



ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS
ANNUAL REPORT 2010-11

Assembly of First Nations

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Annual General Assembly logo:

“Sharing as one” by Garry Sanipass

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NATIONAL CHIEF SHAWN A-IN-CHUT ATLEO



Together with the National Executive, I am pleased to welcome you all to the Annual General Assembly for 2011. I would like to thank our wonderful hosts, the Mi'kmaq and Maliseet Nations as well as Regional Chief Roger Augustine and the host committee. From the outset, their leadership and dedication to producing a most memorable experience and excellent Assembly have been very clear.

We will gather under the important theme that reminds us all of our historic and enduring relationships **“IN THE SPIRIT OF PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP”**. Indeed this theme seems most appropriate as we steadfastly protect our rights and responsibilities and affirm the First Nation-Crown relationships. At the same time, we advance all First Nation governments' responsibilities and jurisdictions to improve the quality of life, safety, security and prosperity of every one of our citizens.

You will have all received my report to Chiefs in June (it is also available at www.afn.ca) in an effort to ensure that all of the information is provided to you in a timely fashion. It is my hope that in this way we can all engage together in the important dialogue and deliberations looking ahead to 2011-12.

As you will see in this Annual Report, we have prepared detailed updates on all of the major issues, a full financial and organizational report as well as a report on progress made responding to all specific resolutions and your mandated direction.

Once again this year, the most important part of my work has been time spent in First Nation territories from coast-to-coast-to-coast. This continues to be the foundation of everything we do. Time spent in community with the leaders, elders, women, youth and families is what the work is all about.

These connections reinforce the role of the Assembly of First Nations as a national advocacy body standing with our leaders and bringing focus and attention to the need for action and the need for meaningful and lasting change. I continue to feel great inspiration in seeing the dedication of our leaders, the energy of our youth and the vigilance of our elders, our traditions and our ceremonies.

Our work together is all about creating the conditions so that First Nation governments themselves lead, shape and confirm solutions that protect and confirm their rights, interests and responsibilities today and for the future.

The work this year has meant active engagement with Parliament as well as through the federal election. We have also advanced efforts with all provincial governments, driven direct action and advocacy, and completed extensive work with media. We have expanded new communication approaches seizing on the power of social media and new technology to connect our peoples and our energies.

Throughout this year, we have also taken our message farther and deeper – to the heart of corporate Canada, to the boards of trade, to major policy conferences, and other venues of thousands hearing for



the first time the fundamental need for action and engagement by all Canadians. While there is still so much work ahead – I am encouraged and I do believe that our message is getting through. There are more people than ever before listening and noticing. Creating genuine understanding will require more work – but together I know that we can achieve what is needed to resume our rightful place as the Indigenous Nations of this land.

We will continue to advance the work and outcomes from this year. Using the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a framework and guide, our national Treaties strategies as well as the direction from leaders through the Planning and Dialogue Forums – we are together creating a ‘blueprint for change’.

Our agenda is clear. Based on our upcoming deliberations and your direction, we will move forward together. It has been my honour and privilege to serve you this year and I look forward to our continued work together.

Kleco, Kleco!

National Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo



REGIONAL CHIEF ROGER AUGUSTINE NEW BRUNSWICK AND PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Pjila'si. It is my honour to greet the Elders, Chiefs and delegates from across Canada at the Annual General Assembly.

This year, I have the great honour to host the 32nd Annual General Assembly (AGA) from July 12-14, 2011 in the city of Moncton, New Brunswick, on traditional Wabanaki Territory. Under the theme of "The Spirit of Peace and Friendship", this gathering will provide delegates with a meaningful opportunity to commemorate and to renew alliances that reflect the significance of our historical relationships.

During the 1700s, treaties known as the Maritime peace and friendship treaties were made with the Mi'kmaq, Maliseet and Passamaquoddy people in what was to become the Maritime Provinces. At the time, the main concerns of the British colonial administration in the period covered by these treaties were to end hostilities between themselves and the Indians and to establish ongoing peaceful relations.



