. In line with this recommendation, the CCED hosted a preparatory session and panel at the 2013 Special Chiefs Assembly where initial discussion on the energy sector and First Nations priorities and challenges took place. In addition, the Working Group on Natural Resources Development has recommended an international forum to promote First Nations trade and international partnering opportunities.

While the AFN had submitted a proposal to AANDC for 2014-15 funding, the request was not approved. The AFN has since submitted a new request for funding in the current fiscal year, 2015-2016.



### Human Resource Development

In December 2013, the Chiefs-in-Assembly adopted a resolution to form a national negotiating committee on Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) renewal with engagement from First Nations leadership, First Nations human resources experts and federal officials from Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). The five-year ASETS was originally scheduled to end on March 31, 2015. The 2015 Federal Budget extended the ASETS strategy to March 31, 2017, although this announcement offers a two-year extension the AFN continues to advocate for a five-year renewal of this strategy.

On February 9, 2015, the Hon. Minister Pierre Poilievre, P.C., M.P. was assigned to ESDC replacing the Hon. Minister Jason Kenney, P.C., M.P., who moved to the department of National Defence.

On March 6 2015, the National Chief wrote to the Minister to offer congratulations and highlight the fact that ASETS is considered the “flagship employment program” at ESDC. The National Chief also sought a firm commitment on both ASETS renewal and the continuation of First Nations employment and training organizations as the delivery mechanism for skills training, literacy and essential skills, and child care to First Nations communities and citizenry.

The First Nation Technical Working Group on Human Resources Development (TWG) met in Edmonton on March 9 and 10, 2015. During the TWG meeting, a recommendation was made to submit an ASETS Renewal “demand driven” position paper to the new Minister of ESDC. The paper will be posted on the AFN website. The AFN and the TWG continue to advocate for ASETS renewal post-2017 in order to establish a stronger ASETS program that will meet the increasing needs of the fastest-growing demographic in Canada.

The 2015 Federal Budget also confirmed the continuation of the Skills Partnership Fund (SPF) at \$50 million per year until 2019-20. The SPF, which provides training to employment for major projects such as the energy, mining and shipbuilding sectors, must have ASETS involvement. The deadline to submit proposals for the next round of SPF is September 1, 2015 for a project start-up of April 1, 2016.

The AFN and TWG continue to organize national technical activity with the guidance of the First Nation National Action Plan on Human Resources Development, which focuses on themes to improve relationships, resource enhancement, employment parity, and private sector engagement.

### First Nations e-Community

The AFN Chiefs Committee on Economic Development includes focus on First Nations connectivity and continues to advocate for increased access and support for First Nations Information Communications Technology (ICT). Resolutions 11/2006, 16/2008 and 53/2011 provide direction to advocate for appropriate program, services and investments in First Nations ICT. The First Nations e-Community strategy is the basis of planning to help promote connectivity infrastructure, capacity and management broadly amongst First Nations communities.

Recent advocacy and communications efforts have focused on Industry Canada’s Connecting Canadians Program. The AFN has coordinated two First Nations information sessions regarding the program in order to facilitate discussions between First Nations ICT advisors and experts and Industry Canada officials on the funding program and to highlight First Nations considerations. The AFN will continue to monitor the Industry Canada process for announcements on conditionally approved projects and seek out opportunities to advocate for First Nations specific projects as a priority. The AFN has also worked to advocate for the inclusion of First Nations connectivity recommendations as part of the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group (AAWG) process.

Another area of focus and activity for the AFN has been data on the status of First Nations connectivity to inform and support advocacy efforts. The AFN conducted a First Nations Information Communications Technology (ICT) survey and received feedback from 108 communities. The purpose of the survey was to obtain an overview of the level of connectivity in First Nations community buildings and households in order to inform AFN advocacy and policy support efforts in the area of First Nations connectivity. It is evident from the responses that there are communities that have been able to successfully establish a level of connectivity that allows the use of new technologies however there are still many First Nations communities that continue to remain underserved.



Current proposed activity includes the continuation of the First Nations Community Internet Survey.

#### **Poverty Action Research Project (PAR Project)**

The AFN, through the Chiefs Committee on Economic Development, has established a Make First Nations Poverty History Expert Advisory Committee. As part of its activity, the committee has been successful in obtaining a five-year research grant from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and the Institute of Aboriginal Peoples' Health (IAPH). Work on this research project continues independently with First Nations communities and local/regional project advisory committees. The work involves designing and implementing a strategic plan to help create a sustainable economic base and improve the health and well-being of community members. The third national meeting which brings together all participating communities and researchers is planned for June 2015 in Wendake, Quebec.

#### **NEXT STEPS – MOVING FORWARD**

- Identify funding and coordinate a national forum on First Nations and energy development.
- Propose participation and coordination in a discussion dedicated to revenue options among First Nations.
- Pending funding, determine next steps to support Working Group on Natural Resources Development recommendations.
- Continue to work with First Nations leadership and ESDC on ASETS renewal post-2017; explore social finance/innovation training options with ESDC; work towards a national First Nation ASETS labour forum that would feature policy workshops, industry partners, and highlight new labour market information from the upcoming First Nation Regional Early Childhood, Education, and Employment Survey (FNREES).
- Upcoming plans to further support advocacy efforts include: continued participation in advocating for First Nations connectivity priorities as part of the AAWG process; seeking opportunities to provide a First Nations perspective and input on federal connectivity related matters and discussions. The AFN will also continue to follow the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) as it relates to the status of Indigenous-specific recommendations and discussions.
- Participate in the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group process on economic development, including those discussions related to connectivity recommendations.
- Continued focus on addressing data and information management gaps within the economic partnerships policy portfolio. With decreased funding, activity in economic policy, research, and technical support areas continues however some activities are at a reduced pace. Efforts to identify funding will continue for economic research and analysis on First Nations trade and investment activity, procurement approaches and improvements, investment tools, economic incentives and other areas that have been affected.
- Collaborate, where possible, with the National Congress of American Indians on trade, connectivity and revenue options.
- Continued support for the PAR Project and report to the CCED on the development of this initiative.
- Assist, as appropriate, with AFN organizational sustainability and NIB Trust planning.
- Identifying and communicating to the public and all government decision-makers, barriers to implementing economic development strategies arising from current federal approaches to support for economic development capacity development in First Nations and from the lack of fiscal fairness in federal transfers for essential services in First Nations communities.





## ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS

**The AFN continues to raise attention to the urgent issue of murdered and missing Indigenous women throughout Canada, the need for a National Inquiry and a national action plan to end violence against Indigenous women and girls.**

The AFN is mandated through multiple resolutions to address the critical situation of violence, disappearance, and murder of First Nations women and girls. In July 2013, Chiefs-in-Assembly endorsed a National Action Plan to End Violence against Indigenous women and girls. This plan provides a foundation of areas of focus for advocacy with governments and communities. In July 2014, Resolution 04/2014, Support a First Nation and Federal Government Roundtable on Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women, directed the AFN to pursue a National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls as part of a framework to develop a national dialogue on addressing and ending violence against Indigenous women and girls as a step towards the broader goal of securing a National Inquiry into this matter. In December 2014 further direction was given to ensure the respectful and appropriate inclusion of the voices and perspectives of the families of murdered and missing women and girls in the Roundtable.

### KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

#### National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

All provinces and territories, federal ministers, National Aboriginal Organizations (NAOs) and the families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls participated in a historic National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls on February 27, 2015. To support the families and engage them in recommendations to be brought to the National Roundtable, NAOs held a closed gathering on February 26, 2015. Additionally, NAOs held a Peoples' Forum concurrent with the National Roundtable for citizens and

social justice organizations to contribute to solutions and actions for ending violence.

The National Roundtable was focused in three broad areas: Prevention and Awareness; Community Safety; and, Policing Measures and Justice Responses. A Framework for Action to Prevent and Address Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls was endorsed by all Parties, who agreed to continue working on collaborative efforts to end and address violence. The Framework outlined a number of principles to guide work forward:

- **Human Rights:** Violence against Indigenous women and girls implicates numerous human rights including the right to life, to security, to equality and to be free of discrimination.
- **Shared responsibility:** Preventing and addressing violence against Indigenous women and children is a shared responsibility, requiring shared commitments across governments and communities.
- **Community-based solutions:** Solutions to prevent and end violence against Indigenous women and girls must be community-based and led, recognizing the diversity of community situations, and appropriate support given to building community capacity.
- **A focus on healing:** Addressing violence against Indigenous women and children acknowledges the need for improved relationships based on respect and understanding among Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous Canadians, and the need for holistic approaches in concert with support for the healing of individuals and communities.