These living treaties and their legacy are an important part of our history and help shape Canada's relationship with First Nations as they are solemn agreements that set out long-standing promises, mutual obligations and benefits for both parties. They have enabled us all to work collaboratively on strengthening our long-term relationship founded on the principles of trust, cooperation and mutual respect.

During the week's events, we will join together as Wabanaki people along with the Acadians to celebrate our culture and alliances. The Spirit of Peace and Friendship will be our stepping stone in maintaining links with one another and to build on our relationships by appreciating our cultural differences. We will provide inspiration to our people and to the world at large that it is possible to live in peace and friendship.

During the past nine months, I have been meeting and negotiating with several businesses, organizations and government agencies to procure an office, furniture, funding, and staff for the upcoming AGA. I have been successful in retaining an office for the Host Committee at the Delta Hotels. I have also retained three team members to assist me in the fundraising, planning and development of the cultural component of the AGA. These individuals have been seconded from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) and the Province of New Brunswick.

The artwork featured at this year's AGA is titled "Sharing as one" by Garry Sanipass. The artwork features diverse hands joining, coming together in the spirit of sharing, and forming the rays of the sun.

The Host Committee was able to retain a van to promote the upcoming AGA. I am a strong believer in promoting our event and inviting everyone to celebrate and learn from our rich Wabanaki culture. The van will be utilized to shuttle senior delegates as well as our Elders.



Events

The Regional Chief's Host Committee is responsible for the cultural component of the AGA. It is my strong belief that we represent the Mi'kmaq, the Maliseet and Passamaquoddy equally during our AGA. I have been able to recruit individuals from all Nations to help in the planning stages of the four-day event. I also believe it is very important to include our Acadian friends in the display of cultures. I have invited them to take part in our event and to walk side by side with us during the Grand Entry and become "friends" of the Assembly.

Our cultural event will commence on July 11, 2011 with the Pow Wow. This event will be held along the Petitcodiac River where a semi-permanent Indian village will be displayed. We will have the three Nations join together while dancing, drumming and sharing our story with spectators. The semi-permanent village, which will be set up for four days, will feature cultural events such as traditional storytelling and language classes.

Gala - Honouring the New Brunswick and PEI Chiefs

On the evening of July 12 at the Capitol Theatre, the Regional Chief's office will recognize and acknowledge the hard work, dedication and leadership of our NB and PEI First Nation Chiefs and their commitment to fostering better lives for their community members and the 24-hour service they provide to their membership. We will acknowledge their work in the areas of Aboriginal and Treaty rights, economic development, education, languages and literacy, health, housing, social development, land claims, environment, and fisheries, among others.

We will also be paying homage to former Regional Chief Rick Simon of the Nova Scotia/Newfoundland region. He has resigned from his position after serving 17 years as Regional Chief. The AFN Executive and the Host Committee would like to pay their respects and honour his many years of service.

The New Brunswick and PEI Chiefs will be sharing their venue with our Acadian friends where local artist Donald McGraw will be showcasing his famous "Circle of Chiefs" paintings for everyone to enjoy.

Feast

The feast is our main event to show delegates our Maritime hospitality. The event will feature local musical talents of Mi'kmaq, Maliseet, Passamaquoddy and Acadian cultures. This is where we join hands with everyone, we eat, we share stories, we sing and we dance. This event is being held on July 13, 2011 at the Moncton Coliseum.

Night of Legends

The Final Farewell will close the 2011 AGA. This is where we bid our guests a safe trip home and thank them for attending our event. We will be hosting a book signing evening with NHL hockey legend Bobby Hull following by an evening of exciting entertainment that will recognize our own legends.



Sponsors

One of the most exciting challenges to the AGA is seeking sponsorships for our cultural component of the AGA. The team needed to design a sponsorship package that would entice organizations, businesses and government to sponsor our events. We have been successful in almost reaching our goal and would like to thank the following sponsors for supporting our Assembly:

First Nation Education Initiative
Province of New Brunswick
Ulnooweeg
Metepenagiag First Nation
Burnt Church Band
Irving
NBLiquor
Enbridge

INAC
NB Power
Nova Scotia Power
Crowne Plaza
City of Moncton
Delta Moncton
L.I.U.N.A Ontario Provincial District Council

Other Initiatives

Gitpo Place: I have taken a personal initiative that I would like to share with the Assembly. I have constructed a Men's Wellness Centre in my community of Eel Ground. This centre is near and dear to my heart. My goal is to help men regain and renew their spirit. It is a centre for men to join together to share their stories, seek friendship, advice and to renew their mind, body and spirit. Gitpo Place uses traditional practices to empower our men. In its few months in operation, it has become very successful.

Scholarships, Bursaries, Awareness monies: I have also been working with various agencies in securing funding for our First Nation youth. I have been a strong advocate for education in First Nation communities. I have been able to secure \$5,000 bursaries every year for the next five years from NB Liquor for our First Nation youth who are graduating. These bursaries will come into effect in the spring of 2012. I have also been able to secure \$5,000 every year for the next five years for alcohol awareness and prevention programs among youth. This initiative will come into effect in the fall of 2011.

As you may see, it has been a very challenging but also very rewarding year. I would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone for the support in the Regional Chief's office for New Brunswick and PEI.

Welalin,

Regional Chief Roger Augustine



REGIONAL CHIEF RICK SIMON NOVA SCOTIA AND NEWFOUNDLAND



Welcome Elders, Chiefs, youth and delegates to beautiful Moncton, New Brunswick, site of this year's Annual General Assembly. Congratulations to Regional Chief Roger Augustine, his team and the Chiefs of New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island as the hosts of this year's event.

As some of you know, I have stepped down as the Regional Chief for the Nova Scotia/Newfoundland region within the Assembly of First Nations (AFN). Effective June 1, 2011, Morley Googoo, a former chief of the Waycobah First Nation, was elected as Regional Chief for a three-year term. I have no doubt that Regional Chief Googoo will do a great job for the leadership in this region, as he was involved in many aspects of the AFN's work over the past 17 years while I was Regional Chief.

It's hard to believe that 17 years has gone that fast! When I was first elected back in February 1994, Ovide Mercredi was National Chief. During my six terms as Regional Chief, I also had the opportunity to work with Phil Fontaine, Matthew Coon Come and Shawn Atleo in the position of

National Chief. The opportunity to work with such talented people will never be lost on me and the many initiatives and experiences we've shared over the years will always be with me.

I have held the portfolio or been involved in every issue that the AFN has pushed over the past 17 years and what a learning experience that has been!

Regional Chiefs Ghislain Picard of the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador (AFNQL) and Bill Erasmus of the Dene Nation are two very capable Chiefs who were there from day one of my six terms. As well, the opportunity to work with many Regional Chiefs that have come and gone during this time was something I will always be proud of, as we were all friends at the end of the day.

Some of the highlights of my time with AFN include my term as Deputy National Chief under the leadership of Phil Fontaine, a good friend who I worked with during his three terms as National Chief. As well, I will always be grateful for the mentorship that was given to me by the late Regional Chief Len Tomah of the New Brunswick/Prince Edward Island region. Len was the longest-serving Regional Chief until his untimely death a few years back and his memory and accomplishments will live on with the AFN.

To all the leaders from across Canada and beyond that have become my good friends, I thank you for the wisdom that you have shared with me.

Having been given the opportunity by my friend and current National Chief Shawn Atleo to chair the Management Committee over the past few years has been one of the biggest challenges that I have wrestled with during my career. In these times of shrinking resources and the demands that are placed on the leadership within the AFN, our ability as the Management Committee to put the AFN on solid financial footing has been a challenge. But the financial report to the Chiefs of Canada in Moncton should show



that we have done just that, taking the AFN from a \$1.3 million deficit to hopefully a zero balance. The National Chief, Regional Chiefs, staff and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Richard Jock all deserve credit for this huge undertaking and accomplishment.

So, why did I step down and what is my next plan of action? I was presented with an opportunity that was too good to pass up. I will be serving as the CEO of the Indian Brook First Nation, my home community. I look forward to this next phase of my career and using everything that I have learned to help move the community forward. I'm sure I will continue to see many of you in my new role.

In closing, I would like to thank the many Chiefs in the NS/NL region who supported me over the years as Regional Chief, as well as the Atlantic Chiefs and Chiefs of Canada who I had the privilege and honour to serve.