- **A collaborative focus:** Indigenous Peoples must be partners in developing and implementing responses to addressing violence against Indigenous women and girls.
- **Bringing about behavioral change:** Addressing and preventing violence against Indigenous women and girls requires a shift in societal attitudes and behaviours, within individuals, institutions and organizations, including men and boys, who are key agents of that change.
- **Changing the discourse:** Mobilizing Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities to change how we talk about the issues can help re-frame institutional responses, community perspectives and individual attitudes.

There was also agreement to explore specific areas of action identified in the Framework, to work on a national prevention and awareness campaign, for a forum on policing and justice to be hosted by Manitoba in the fall of 2015 and to hold a second roundtable in 2016.

#### Developments towards a National Inquiry

Attention and momentum to this issue and the need for a National Inquiry continue to grow. A national opinion poll in fall 2014 showed that 75 per cent of Canadians supported an inquiry. The AFN and National Chief continue to push strongly at all levels for an inquiry.

Aboriginal leaders, Premiers and other civil society organizations continue to call for a National Public Commission of Inquiry. There is increasing attention internationally including recent reports by the Committee for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. In its report, CEDAW found that Canada committed grave human rights violations. CEDAW makes 38 recommendations for action that echo those raised by First Nations including the establishment of an independent national inquiry and an action plan. CEDAW found that Canadian police and justice system have failed to effectively protect Aboriginal women, hold offenders to account, and ensure that victims get redress. This is consistent with the findings and recommendations of other international human rights bodies, including the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights that also studied this matter and brought forward a report urging action earlier this year.

The pledge to “live violence free and to personally work to achieve safety and security for all Indigenous peoples – women and men, girls and boys” continues to grow and is available online and AFN continues to encourage all Indigenous citizens and Canadians to sign-on as part of the “**i pledge. end violence.**” campaign to mark the National Day of Remembrance for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Sisters in Spirit Day, October 4th.

The AFN continues to support the work of the National Aboriginal Circle Against Family Violence (NACAFV) and recently presented the AFN’s activities related to ending violence at the NACAFV annual general meeting in Ottawa. The AFN looks forward to continuing to work together at identifying the needs and priorities of community shelters and shelter activities that provide services towards prevention of violence against First Nations women and children.

#### First Nations Policing

First Nation police services play an important public safety role in our communities. Unfortunately First Nation police services are not afforded the same respect or recognition as mainstream police services as they are underfunded on a year to year basis and are designated as enhancement to either provincial police services or the RCMP as opposed to essential police services.

Despite the evolution of First Nation police services over the years, the First Nations Policing Policy (FNPP) and program has not been updated to address chronic underfunding or the legal designation of our police services. A more sustained effort is required by federal and provincial governments including the RCMP to continue building working relationships nationally and regionally to address the current gaps in First Nation policing i.e. chronic under-funding and legal designation, which in turn would lead to safer and secure communities and families.

The AFN has engaged in dialogue with Public Safety Canada and the RCMP to advocate for improvements in policing to First Nation communities, including strengthened support for stand-alone police services.



## NEXT STEPS – MOVING FORWARD

- Continue advocacy for a National Public Commission of Inquiry on violence against Indigenous women and girls, including an investigation of root causes and preventative factors.
- Finalize and share reports from the National Roundtable(s).
- Create a structure and process to deliver on commitments of the National Roundtable.
- Ensure the voices of families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls are included in all ongoing activities.
- Work to further the First Nations National Action Plan to End Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls and the Provincial and Territorial Coordinating Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women and Girls.
- Advocate for ongoing and predictable funding for community-based justice programs, including those funded by the Aboriginal Justice Strategy.
- Continue advocacy to declare First Nations Policing Services as essential services, with sustainable and predictable funding.
- Facilitate meetings with First Nation leadership and Minister of Public Safety to examine new funding models and approaches to the First Nations Policing Program – including committed funding over a 10 to 20-year timeframe.



## HOUSING

**The AFN Housing Secretariat works toward improved housing outcomes and resources for First Nations citizens living in and away from their community. Objectives of this work are to secure adequate resources so that First Nations enjoy a quality of life that is safe, secure and sustainable.**

This is achieved through analysis of existing policies, promoting changes and working closely with regional housing representatives and the Chiefs Committee on Housing and Infrastructure to seek input and advice.

Activities include:

- seeking commitment from governments for adequate housing to meet the needs of all First Nations citizens whether living in or away from their community;
- research and data gathering;
- facilitating discussion and monitoring housing challenges with federal departments;
- providing a forum for increasing the knowledge and sharing of emerging programs and initiatives throughout Canada in order to assist First Nations;
- analyzing policies and advocating for policy improvement;
- engaging in discussion; and,
- analysis and knowledge sharing on legislation impacting First Nations.

Federal programs are not meeting housing need nor are they decreasing the current backlog of housing in First Nations communities. Between 2010 and 2034, it is estimated that there will be a backlog of 130,000 units, 44% of the existing units requiring major repairs and 18% requiring replacement. Mould is prevalent in many homes. The federal government has identified a strategy to examine the presence but not to remediate the mould in the affected homes. Flooding has plagued some First Nations. As of May 22, 2015, there are a total of 4,319 long-term flood evacuees in various First Nations communities. Manitoba is still faced with 1,923 displaced members from the 2011 flood; Alberta is faced with 1,479 displaced members from 2013 flooding. Another 390 members

from Kashechewan First Nation in the James Bay area of Ontario and an additional 525 from various Manitoba communities are displaced from the 2014 flood season.

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) has responded to the flood events through an enhanced Emergency Management Assistance Program (EMAP) policy. Details on 2015 Flooding in First Nations Communities can be found online at: <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1397740805675/1397741020537>.

*“Prevention/mitigation efforts are crucial to avoiding future situations such as the severe 2011 Manitoba flood. AANDC invested more than \$80 million to protect Manitoba First Nations from the flood of 2011. This included approximately \$44 million to construct permanent dikes. An additional \$10.9 million was invested after the 2011 flood to make temporary dikes permanent at 11 Manitoba First Nations: Sioux Valley, Opaskwayak, Canupawakpa, Sandy Bay, Ebb and Flow, Lake Manitoba, O Chi Chak Ko Sipi, Little Saskatchewan, Poplar River, Berens River and Kinonjeoshtegon.*

*Economic Action Plan 2014 proposes \$40 million over five years, starting in 2015-16, for disaster mitigation programming in First Nations communities and reaffirms the Government of Canada’s commitment made in fall 2013 to provide stable funding for response and recovery efforts.” – AANDC website*

Increased insurance rates are making it nearly impossible for First Nations to have insurance on their homes. Shelter Allowance is an issue in some provinces, causing greater financial burden on First Nations to maintain housing stock.

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) reported that 496 units were built on reserve in 2014.

### Facts

- In a March 2012 report, AANDC estimated that between 2010 - 2034 there would be a need for 130,197 new units to accommodate household



and family growth, 11,855 replacement units to accommodate the deteriorated stock and major renovation of between 8,261 and 10,861 units.

- 43.5% of adults with asthma and 52% of those with chronic bronchitis are living with mould in their homes. (Regional Health Survey – Phase II)
- 23.4% of First Nation adults lived in overcrowded housing – which is defined as having no more than two people per bedroom, parents should have a separate room, children aged five and older should not share with the opposite gender and unmarried household members 18 and older should have a separate bedroom.
- 3% of existing Section 95 operating agreements with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation were expiring by the end of 2013, affecting approximately 1,036 units.
- CMHC committed funding for 496 new rental units in 2014 and continued to subsidize 27,750 existing social housing units on-reserve.

### Resolutions

Several AFN resolutions address the critical need for safe, secure and adequate housing for First Nations. The resolutions direct the AFN to call on the federal government to respect the jurisdictional authority of First Nations and their duly mandated organizations in exercising roles and responsibilities for housing.

Resolutions also call on government to respect its fiduciary responsibility to provide for housing based on the Treaty Right to Shelter. The government has taken the position that housing is nothing more than a social obligation and not a fiduciary responsibility based upon Treaty rights. A number of resolutions have framed the current AFN approach to housing which calls for more direct engagement of First Nations in a new rights-based National First Nations Housing Strategy. Key resolutions include:

- Resolution 81/2008 – First Nations Housing Evaluation
- Resolution 83/2011 – Housing as a National Priority
- Resolution 19/2012 – Development of a National First Nation Housing Strategy
- Resolution 15/2013 – Implementation of a National First Nations Housing Strategy
- Resolution 16/2013 – Transition of the First Nations Market Housing Fund to First Nation Control

## KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The substandard and deplorable housing conditions in First Nations are a persistent and growing challenge. Recent environmental disasters affecting First Nation communities, such as flooding and forest fires, have only exacerbated the issues. While some First Nations have undertaken innovative and successful initiatives, many still rely on federal programs to provide financing options for their members.

It was recommended in the 2014 pre-budget submission that new programs and funding be provided through another round of stimulus spending specific to the First Nations housing sector. This proposed spending will directly benefit First Nations families and First Nations economies, and indirectly produce economic benefits and sustainable job creation in the construction industry. This new investment will benefit all regions across the country, with the greatest impact to the remote and rural sectors of Canada.

### Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity (HfH) and the AFN formalized a statement of partnership on December 5, 2011 to explore the opportunity of assisting interested First Nations in enhancing their current housing programs with the Aboriginal Housing Program offered through HfH. As per the Statement of Partnership, HfH and the AFN established a voluntary committee to oversee the work to be carried out under the agreement and assess its effectiveness. The AFN aims to engage First Nations on the Aboriginal Housing Program offered by HfH. Ongoing discussions between HfH and several First Nations in 2014 saw progress on a project to build the first home on reserve – this resulted in a ground-turning on May 5, 2015 which marked the first time that the HfH has made a commitment to an on-reserve development project. It is planned that there will be more on-reserve builds in the future.

### National First Nations Housing Strategy (NFNHS)

The AFN led the development of the NFNHS to serve as the strategy to guide work that needs to be done to address the housing needs of First Nations. The NFNHS is an evergreen document which will be improved through time based on input from First Nations. The document has been shared with the tri-council, AFN Executive, AFN Housing Technicians, Regional Housing Committee



meetings (Ontario and Atlantic), and presented at the February 2014 National First Nations Infrastructure Conference and Tradeshow. The AFN is implementing a number of the strategies, such as the Atikameksheng Anishnawbek/AFN/ Holmes Foundation Pilot Project which resulted in the development of First Nations Sustainable Development Standards. Partnership agreements including those with Habitat for Humanity and the AFN/ Holmes Group agreement are meant to assist First Nations with improved management of housing portfolios and building safer and more durable houses. The NFNHS is available on the AFN website at: <http://www.afn.ca/index.php/en/policy-areas/housing/key-issues-activities/national-housing-strategy>.

#### **National Housing Liaison Committee (NHLC)**

The NHLC consists of members from AANDC, CMHC, Health Canada, AFN Regional Housing Technicians and the AFN. The AFN brings issues raised by regional housing technicians to this table. The objectives of the NHLC are to support First Nations and First Nations organizations in their housing roles and responsibilities, identify housing issues and to advise on broad policies and processes to enhance housing outcomes on-reserve including settlement lands and self-governing First Nations territories. It will also provide a regular forum for exchanging information on First Nations housing matters, including recommendations to the authorities related to programs, policies and practices that will contribute to enhanced housing outcomes on First Nations. AANDC is the current chair of the NHLC for 2015.

The NHLC members have developed a Terms of Reference to: i) support First Nations and First Nations organizations in their housing roles and responsibilities; identify housing issues and to advise on broad policies and processes to enhance housing outcomes on-reserve including settlement lands and self-governing First Nation territories; and ii) provide a regular forum for exchanging information on First Nations housing matters, including recommendations for consideration to the authorities related to programs, policies and practices that will contribute to enhanced housing outcomes on First Nations.

#### **AFN / Atikameksheng Anishnawbek First Nation (AAFN) / Holmes Group (HG) Pilot Project**

In July 2010, the AFN entered into a Statement of Partnership with the Holmes Group to seek out and

partner with a First Nation community (Atikameksheng Anishnawbek) in Ontario to construct a housing and community subdivision (the “Pilot Project”). The Pilot Project consists of multi-levels, incorporating the retrofit of existing housing units, construction of new houses, construction of community buildings (water and waste water systems, schools and administrative offices) and incorporating green technology and clean energy sources. The Pilot Project would lead to the development of a First Nation Community Planning Tool, a Housing Centre of Excellence, and a First Nation Green Housing Standard for the use of all First Nations, more recently entitled the First Nations Sustainable Development Standards (FNSDS). The overarching goal of the First Nation Sustainable Development Standards (FNSDS) is to enable First Nation communities to provide good, healthy and affordable housing in their communities. During the preparation of the document, it became apparent that the housing shortage problem could not be solved without first addressing several other challenges both specific to and related to housing and community development. As a result, the scope of this document increased to include both community as well as housing development. The FNSDS was funded by the First Nation Market Housing Fund.

The FNSDS is divided into four chapters, each focusing on a specific subject matter.

- Chapter 1: describes community assessment and capacity development strategies.
- Chapter 2: focuses on establishing Good Governance in a community.
- Chapter 3: identifies good design strategies and sustainable building materials and equipment.
- Chapter 4: focuses specifically on building code, project management, and construction standards.

The FNSDS is undergoing translation and will be available to all First Nations when complete. The project team is currently seeking funding to develop instructor and participant’s manuals and train the trainer manuals.

The Statement of Partnership is available on the AFN website at: <http://www.afn.ca/index.php/en/policy-areas/housing/key-issues-activities/holmes-group-atikameksheng-anishnawbek-project>.





### First Nations Market Housing Fund (FNMHF)

On April 20, 2007, the federal government announced that it would create the \$300 million First Nations Market Housing Fund (Fund). This Fund was developed to facilitate and broaden the range of housing options for residents of First Nations communities so that they may have the same housing choices and opportunities as people in non-First Nation communities. It was projected that the Fund would assist with the generation of some 25,000 housing units over 10 years.

The FNMHF has informed the AFN that as of May 26, 2015:

- 183 First Nations have chosen to work with the FNMHF.
- 79 have been approved for credit of \$725 million. This will finance an estimated 4650 loans in those 79 communities.
- The FNMHF has backed 99 loans to-date.
- 47 First Nations are approved for capacity building only – they are working toward qualifying for credit.
- 85 First Nations have used capacity development funding for more than 800 initiatives.

### Shelter Allowance as it Relates to Housing

The AFN is working to resolve housing challenges related to income assistance shelter allowance. Currently, First Nations who have CMHC's not-for-profit housing program (Section 95) in their communities are only eligible to receive the shelter allowance until the mortgages are paid in full. If, however, the First Nation implements a universal rental regime in the community, then the tenants residing in the units are eligible to collect shelter allowance. Similarly, band-owned or self-funded units are eligible as well to collect shelter allowance from income assistance clients. The benefits of this will be realized in the budgets for housing, as the First Nation will be able to collect the rent from those individuals and use it for maintenance, repair and potential remediation of mould.

A meeting was held with AANDC to seek written confirmation that those First Nations which adopt and enforce a universal rental regime will be eligible for shelter allowance. The written response has not been received. Impacted regions are primarily in the Prairies, but this also affects the Atlantic and British Columbia regions.

### First Nation Indoor Air Quality Committee – electronic Community Self-Assessment Tool (e-CSAT) project

The AFN has been active in the First Nation Indoor Air Quality Committee.

In 2011, the Auditor General of Canada found that there was not satisfactory progress addressing mould in First Nations housing. Despite having developed a strategy, the audit found that the three organizations, AANDC, CMHC and Health Canada had not:

- allocated additional funding to address mould,
- determined the magnitude of the problem,
- estimated the costs to remediate existing mould,
- completed most items in the strategy, or
- met the strategy's timelines.