We'lalin,

Rick Simon
CEO, Indian Brook First Nation
Former Regional Chief, NS/NL



REGIONAL CHIEF MORLEY GOOGOO NOVA SCOTIA AND NEWFOUNDLAND

Greetings, I look forward to the tremendous opportunity to work with all of you as Regional Chief of Nova Scotia/Newfoundland. I was very honoured to accept this responsibility and want to express sincere appreciation to Regional Chief Simon. His leadership, experience and dedication set a powerful example for me and I am anxious to carry on his work and look to the future as we strengthen our organization. This Annual General Assembly will be a great opportunity for me to meet with many of you and to join in the important efforts of supporting our Nations here in the Atlantic and all across Canada.



REGIONAL CHIEF GHISLAIN PICARD QUEBEC AND LABRADOR



The First Nations of our territories continue their efforts to develop our economies and improve the living conditions of our populations. Our children are our most precious resource and the conditions under which they are raised and educated remain a major concern. Our commitment to action is met with inertia and continual questioning nobody wants to respond to. We can ask ourselves whether days of patience and compromise are now gone, especially when it comes to the future of our youth.

At the Chiefs-in-Assembly's request, the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador (AFNQL) and its regional commissions have triggered a general mobilization against dependencies in First Nations. Whatever form they take, dependencies hinder the development of First Nation individuals, families and institutions. They impair our collective future and we can no longer let others take on the responsibility of facing them.

An essential condition of our development as Nations is the access to our territories and resources. On this point the provincial government's approach has consumed our energy and focus, without significant headway. Furthermore, the federal government's approach to implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is breach of its basic obligations and does not uphold the honour of the Crown.

There is a very clear link between all those issues, whether they are related to education, access to resources or degraded social conditions. We are impeded each and every day through a lack of respect for our Aboriginal or treaty rights, and the ultimate failure to respect who we are: the First Nations. We must be vigilant in defending our Aboriginal and treaty rights and not let them become vulnerable to indifference or defeatist acceptance.

We must persevere to protect our rights, our lands, and our children's future. Chiefs before us often managed to be heard without any money or means of support, through the only strength of their convictions and their determined steadfastness. What have we accomplished in recent years? I believe that we must ask ourselves this question and above all, respond to it right now and clearly. What are we ready to do to ensure our Nations are respected?

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

The First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission (FNQLHSSC) launched the implementation of its 2nd health and social services strategic plan for 2011-2014. This document can be downloaded from the home page of the following Web site: www.cssspnql.com.

The priorities identified for 2011-2012 cover five main categories:

1. Governance;
2. Development and research;



3. Information and data management;
4. Prevention, promotion and response; and
5. Special events and training.

All these priorities require the building of effective and long-lasting partnerships. We are also tracking emerging issues such as the maintenance of the infostructure governance framework that has lead this year to the establishment of an ad hoc committee on privacy and access to information. This way, the First Nation communities in Quebec will take concrete steps to ensure the security of their data and related information.

An emphasis will also be placed on skills upgrading and strengthening for staff working in First Nation communities and organizations. To this end, we will complete the inventory of requirements for health human resources in order to identify long, medium and short-term priorities and develop tools to assist them in their work.

A summit on dependencies was held in February 2010, which included more than 420 stakeholders, administrators and politicians from the communities and various regional organizations. An action plan was developed to combat dependencies, which will be focused on action at the political, regional and local levels in the following areas: early childhood, education, human resources, economic development, health and social services, social development, sustainable development, and research.

HUMAN RESOURCES

During the first six months of 2010-2011, the First Nations Human Resources Development Commission of Quebec (FNHRDCQ) – which is involved in jobs and training on behalf of 29 First Nation communities and the overall urban Aboriginal population in Quebec – proceeded with the preparation, planning and negotiation of the new five-year agreement between the AFNQL and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC).

The three-year long talks with HRSDC largely hindered the efforts of organizations, such as the FNHRDCQ, that had already begun to develop their own partnerships and approaches to essential skills and labour market information.

- If the relationship between the Department and the AFNQL had preserved at least some of its bilateral nature from the 1996-1999 agreements, we could have proceeded quickly with the implementation of conditions that would have better enabled us to multiply successes and contribute to the economy of First Nations.

The Department then engaged the FNHRDCQ in the swift negotiation of a five-year agreement, the signature of which had become imperative, otherwise the clients of our 33 points of service would not be able to pursue or initiate an employment or training measure.

- Our populations served once again as hostages in the hasty settlement of an agreement that ultimately benefits the federal government in a disproportional manner. At all levels this process has been marked by a non-bilateral and inequitable relationship.

The last six months of fiscal year 2010-2011 have been devoted to implementing the new agreement provisions as well as the actions prescribed in the FNHRDCQ's operational plan, including the following:

- Complete the nine projects developed through the Aboriginal Skills and Training Strategic Investment Fund (ASTSIF) with regard to fundamental skills, information on the labour market, integration into employment and partnerships.



- Develop new projects relating to fundamental skills, communications, client assistance as well as social and professional integration, and submit them to the new Skills and Partnership Fund (SPF). As of March 31, 2011, the FNHRDCQ had not yet received a definitive response.
- Pursue the work initiated for implementing two adult education centres, particularly by establishing a temporary school board comprising members from the education, employment and training areas, and provincial and federal partners. The selection criteria for host communities were developed, as well as an implementation guide for applicant communities.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Sustainable Development Institute (FNQLSDI) provides support to First Nations in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy, particularly by creating effective tools for communities, supporting First Nations in the sustainable management of their resources, and advising Chiefs and communities, as required.

This year, the FNQLSDI pursued its work with respect to the 2010-2014 action plan and was involved in the development of a new research protocol. It also organized several networking workshops between experts from communities, as well as a seminar on sustainable development designed to promote the First Nations' positions on the crucial issues of economic development, traditional knowledge and land management. The FNQLSDI team is working actively to produce the 3rd version of the Sustainable Development Strategy for Quebec and Labrador First Nations that will serve as an important stepping stone for development in communities.

I am,

Regional Chief Ghislain Picard



REGIONAL CHIEF ANGUS TOULOUSE ONTARIO

Ahnee, and welcome to the 2011 Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Annual General Assembly. I am honoured to once again provide you with a report on our activities and issues of the past year. Before going into further detail I want to acknowledge the passing of a dear colleague and friend, Chief Ralph Akiwenzie of the Chippewas of Nawash. He was a respected leader and friend who diligently served his people for many years. His legacy will continue to live on in our hearts and in our minds.

This has been a very busy year. We began with a small victory in maintaining our point-of-sale exemption despite the implementation of the HST. I say “small victory” because we still have a huge battle ahead of us in getting what we are owed: full tax immunity. The First Nations in Ontario, however, have expressed their dedication to achieving this goal.

In November of 2010, the Canadian government publicly endorsed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). We immediately called upon Canada to follow their endorsement with concrete actions to live up to the minimal human rights standards described in the UNDRIP. We asked that all legislation within the Parliamentary process be amended to respect the standards within the UNDRIP. This, unsurprisingly, did not occur. However, we continued with our advocacy efforts in opposing Bills S-4, C-3, and S-11 on the basis that they failed to recognize First Nations jurisdiction over such matters as family law, lands, and citizenship/identity. The approach taken by the federal government on these issues has thus far been contrary to principles found within the UNDRIP.

Another major issue on our agenda in Ontario this past year has been resource revenue and benefit sharing (RRBS). At our most recent Special Chiefs Assembly, First Nations leadership notified the Ontario and Canadian governments that we will be exercising our jurisdiction over the resources on our lands and vigorously defending this jurisdiction by direct action if required. A resolution was passed mandating the RRBS Task Force to develop a strategy to address the assertion of jurisdiction over our lands and territories as well as a complete review of direct and indirect resource revenues to expose what Ontario collects in terms of our resources. It will contemplate ways to make it a legal requirement for industry to deal directly with First Nation governments on resource revenue sharing agreements. The strategy is not meant to influence future, or ongoing, negotiations between First Nations and private industry. Each First Nation government will determine for themselves how to approach the Crown governments, whether it be a Treaty-based approach, a sector approach, or some other approach. Our Chiefs have stated that resource benefit sharing is not about money, it's about our inherent jurisdiction and a means to restore peace and harmony for the sake of our children and future generations.