As a partner in this group the AFN has been working with CMHC to develop an application for First Nations to conduct a self-assessment tool (e-CSAT) for mould in housing. The AFN is working with CMHC on furthering enhancing the tool and ensuring outcomes are achieved for all parties, federal and First Nations. This tool will help communities better understand the extent and causes of mould problems in each house and across the community, identify which houses may need attention first and to organize an effective remediation strategy. It will also help in a project to provide an estimate of the magnitude of the problem so that the three departments can answer the Auditor's criticism.

A two-year funding proposal was submitted to AANDC and received approval for fiscal year 2014/2015. This project will have two objectives: 1) to assist the three departments address the Auditor General's criticism that they have not determined the magnitude of the problem nationally; and 2) to put an electronic mould assessment tool in the hands of First Nation housing managers that will assist them to determine the extent of mould in their communities. Phase one for fiscal year 2014/15 was initiated February 2015 in due to late approval of funding. The project team consists of AANDC, CMHC, Health Canada, and the First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC). The intent is to select random communities in the 10 regions where an assessment as to the extent of mould in a random sample of homes in each of the communities would be



conducted. The data collected from the homes will be collected and managed by FNIGC and treated with respect to the OCAP principles. FNIGC will generate a report which will attempt to develop and estimate of the extent of mould in First Nations communities in Canada. It will have a secondary objective which is to provide housing managers with an electronic mould assessment tool to assist them in assessing the magnitude of mould in their own communities and to assist them in planning how to mitigate or remediate the mould problems.

## NEXT STEPS – MOVING FORWARD

- Create greater awareness and understanding of First Nations' critical housing needs and encourage investments and adequate resources.
- Research other options for addressing the housing shortfall.
- Continue to utilize the First Nations National Housing Liaison Committee to advocate for adequate funding to address the overcrowding, backlog of housing and repairs and renovations.
- Ongoing exploration on insurance, financing alternatives, new building techniques, eviction processes and other challenges.
- Ongoing research into building code requirements for log and square timber frame homes.
- Draft a memorandum of understanding outlining the willingness and commitment of both AFN and the FNMHF to work together to initiate discussion on the transition of the Fund to First Nations control.
- Explore opportunities for partnerships with other organizations such as Frontiers Foundation.
- Together with the AFN Housing technicians prepare to work in partnership with AANDC on the next evaluation of the Housing program.
- Continue to support and model promising practices from the AFN-Holmes Group-Atikameksheng Anishnawbek Pilot Project.
- Continue with the electronic Community Self-Assessment Tool project.
- Continue to work with the FNIGC to ensure access to good data regarding the national housing situation.



## INFRASTRUCTURE

**The AFN works at the direction of the Chiefs Committee on Housing and Infrastructure (CCoHI) to ensure that First Nations are adequately represented in initiatives as they affect First Nations Housing and Infrastructure; to support communities and leadership in their advocacy; to maintain up-to-date information on First Nations Housing and Infrastructure and provide information upon request; and, to advocate, support and assist First Nations in the development and maintenance of regional housing and infrastructure strategies, as required.**

### KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

Access to clean drinking water is a universal human right, recently affirmed by the United Nations, and Canada has a responsibility to ensure clean drinking water is accessible to all First Nations communities. However, First Nations water quality continues to be a national concern. The Government of Canada must engage with First Nations on a plan to implement the recommendations in the 2014 Pre-Budget Submission and a clear plan of investment for the identified \$4.7 billion in the area of water treatment systems. For example, the Alternative Federal Budget 2013 identified that the funding required to address the First Nations water crisis (\$1 billion per year) could be overcome by raising the tax rate for Canada's corporations by a mere 0.5% (from 15% to 15.5%).

#### **Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act**

The *Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act* came into force November 1, 2013. The Act enables the government to develop enforceable federal regulations that apply to the provision of drinking water, the effective treatment of wastewater and the protection of sources of drinking water on First Nation lands. First Nations expressed deep concern that this Act would infringe upon their jurisdiction, while creating a requirement to adhere to

standards that are unachievable within current funding and capacity levels.

A process for the development of regulations is underway on a region-by-region basis and being phased in groupings of 3 regions – phase 1 will include the Atlantic, Yukon and the Northwest Territories. Regulations are to be consistent with existing provincial and territorial regulations in each region, with adaptations to address the realities on First Nation lands.

Four compliance and enforcement models will be considered:

- an independent aggregation(s) of First Nations;
- a compliance regime implemented by provincial/territorial governments;
- a compliance regime implemented by the federal government; or
- a combination of all these scenarios.

Discussions with First Nations and provincial/territorial governments over the next few months will inform the compliance and enforcement model on a region-by-region basis.

To date, AANDC has received minimal input from First Nations on the drafting of regulations. Clarity is required from AANDC on their intent and expectations on the form and content of input from First Nations. There are indications that Aboriginal Representative Organizations (ARO) funding proposals would be considered to assist First Nations organizations gather input from their member First Nations. Health Canada has developed very preliminary options regarding compliance and enforcement for those areas of the Act where they are directly responsible, such as sampling and monitoring.

#### **Water and Wastewater Infrastructure**

Budget 2014 allocated \$323.4 million over two years to continue the First Nations Water and Wastewater Action Plan. There was no new funding announced in Budget 2015. The current allocation provided in Budget 2014 will sunset on March 31, 2016.



Budget 2014 also re-announced funds from Budget 2013 – \$155 million over 10 years for First Nation infrastructure as part of the new Building Canada Fund. This equals \$15.5 million per year for the next 10 years. This amount will be combined with the First Nations Gas Tax Fund allocation, approximately \$26 million annually, for a total amount of \$42 million to be available annually under a renewed First Nations Infrastructure Fund (FNIF). The previous FNIF was heavily oversubscribed indicating a huge need for basic community infrastructure funding. The Gas Tax Fund, which was sun-setting in 2014 for municipalities, was guaranteed in 2011 to be continued beyond 2014. While there has been no similar official announcement that the First Nation portion is guaranteed beyond 2014, this suggests that the First Nations' portion of the GTF is being allocated for this purpose. AANDC officials have committed to confirm in writing that the GTF will continue for First Nations as it has for municipalities.

#### **National First Nations Water Strategy**

Resolution 45/2012 directs the AFN to continue to actively facilitate discussion and seek input from First Nations, regional technical working groups and other organizations to further refine the development of a comprehensive National First Nations Water Strategy (NFWWS), to be overseen by the Chiefs Committee on Housing and Infrastructure. In addition, Resolution 81/2012 directs the AFN to follow Indigenous protocols and laws to ensure that ceremonies are conducted to honour the water spirits to ensure that work is done in a proper and respectful way.

The AFN continues to seek input on the Strategy and the Water Declaration for ongoing improvement.

#### **Summative Evaluation of the Education Facilities and Community Infrastructure Sub-Programs (Community Facilities and Maintenance Program)**

The AANDC Evaluation, Performance Measurement and Review Branch (EPMRB) is conducting a summative evaluation of the two sub-programs of the Capital Facilities and Maintenance Program (CFMP): (1) The Education Facilities sub-program; and (2) the Community Infrastructure sub-program. The evaluation will focus on the relevance and the performance of the two sub-programs. The evaluation consists of literature review, document and file review, key informant interviews, and case studies. An evaluation working group consists of policy and regional program staff from AANDC, provincial

representatives and AFN and regional technicians. The working group will be responsible for reviewing, validating and commenting on methodology, preliminary findings and final report. A draft report has been provided to AFN and other regional technicians for review and comments.

#### **First Nation Water and Wastewater Action Plan Evaluation**

AANDC has completed an evaluation of the performance and relevance of the First Nation Water and Wastewater Action Plan (FNWWAP). The AFN participated as a member of the working group along with the AANDC Community Infrastructure Branch. The evaluation looked at the performance of the program since it replaced the First Nations Water Management Strategy (FNWMS) in 2008. AANDC approved the report in September. Health Canada has also approved the report and action plan. Web posting and publication of the evaluation is pending. The report supported what AFN has stated many times about the proposed water and wastewater regulations:

*“While the development of the Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act is an essential first step in ensuring there is a measured standard around safety of drinking water, it is essential that First Nations are fully engaged in the development of Regulations; that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined; and that First Nations actually have the capacity and means to meet the Regulations against which they will be held.”*

The final report is dated September 2013 and can be found at: [http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-HQ-AEV/STAGING/texte-text/ev\\_wwap\\_1400003583366\\_eng.pdf](http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-HQ-AEV/STAGING/texte-text/ev_wwap_1400003583366_eng.pdf).

#### **First Nations Fire Protection Strategy**

The Aboriginal Firefighters Association of Canada has shared recommendations with AANDC for priority areas under a renewed fire strategy, with the aim of refocusing activities around tangible, measurable deliverables. Proposed activities include enhancing fire prevention, improving inspections, exploring options to improve compliance with infrastructure codes on reserve, and modernizing the department's Levels of Service for Fire Protection Services (which directs support for training, capital investments, etc.). AANDC and AFAC continue to discuss updates to the strategy. AFAC has partnered with AANDC on the BeFireSafe campaign.



There have been several fire fatalities in First Nations communities in the past year. The AFN attributes many of these fires and resulting injuries and fatalities to the inadequate funding for community fire services and equipment as a direct consequence of the 2% funding cap. National Chief Bellegarde communicated this concern directly to Minister Valcourt.

### **The Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples study on First Nations Housing and Infrastructure**

The Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples is conducting a study on the challenges relating to First Nations housing and infrastructure on reserves. The committee has held meetings in urban centres and visited selected First Nations communities.

The AFN presented to the Committee on November 18, 2014. The AFN took the opportunity to bring to the attention of the Committee an AANDC presentation explaining their practice of reallocating capital (CFMP) funds to other programs, namely education and social. The presentation revealed that over the past six years over a half a billion dollars was reallocated to these other programs. The reason cited was the impact of the 2% cap on Indian Program funding instituted in 1996. The practice has placed First Nations in a position where they are not able to deliver the services expected under their funding agreements.

An interim report was released February 2015, and the Committee is continuing this study and examining alternative and innovative approaches to housing.

- Follow progress of the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples study of First Nations Housing and Infrastructure.
- Continue to support fire prevention services in First Nations communities and the efforts and activities of duly mandated firefighting organizations, as directed in Resolution 33/2011.
- Continue to participate on the Transportation of Dangerous Goods General Policy Advisory Council.
- Continue to implement the National First Nations Water Strategy, with updates as needed, and promote the National First Nations Water Declaration.

## **NEXT STEPS – MOVING FORWARD**

- Continue monitoring developments for the *Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act*, assist Nations in preparation as required and continue discussion with the First Nations Technical Water Advisory Group (FNTWAG) to synchronize regional efforts.
- Continue to advocate for increased infrastructure funding, facilitate opportunities for investigation of alternative financing options, continue to make links from innovative technology processes and systems to provide cost-effective infrastructure management, and provide opportunities for information sharing and interactions through conferences, tradeshow, seminars, etc.





## EMERGENCY ISSUES MANAGEMENT

**The AFN carries feedback and recommendations from First Nations and regional organizations for improvements in effective consideration of and response to First Nations emergency issues management before, during and after events that befall communities.**

The AFN works toward the objective of increasing consideration of First Nations Emergency Issues Management (EIM) through:

- Advocating for fair, adequate, and equitable emergency management and response services;
- Facilitating discussion on emergency management and response;
- Analyzing policies and advocating for change, improvement, and the inclusion of First Nations in issues of direct concern;
- Initiating and engaging in discussion on current emergency issues management and response for First Nations; and,
- Analysis and knowledge sharing with various First Nations groups and organizations regarding emergency issues management and response.

There are various funding arrangements or agreements between Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) and the provinces for the delivery of emergency management services for First Nations communities. These agreements ensure that First Nations have access to comparable emergency assistance services available to other nearby non-First Nation communities in their respective province.

### KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

#### **Aboriginal Affairs Working Group – Disaster Mitigation and Emergency Management Services (DMEMS) in Aboriginal Communities Working Group**

The AFN has been participating in one of the sub working groups under the larger Provincial/Territorial Aboriginal Affairs Ministers Working Group (AAWG).

The DMEMS working group provides support on various aspects of First Nations emergency management and response issues, and the development of an action plan to assess and identify gaps and shortfalls between First Nations, provincial governments and various emergency management organizations.

#### **Domestic Group on Emergency Management (DGEM)**

The AFN participates in Public Safety Canada's Domestic Group on Emergency Management. DGEM provides advice on the development of and supports the implementation of Emergency Management (EM) policies, plans and programs to mitigate against, prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies for a safe and resilient Canada. The DGEM is co-chaired by the Senior Officials Responsible for Emergency Management (SOREM). The AFN agreed to participate to ensure First Nations interests are taken into consideration.

The DGEM's draft mandate is to undertake the following activities:

- sharing and disseminating information and advice across existing members' networks and within federal/provincial/territorial channels, where relevant;
- participating in the Canadian implementation of and reporting on the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction;
- sharing views on the orientation of the emergency management system to address Canada's evolving hazard and risk environment, including potential means to increase societal resilience;
- engaging in the development and delivery of outreach/awareness initiatives (e.g., annual Emergency Preparedness Week);
- participating in the Advisory Committee to Canada's Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, reporting back through existing networks, and promoting the annual National Roundtable; and,
- identifying linkages and pursuing new partnership opportunities, as they arise, to advance emergency management initiatives across Canada.



The DGEM consists of many first responder groups such as Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs, Canadian Centre for Emergency Preparedness, Canadian Interoperability Technology Interest Group, Canadian Medical Association, Canadian Nurses Association, Canadian Red Cross, Canadian Veterinary Medical Association of Canada, Canadian Volunteer Fire Services Association, Emergency Medical Services Chiefs of Canada, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Paramedic Association of Canada, The Salvation Army, Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of Canada, St. John Ambulance, Mennonite Disaster Service, and Canadian Council of Emergency Management Organizations.

### **AANDC Emergency Notifications**

Through cooperation with the AANDC Emergency Management Directorate (EMD), the AFN has been providing representative regional organizations with timely notifications on emergency issues which affect First Nations.

### **Canadian Red Cross**

The AFN maintains an ongoing relationship and engagement with the Canadian Red Cross and has been exploring a “Relationship Protocol” that can be effectively operationalized between the organizations. The Red Cross is interested in working together, in a mutually respectful and supportive manner, with First Nations to explore culturally appropriate and sustainable ways to deliver its three key programmatic areas across the country: Emergencies & Disasters, Community Health, and Prevention & Safety, which includes Respect Education: Promoting Respect, Preventing Violence; First Aid, and; Swim Safety.

### **Canada Transportation Act Review**

A review is currently underway on the *Canada Transportation Act* (CTA), which is the federal framework legislation for Canada’s national transportation system and includes provisions related to air and railway transportation, and the mandate and operation of the Canadian Transportation Agency. The CTA review will examine whether Canada’s transportation system has the capacity and adaptability that will allow it, and its users, to respond effectively to evolving international and domestic conditions and markets looking out 20-30 years. Preliminary conversations with stakeholders helped with the development of a public Discussion Paper however,

no feedback has been received from First Nations. The AFN will facilitate a session at the 2015 AGA to inform First Nations and seek input.

### **Dangerous Goods**

The AFN was invited to become a permanent member of the Transportation of Dangerous Goods General Policy Advisory Council (Advisory Council) in March 2014.

The Advisory Council was established in 1985 under the *Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act* to counsel the Minister of Transport on various strategic, safety and social issues relating to the transportation of dangerous goods. The Advisory Council members and other subject matter experts, attending as invited guests, continue to meet at least twice a year in Ottawa. The Council has been very active in providing recommendations to improved rail safety in response to the Lac Megantic rail disaster. Since then Transport Canada has improved rail tank car design and strengthened regulations in response to the Transportation Safety Board report on the disaster.

Following Transport Minister Raitt’s announcement on April 23, 2014, to create a task force that brings stakeholders such as municipalities, first responders, railways, and shippers together to strengthen emergency response capacity across the country, a Transportation Dangerous Goods (TDG) Emergency Response (ER) Task Force has been established to conduct further research, assess, evaluate and make recommendations to advance and make improvements to the Emergency Response Assistance Plan (ERAP) program. First Nation representation on this task force is through the Aboriginal Firefighters Association of Canada.