There are many other priority issues that the First Nations in Ontario are concerned with in regards to health, social services, justice, and the environment. Most recently, the Ontario Ministry of Revenue introduced Bill-186, Supporting Smoke-Free Ontario by Reducing Contraband Tobacco Act, which makes the primary focus of the legislation punitive action rather than tobacco use reduction strategies. It specifically targets products that are grown or manufactured within First Nation communities and under the jurisdiction of First Nations. The Ontario Ministry of Revenue introduced these proposed amendments to the *Tobacco Tax Act*, on April 21, 2011, in direct opposition to the inherent Aboriginal right to the cultivation





and trade of tobacco. Tobacco has been a trading commodity for First Nations for thousands of years and yet we were only made aware of the proposed amendments to the Act on the same morning the legislation was introduced. Given these considerations it is appalling that the Province would proceed with this initiative. Our Political Confederacy of the Chiefs within Ontario met and agreed that First Nations will continue to protect our inherent right to trade and commerce activities and promote economic development within our First Nation communities – including opposing Bill-186.

First Nations in Northern Ontario have taken the lead in opposing the Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement and the *Far North Act*, among many other issues. The Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement represents an unprecedented agreement between big forestry companies and environmental groups. Nishnawbe-Aski Nation asserted that the plan is disrespectful to First Nations' rights and treats First Nations like stakeholders rather than governments. The agreement was developed without obtaining the free, prior, and informed consent from First Nations. The *Far North Act*, which passed in September, 2010, was opposed for similar reasons. The Act is deemed to violate the treaties and disrespects First Nations' jurisdiction as it imposes a massive interconnected protected area over First Nation lands without any compensation. Further to this, it splits northern First Nations from southern First Nations within Ontario – an issue we are consistently working to overcome.

On the education front, the Chiefs within Ontario have clearly expressed their wish to move beyond the 'status quo' of the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) Education Reform agenda that does not meet the standard of First Nation control of First Nation education envisioned in the treaties, our policy work, and affirmed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. The Chiefs in Ontario have asserted that a parallel process will be conducted to coincide with the National Panel process and will represent an opportunity to provide a positive contribution to the process of developing options for First Nation education. The parallel process will not be at odds with the National Panel initiative, but will serve to complement the report produced by the Panel. The scope of the process will include First Nation rights to all aspects of lifelong learning as envisioned in the treaties and the AFN policy document *First Nations Control of First Nations Education*.

The theme of nation-building (or re-building) is one that underpins all of the work that we have done in the past year. Numerous resolutions, if not all of our resolutions, include the work of nation-building as a principle or goal. Most recently we have struck a nation-building task force to review all of the tools currently available to First Nations and to report back to our Chiefs in Assembly. I understand similar work is being conducted across the country and I hope we will have at least a few opportunities over the next year to share our experiences with each other.

Indeed, the coming year will likely be a challenging one for First Nation leaders and advocates. The political climate in this country will now, more than ever, require us to work together in a creative and proactive fashion. I think there are real opportunities out there to improve the quality of life for First Nations – opportunities that won't require us to compromise our integrity as Indigenous Peoples.

In closing, I look forward to hearing what our First Nation brothers and sisters are pursuing in other provinces and the opportunity to explore ways to support each other in achieving our collective and individual goals. I look forward to productive discussion and time to share with one another over the next few days.

Miigwetch,

Regional Chief Angus Toulouse



REGIONAL CHIEF BILL TRAVERSE MANITOBA

I welcome all Elders, Grand Chiefs, Chiefs, councillors, and First Nation members to the 32nd Annual General Assembly of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN). I want to thank the Host Committee for welcoming us to their traditional territory.

The past year has been busy for all of us. As Manitoba Regional Chief, I have been working diligently in many areas to ensure our voice is heard at the national level. The AFN continues to monitor key legislative initiatives affecting First Nations and pushed back on proposed legislation such as Bill S-11, *Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act*. With the new majority Conservative government, we must continue to work together to ensure that our voice is heard loud and clear on issues that affect our Treaty lands.