## **NEXT STEPS – MOVING FORWARD**

- The AFN will continue its involvement in the DGEM group and the Advisory Council on the Transportation of Dangerous Goods.
- The AFN will continue to develop its connections and networking to coordinate EIM efforts between representative regions, organizations and communities, as well as with federal and provincial organizations, and engage with First Nations in an effort to continue to build knowledge, capacity, and possible training.
- Where appropriate, the AFN will continue to provide updates and reports on its activities to AANDC, seek



involvement and support with federal counterparts, and develop a more concerted connection with AANDC's Emergency Issues Management Directorate on related issues and joint efforts.

- The AFN will renew its relationship with the Canadian Red Cross through the signing of the Relationship Protocol.



Consolidated financial statements of the

# **National Indian Brotherhood**

March 31, 2015

DRAFT



# National Indian Brotherhood

March 31, 2015

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## Independent Auditor's Report

To the Executive Council of  
National Indian Brotherhood

We have audited the accompanying consolidated financial statements of the National Indian Brotherhood (the "Corporation"), which comprise the consolidated statement of financial position as at March 31, 2015, and the consolidated statements of operations, changes in net assets (deficit) and cash flows for the year then ended, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

### Management's Responsibility for the Consolidated Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these consolidated financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of consolidated financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

### Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these consolidated financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we comply with ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the consolidated financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the consolidated financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the consolidated financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the consolidated financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the consolidated financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

**Opinion**

In our opinion, the consolidated financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Corporation as at March 31, 2015, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

Chartered Professional Accountants, Chartered Accountants  
Licensed Public Accountants

July 7, 2015

DRAFT

# National Indian Brotherhood

## Consolidated statement of operations year ended March 31, 2015

	2015	2014
	\$	\$
<b>Revenue</b>		
Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development		
Canada (AANDC) (Schedule 1)	6,893,346	10,212,639
Employment and Social Development Canada (Schedule 2)	165,868	-
Public Safety (Schedule 2)	-	76,377
Alberta Justice and Solicitor General (Schedule 2)	-	10,000
Justice Canada (Schedule 2)	-	112,320
Human Resources and Skills Development (Schedule 2)	-	250,000
Environment Canada (Schedule 2)	149,998	287,351
Commission for Environment Cooperation (Schedule 2)	-	50,151
Nuclear Waste Management Organization (Schedule 2)	117,000	230,654
Health Canada (Schedule 2)	3,200,653	3,517,736
Canadian Partnership Against Cancer (Schedule 2)	211,630	210,828
Fisheries and Oceans Canada (Schedule 2)	560,000	575,956
Other department (Schedule 2)	1,671,886	1,324,006
Trust Fund (Schedule 3)	24,500	28,580
	<b>12,994,881</b>	<b>16,886,598</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Advertising, promotion and publications	21,446	244,429
Amortization of capital assets	19,457	42,517
Insurance	32,667	31,291
Miscellaneous	5,402	5,387
Bad debt	-	67,964
Office expenses	1,027,716	1,063,890
Professional fees	658,354	2,202,520
Regional service delivery	1,204,872	1,294,675
Rent	832,167	1,163,138
Salaries and benefits	6,587,457	7,806,366
Travel and meetings	2,874,084	3,236,436
Scholarship	16,000	16,000
	<b>13,279,622</b>	<b>17,174,613</b>
<b>Deficiency of revenue over expenses</b>	<b>(284,741)</b>	<b>(288,015)</b>

# National Indian Brotherhood

## Consolidated statement of financial position as at March 31, 2015

	2015	2014
	\$	\$
<b>Assets</b>		
Current assets		
Cash	125,301	271,803
Asset held In Trust (Note 3)	15,281	22,681
Grants and contributions receivable (Note 4)	569,976	986,279
Other accounts receivable	772,577	917,652
GST/HST recoverable	210,869	428,446
Inventory	27,613	17,717
Prepaid expenses	111,318	106,915
	<b>1,832,935</b>	<b>2,751,493</b>
Prepaid expenses	525,440	598,757
Capital assets (Note 5)	140,111	159,568
	<b>2,498,486</b>	<b>3,509,818</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Current liabilities		
Bank loan	785,779	-
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	1,725,416	3,024,432
Government remittances payable	52,055	64,506
In Trust liability (Note 3)	15,281	22,681
Deferred contributions (Note 6)	14,449	178,638
Excess contributions (Note 7)	494,555	420,372
Current portion of long-term debt (Note 8)	96,000	103,497
	<b>3,183,535</b>	<b>3,814,126</b>
Long-term debt (Note 8)	368,000	464,000
	<b>3,551,535</b>	<b>4,278,126</b>
Contingencies and commitments (Note 9 and 12)		
<b>Net assets (deficit)</b>		
Invested in capital assets	140,111	159,568
Restricted funds (Note 10)	145,324	163,083
Unrestricted deficiency - general operations	(1,338,484)	(1,090,959)
	<b>(1,053,049)</b>	<b>(768,308)</b>
	<b>2,498,486</b>	<b>3,509,818</b>

On behalf of the Executive Council

\_\_\_\_\_  
Perry Bellegarde, National Chief

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ghislain Picard, Regional Chief, Management Committee



# National Indian Brotherhood

Consolidated statement of changes in net assets (deficit)  
year ended March 31, 2015

	Invested in capital assets	Restricted funds (Note 10)	Unrestricted deficiency - general operations	<u>Total</u>	
	\$	\$	\$	2015 \$	2014 \$
Balance, beginning of year	159,568	163,083	(1,090,959)	(768,308)	(480,293)
Deficiency of revenue over expenses	-	(17,759)	(266,982)	(284,741)	(288,015)
Amortization of capital assets	(19,457)	-	19,457	-	-
<b>Balance, end of year</b>	<b>140,111</b>	<b>145,324</b>	<b>(1,338,484)</b>	<b>(1,053,049)</b>	<b>(768,308)</b>

# National Indian Brotherhood

## Consolidated statement of cash flows year ended March 31, 2015

	2015	2014
	\$	\$
Net inflow (outflow) of cash related to the following activities:		
<b>Operating</b>		
Deficiency of revenue over expenses	(284,741)	(288,015)
Items not affecting cash		
Amortization of capital assets	19,457	42,517
Loss on disposal of assets	-	250,144
Decrease in deferred contributions	(164,189)	(167,787)
Increase in excess contributions	74,183	420,372
	(355,290)	257,231
Changes in non-cash operating working capital items (Note 11)	(473,494)	1,262,314
	(828,784)	1,519,545
<b>Investing</b>		
Purchase of capital assets	-	(172,873)
	-	(172,873)
<b>Financing</b>		
Net change in Bank loan	785,779	-
Repayment of long-term debt	(103,497)	(461,477)
	682,282	(461,477)
Net cash inflow (outflow)	(146,502)	885,195
<b>Cash (bank overdraft), beginning of year</b>	<b>271,803</b>	<b>(613,392)</b>
<b>Cash, end of year</b>	<b>125,301</b>	<b>271,803</b>

# National Indian Brotherhood

## Notes to the consolidated financial statements

March 31, 2015

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### 1. Description of the organization

The National Indian Brotherhood (the "Corporation") was incorporated under Part II of the Canada Corporations Act on September 29, 1970. In June 2014, the Corporation received a Certificate of Continuance under the Canada Not-For-Profit Corporations Act. The Corporation has the following objectives:

- to assist and to work towards solutions for problems facing the First Nations people;
- to operate as a national body to both represent the First Nations people and to disseminate information to them;
- to study, in conjunction with First Nations representatives across Canada, the problems confronting First Nations and to make representations to the government and other organizations on their behalf;
- to assist in retaining the First Nations culture and values; and
- to act as the national spokesperson for First Nations throughout Canada.

The Corporation acts as the secretariat to the Assembly of First Nations ("AFN").

The Corporation is a not-for-profit organization and, as such, is not subject to income taxes.

### 2. Significant accounting policies

The consolidated financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations and include the following significant accounting policies:

#### *Basis of presentation*

The financial statements include the accounts of the Corporation and those of the National Indian Brotherhood Trust Fund which is controlled by the Corporation. All significant inter-organizational transactions and balances have been eliminated on consolidation.

#### *Revenue recognition*

The Corporation follows the deferral method of accounting for contributions.

Unrestricted contributions are recognized as revenue of the appropriate program when received or receivable if the amount to be received can be reasonably estimated and collection is reasonably assured.

Restricted contributions are recognized as revenue of the appropriate program in the year in which the related expenses are incurred.

Contributions received towards the acquisition of capital assets are deferred and amortized to income on the same basis as the related depreciable capital assets are amortized.

#### *Financial instruments*

The Corporation initially measures its financial assets and liabilities at fair value. The Corporation subsequently measures all its financial assets and liabilities at amortized cost except for cash which is measured at fair value.

#### *Capital assets*

Capital assets are recorded at cost. Contributed capital assets are recorded at estimated fair value at the date of contribution.

Amortization is provided on the straight-line basis over the estimated useful lives of the assets as follows:

Computer equipment	3 years
Office equipment	3 years
Leasehold improvements	10 years

# National Indian Brotherhood

## Notes to the consolidated financial statements

March 31, 2015

### 2. Significant accounting policies (continued)

#### *Excess contributions*

The excess of revenue over expenses of some programs may require repayment and is recorded as a liability. When approval to retain the funds has been received, the excess is then recorded as revenue.

#### *Allocation of expenses*

Allocation of administrative expenses between the programs or funding agencies is done in accordance with the stipulated basis of allocation and maximum amounts or percentages mentioned in each of the different contribution agreements entered into by the Corporation.

#### *Use of estimates*

The preparation of these consolidated financial statements in conformity with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported in the consolidated financial statements and the accompanying notes. In the opinion of management, these consolidated financial statements reflect, within reasonable limits of materiality, all adjustments necessary to present fairly the results for the years presented. Actual results could differ from these estimates. Assumptions are used in estimating the collectibility of grants and contributions receivable, other accounts receivable, the amount of inventory reserves, useful life of capital assets, the amount of accrued liabilities and the allocation of expenses.

### 3. Asset held in trust

The Corporation is holding in trust an education fund totaling \$15,281 (2014 - \$22,681) for Kelly Morrisseau's children. These funds were donated by individuals and organizations.

### 4. Grants and contributions receivable

Grants and contributions receivable are as follows:

	2015	2014
	\$	\$
Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC)	364,593	284,591
Canadian Partnership Against Cancer	297	230,148
Commission for Environmental Cooperation	-	32,125
Dalhousie University	-	19,994
Health Canada	104,587	3,505
Human Resources and Skills Development Canada	-	25,000
Fisheries and Oceans Canada	38,000	53,956
Environment Canada	57,499	174,901
Nuclear Waste Management Organization	-	123,373
Justice Canada	-	33,686
Province of Ontario	5,000	5,000
	<b>569,976</b>	<b>986,279</b>

# National Indian Brotherhood

Notes to the consolidated financial statements

March 31, 2015

## 5. Capital assets

	2015		2014
	Cost	Accumulated amortization	Net book value
	\$	\$	\$
Computer equipment	22,470	21,961	509
Office equipment	71,689	71,689	-
Leasehold improvements	172,874	33,272	139,602
	267,033	126,922	140,111
			159,568

## 6. Deferred contributions

Changes in the deferred contributions balance are as follows:

	2015	2014
	\$	\$
Balance, beginning of year	178,638	346,425
Contributions received during the year	11,463,449	15,265,381
Contributions recognized as revenue during the year	(11,587,719)	(15,391,527)
Balance, end of year	54,368	220,279
Other deferred revenue	14,449	54,368
Other revenue recognized	(54,368)	(96,009)
	14,449	178,638

The balance, end of year is comprised of the following:

	2015	2014
	\$	\$
SSHRC - Fishers Western Indigenous Knowledge System	14,449	-
Annual General Assembly	-	51,368
Canadian Partnership Against Cancer	-	82,031
Canadian Teachers Federation	-	3,000
Dalhousie University	-	39,239
Other	-	3,000
	14,449	178,638



# National Indian Brotherhood

## Notes to the consolidated financial statements

March 31, 2015

### 7. Excess contributions

Excess contributions are as follows:

	2015	2014
	\$	\$
Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC)	494,555	420,372

### 8. Long-term debt

	2015	2014
	\$	\$
Term installment loan, maturing January 2020, payable by 5 consecutive monthly payments of \$80,000 followed by 75 consecutive monthly installments of \$8,000 for capital bearing interest at prime plus 1%	464,000	560,000
Capital lease obligation, maturing in 2015, bearing interest at 3%, payable by monthly installments of \$1,793, including interest	-	7,497
	464,000	567,497
Current portion	96,000	103,497
	368,000	464,000

Principal payments required in each of the next five years are as follows:

	\$
2016	96,000
2017	96,000
2018	96,000
2019	96,000
2020 and thereafter	80,000

### 9. Contingencies

The Corporation receives funding from various government agencies based on specific program needs and budgets and allocates certain expenses to the various programs. In many cases, the funding agent has the right to review the accounting records to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of their programs. At this time, no estimate of the requirements, if any, to reimburse the agencies can be made. Management of the Corporation believes that their allocations of expenses are fair and appropriate in the circumstances. Adjustments to the consolidated financial statements as a result of these reviews, if any, will be recorded in the period in which they become known.

#### *Credit facility*

The Corporation has a banking agreement which establishes a demand credit facility for general business purposes up to a maximum of \$2,500,000, bearing interest at prime plus 1%. The loan is secured by a general security agreement representing a first charge over all of the Corporation's assets. The balance outstanding at year-end is \$785,779 (2014 - \$NIL).

# National Indian Brotherhood

## Notes to the consolidated financial statements

March 31, 2015

### 10. The National Indian Brotherhood Trust Fund

The consolidated financial statements include the accounts of the National Indian Brotherhood Trust Fund which is controlled by the Corporation. A summary description of this controlled entity is provided below.

The Trust Fund was established as a registered charity under paragraph 149 (i)(f) of the Income Tax Act and is comprised of the Language and Literacy Fund, the Youth Healing Fund, the Research Sponsor Fund and the Heroes of Our Times Fund.

Restricted funds are comprised of the following and are to be used for the purposes described below:

- The Language and Literacy Fund was established to promote education of First Nations' citizens by way of scholarship awards and the promotion of research, seminars and conferences of an academic nature into First Nations' rights, histories and cultures among First Nations' peoples as well as the Canadian public.
- The Youth Healing Fund was established in 1996 to support efforts to improve the self-esteem and profile of First Nations' Youth in Canada by organizing events which may bring together First Nations' Youth with political leaders and elders for spiritual and leadership training and support in the Youth's representation of their Nations at conferences and gatherings in Canada and internationally.
- The Research Sponsor Fund was established in 2001 with the purpose to participate in research into economic, social and scientific problems of Indian communities with a view to proposing solutions to these problems.
- The Heroes of Our Times Fund was established in 2001 with the purpose of providing scholarship awards. The awards are made available to applicants who are able to demonstrate a proven record of intellectual and academic ability, integrity of character, interest and respect for fellow human beings, ability to lead, and the initiative to use their talents to the fullest. The awards are named in memory of the following figures of native history: Jake Fire (Criminology), Tommy Pierce (Native Studies), Walter Dieter (Social Work), Omar Peters (Political Science), Robert Smallboy (Medicine), James Gosnell (Law). The awards are presented each year at the Annual General Assembly of First Nations.

The Corporation appoints the Executive Council of the Trust Fund and ensures that the Trust Fund operates in compliance with the Corporation's Charter.

### 11. Changes in non-cash operating working capital items

	2015	2014
	\$	\$
Grants and contributions receivable	416,303	195,452
Other accounts receivable	145,075	(154,338)
GST/HST recoverable	217,577	112,807
Inventory	(9,896)	(1,949)
Prepaid expenses	68,914	330,902
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	(1,299,016)	788,941
Government remittances payable	(12,451)	(9,501)
	(473,494)	1,262,314

# National Indian Brotherhood

## Notes to the consolidated financial statements

March 31, 2015

### 12. Commitments

The Corporation is committed to future minimum lease payments under operating leases for office space and equipment for which minimum annual payments for each of the next five years are as follows:

	\$
2016	902,756
2017	855,685
2018	813,760
2019	809,572
2020	57,163
	3,438,936

### 13. Executive salaries

By virtue of an Annual General Assembly Resolution (62/98), the National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) receives a salary which is adjusted annually in connection with the Consumer Price Index. Similarly, by virtue of a Confederacy of Nations resolution and an Executive Committee resolution, each Regional Chief is allocated a Director's fee. Management and unelected officials are compensated within average industry remuneration levels for their positions.