In 2010, I was appointed co-chair of the AFN Chiefs Committee on Health with my colleague Ontario Regional Chief Angus Toulouse. The Health portfolio includes a wide range of issues that require attention, time and advocacy. First Nations continue to lag behind other Canadians when it comes to health.

In the spring of 2011, there was drastic flooding in many First Nation communities in Manitoba. The leadership has been working with various levels of government to ensure our people are safe. Unfortunately many of our people will be living in hotel rooms for extended periods of time. We must continue to work together to ensure that once water levels subside our homes will be repaired properly and there will be a smooth transition back into the communities. National Chief Shawn Atleo visited our region in April, travelling to Peguis First Nation to see the impact of the flood on this community. The surrounding communities of Lake St. Martin, Little Saskatchewan, Dauphin River, and Pinaymootang have also been affected by the high water levels and many have been evacuated.

The Manitoba Regional Office has been operating at limited capacity and is currently without an executive assistant.

The National Chief attended the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) General Chiefs Assembly held in January at the Opaskwayak Cree Nation, which primarily focused on the National Panel on First Nation Elementary and Secondary Education.

The Speech from the Throne (SFT) confirmed that the previous legislative agenda will be re-introduced, including Bills on matrimonial real property on reserve, drinking water and disclosure of Chief and Council salaries and expenses. First Nations have consistently advocated for full engagement in the legislative process and respect of our Treaty rights. The SFT included positive language with regards to furthering commitments to First Nation education, investments in clean energy, and addressing barriers to social and economic participation for First Nations.





Regional and National Meetings:

- Met with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) to advocate for the Loan Loss Reserve Fund with Chief Glenn Hudson of the Peguis First Nation.
- Met with Pine Creek First Nation Chief Derek Nepinak and Treaty people on Dauphin Lake in support of our Treaty right to fish.
- Met with the Bunibonibee Cree Nation Chief & Council in support of a new school.
- Met with Dakotah Chiefs on their land claim and lawsuit against Canada.
- Attended the Little Grand Rapids First Nation Chief and Council meeting with Grand Chief Ron Evans where various community issues were discussed.
- Attended the Southern Chiefs' Organization (SCO) summits.
- Met with Chief John Thunder of the Buffalo Point First Nation on economic development.
- Met with Little Saskatchewan Chief and Council and INAC on third party management.
- Treaty Day at the Manitoba Legislature.
- Attended the AMC special meeting on Consultation and Accommodation.
- Planning and coordination of the 2010 AFN Annual General Assembly.
- Attended the Truth and Reconciliation Commission National Conference on Residential Schools.
- Participated in the AFN's Advocacy Day on Parliament Hill.
- Attended a joint executive meeting with the SCO and Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO).
- Attended the Council of the Federation meeting in Churchill with National Chief Atleo.
- Attended the Prairie Regional Chiefs meetings in Saskatchewan and Alberta on our Treaty rights.
- Met with Chief Michael Yellowback of Manto Sipi Cree Nation on their need for a new school.
- Met with Chief George Kemp on INAC's policy review on third party management.
- Met with Chief Frank Brown of the Canupawakpa Dakota Nation on Dakotah issues.
- Attended the MKO Annual General Assembly.
- Attended AFN Executive meetings.
- Met with the Chief and Council of the Lake St. Martin First Nation on third party management.
- Participated in a conference call with the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation on child and family services issues.
- Participated in a meeting between the Wuskwi Sipiik First Nation and INAC.
- Provided on update on AFN activities at the Southern Chiefs' Organization's fall 2010 Assembly and to Treaty 3 First Nations.
- Attended the AMC special meeting on fisheries.
- Met with Chief Terry Nelson of the Roseau River Anishinaabe Nation on economic development.
- Met with Chief Garnet Woodhouse of the Pinaymootang First Nation on their 140th anniversary of Treaty 2 celebration.
- Attended the Aboriginal Diabetes Network's roundtable on eliminating diabetes.
- Attended the Regional Health Survey National Conference.
- Participated in the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Roundtable on Isolated and Remote Communities.
- Participated in meetings and travelled to Manitoba First Nations to address flooding issues.