### 14. Pension Plan

The Corporation contributes to a defined contribution pension plan for its employees and Regional Chiefs. Contributions are up to 6% of an employee's salary. The employer's contributions for the year were \$331,542 (2014 - \$385,680).

### 15. Financial instruments

#### *Fair value*

The fair value of long-term debt is determined using the present value of future cash flows under current financing agreements, based on the Corporation's current estimated borrowing rate for loans with similar terms and conditions. The fair value of the long-term debt as at March 31, 2015 approximates its carrying value.

#### *Credit risk*

The risk arises from the potential that one party to a financial instrument will fail to discharge an obligation and cause the other party to incur a financial loss.

The Corporation's various receivables represent credit provided for the Corporation's programs. The credit is provided mainly to the federal government and accordingly presents minimal credit risk to the Corporation.

The maximum credit exposure of the Corporation is represented by the fair value of the investments and various amounts receivable as presented in the consolidated statement of financial position.

#### *Interest rate risk*

Interest rate risk refers to the adverse consequences of interest rate changes on the Corporation's cash flows, financial position, investment income and interest expenses. The Corporation's cash, investments, long-term debt and demand credit facility are exposed to interest rate changes. The long-term debt generally bears interest at fixed rates. Consequently, the cash flow exposure is not significant. However, the fair value of loans having fixed rates of interest could fluctuate because of changes in market interest rates. The interest bearing demand credit facility has a limited exposure to interest rate risk due to its short-term maturity. The impact of adverse changes in rates is not considered material.

# National Indian Brotherhood

## Schedule 1 - Statement of operations

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC)  
year ended March 31, 2015

	Basic Organizational Capacity	Additions to Reserve	Specific Claims	Personal Education Credits	Social Development
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
<b>Revenue</b>					
Contribution/Grant - AANDC	4,500,000	255,000	125,000	1,396,087	71,070
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-	-
Registration fees	-	-	-	-	-
	4,500,000	255,000	125,000	1,396,087	71,070
<b>Expenses</b>					
Advertising, promotion and publications	5,135	88	170	2,474	51
Allocation of administrative expenses	-	-	-	180,249	-
Amortization of capital assets	-	-	-	-	-
Insurance	18,591	421	206	3,348	-
Miscellaneous	240	-	-	-	-
Office expenses	215,656	8,077	4,713	102,098	7,043
Professional fees	79,410	33,990	28,958	8,438	700
Regional service delivery	1,004,429	-	-	-	-
Rent	261,677	16,354	6,293	105,357	4,927
Salaries and benefits	2,768,212	142,531	41,773	671,632	65,604
Travel and meetings	313,551	54,317	43,554	322,491	3,136
	4,666,901	255,778	125,667	1,396,087	81,461
<b>Deficiency of revenue over expenses</b>	<b>(166,901)</b>	<b>(778)</b>	<b>(667)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(10,391)</b>

# National Indian Brotherhood

## Schedule 1 - Statement of operations (continued)

### Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) year ended March 31, 2015

	National Working Group on Natural Resource Dev.	E-Community Design, Capacity and Coordination	E-CSAT E-Community Self- Assessment Tool	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$
<b>Revenue</b>				
Contribution/Grant - AANDC	300,000	112,650	133,539	6,893,346
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	10,043,452
Registration fees	-	-	-	54,564
	300,000	112,650	133,539	114,623
				10,212,639
<b>Expenses</b>				
Advertising, promotion and publications	419	-	-	8,337
Allocation of administrative expenses	-	-	-	180,249
Amortization of capital assets	-	-	-	-
Insurance	513	-	-	23,079
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	240
Office expenses	25,540	1,002	6,717	370,846
Professional fees	61,067	1,051	62,548	276,162
Regional service delivery	-	-	-	1,004,429
Rent	5,808	12,620	3,005	416,041
Salaries and benefits	58,498	98,189	54,133	3,900,572
Travel and meetings	148,587	1,007	7,136	893,779
	300,432	113,869	133,539	7,073,734
	(432)	(1,219)	-	(180,388)
<b>Deficiency of revenue over expenses</b>				(226,803)



# National Indian Brotherhood

## Schedule 2 - Statement of operations

### Other funding agencies

#### year ended March 31, 2015

	Employment and Social Development Canada	Environment Canada	Nuclear Waste Management Organization	Health Canada	Canadian Partnership Against Cancer
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
<b>Revenue</b>					
Contribution/Grant - Other	165,154	149,998	117,000	3,165,146	129,599
Contribution/Grant - Prior Years	-	-	-	-	82,031
Sale of publications	-	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous	714	-	-	35,507	-
Registration fees	-	-	-	-	-
Trade show Fees	-	-	-	-	-
	165,868	149,998	117,000	3,200,653	211,630
<b>Expenses</b>					
Advertising, promotion and publications	67	-	36	4,492	51
Allocation of administrative expenses	-	6,348	13,872	288,538	19,240
Amortization of capital assets	-	-	-	5,486	-
Insurance	272	450	128	5,462	-
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	2,500	-
Bad debt	-	-	-	-	-
Office expenses	9,611	2,449	9,389	240,744	36,255
Professional fees	4,270	35,000	367	109,026	1,645
Regional service delivery	-	-	-	71,422	-
Rent	10,450	14,712	8,524	232,810	8,225
Salaries and benefits	112,230	52,559	70,086	1,518,279	112,007
Travel and meetings	29,940	38,641	14,598	723,297	34,708
	166,840	150,159	117,000	3,202,056	212,131
<b>Deficiency of revenue over expenses</b>	(972)	(161)	-	(1,403)	(501)

# National Indian Brotherhood

Schedule 2 - Statement of operations (continued)  
Other funding agencies  
year ended March 31, 2015

	Fisheries & Oceans Canada	Other	Total
	\$	\$	\$
<b>Revenue</b>			
Contribution/Grant - Other	560,000	88,025	4,374,922
Contribution/Grant - Prior Years	-	42,239	124,270
Sale of publications	-	99	99
Miscellaneous	-	763,206	799,427
Registration fees	-	645,620	645,620
Trade show Fees	-	132,697	132,697
	560,000	1,671,886	6,077,035
<b>Expenses</b>			
Advertising, promotion and publications	-	8,463	13,109
Allocation of administrative expenses	40,726	(548,973)	(180,249)
Amortization of capital assets	-	13,971	19,457
Insurance	850	2,426	9,588
Miscellaneous	-	150	2,650
Bad debt	-	-	-
Office expenses	20,558	337,864	656,870
Professional fees	5,615	224,333	380,256
Regional service delivery	102,000	27,021	200,443
Rent	32,708	108,697	416,126
Salaries and benefits	220,833	600,891	2,686,885
Travel and meetings	138,616	978,694	1,958,494
	561,906	1,753,537	6,163,629
<b>Deficiency of revenue over expenses</b>	<b>(1,906)</b>	<b>(81,651)</b>	<b>(86,594)</b>
			6,705,196
			(59,817)

# National Indian Brotherhood

Schedule 3 - Statement of operations

National Indian Brotherhood Trust Fund  
year ended March 31, 2015

	General Fund	Language and Literacy Fund	Youth Healing Fund	Research Sponsor Fund	Heroes of Our Time Fund	2015	2014
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
<b>Revenue</b>							
Donations	-	-	-	-	-	-	28,580
Sponsorship	-	-	-	-	22,500	22,500	-
Miscellaneous	-	1,000	1,000	-	-	2,000	-
	-	1,000	1,000	-	22,500	24,500	28,580
<b>Expenses</b>							
Professional services	484	484	484	-	484	1,936	2,600
Miscellaneous	145	1,432	-	-	935	2,512	1,060
Scholarships	-	-	-	-	16,000	16,000	16,000
Travel	1,799	(14)	20,026	-	-	21,811	10,315
	2,428	1,902	20,510	-	17,419	42,259	29,975
<b>Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses</b>	<b>(2,428)</b>	<b>(902)</b>	<b>(19,510)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5,081</b>	<b>(17,759)</b>	<b>(1,395)</b>