In closing, as your representative on the AFN Executive, I will continue to push our issues at the national level and attend all Executive meetings. I offer the best of luck to all candidates running in the election for AMC Grand Chief on July 27, 2011.

Yours in unity,

Regional Chief Bill Traverse



REGIONAL CHIEF GUY LONECHILD SASKATCHEWAN

Tansi, Ahneen, Eglanate, Hokada

Greetings Elders, Chiefs and First Nations,

As Chief of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) I am also given the honour to be the Regional Chief for the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) for the Saskatchewan Region. This is my second year in a three-year mandate as Chief of the FSIN and there are a number of priority areas which the FSIN has been focusing on, which complement the work that I am responsible for as Regional Chief, and which will inform this report.

The FSIN is celebrating its 65th anniversary this year. The original mandate, which still applies today, is the protection, promotion and implementation of our Inherent and Treaty Rights. The area now known as Saskatchewan is covered by six numbered Treaties: 2, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 10 and is home to 75 First Nations which represent approximately 13% of the total population of Saskatchewan. With a young First Nation population amidst an aging Saskatchewan general population it has become vital for FSIN to pursue Treaty protection, promotion and implementation that will support our young, vibrant, booming First Nation population.



Treaty Implementation and Self-Government

The FSIN's Treaty Governance Office (TGO) was originally established in 1997 to coordinate the FSIN's participation in the Treaty Governance Processes jointly agreed to by Canada and the FSIN. Since 2005, the Treaty Table has remained active, meeting to deal with Treaty issues, including the requirements for achieving Treaty implementation. The Treaty Table and the Office of the Treaty Commissioner (OTC) were given an expanded mandate in 2008 which was further extended by the FSIN Chiefs-in-Assembly in March 2010.

The TGO has initiated a "report card" process with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) regarding the 26 recommendations of the OTC report *Treaty Implementation: Fulfilling the Covenant*. The report will identify where the parties stand in relation to action completed, action required or where there is disagreement with the recommendations. Clearly, more work must be done in order to achieve the original spirit and intent of the Treaties and to strengthen our political, social and economic relationships with both Canada and Saskatchewan.

The TGO is currently undertaking a review of its mandate and will be recommending any changes to strengthen Canada's commitment. In the coming year it is anticipated that both myself and the Minister will reconvene a Common Table meeting to strengthen the commitment to these processes. The FSIN's revitalization process shall help to better inform and establish a closer working relationship with internal secretariats within the FSIN and clearly define our work with partners like the AFN. For example, our intention in regard to advancing First Nation self-government interests on a province-wide basis is to



explore options and to implement independent offices of a First Nations Auditor General, First Nations Ombudsman and First Nations Children's Advocate.

Additionally, some key priority areas for the TGO in 2011-12 are the Treaty Right to Health and the Treaty Right to Hunting, Fishing, Trapping and Gathering and examining the role of the province in Treaty implementation.

As Regional Chief, the development of the AFN National Strategy on Treaty Implementation remains a priority. On March 29-30, 2011, a Roundtable with Pre-Confederation Treaty holders took place at the Westin Hotel in Ottawa, Ontario. The roundtable was intended to bring together pre-Confederation Treaty holders to better understand local and regional views on the principles of Treaty implementation.

With dispute resolution as a key issue in Treaty implementation, INAC's presentation at the roundtable as it pertains to Treaty Commissions in Canada was instructive in pointing out that provision of facilitative discussion services is currently within the mandate of Treaty Commissions. Why this function has not been exercised may provide an appropriate starting point for a further examination of the role that dispute resolution can play in Treaty implementation.

There is a view held by many Treaty leaders that the current mandate provided to Treaty Commissions for facilitation / dispute resolution is limited and not robust enough to ensure that facilitated outcomes relating to Treaty implementation would be fully negotiated or implemented. Nor do leaders believe that the mandate provided is substantial enough to discuss all issues related to Treaty implementation.

Finally, it was recognized that the federal government's willingness to engage in discussions on Treaty implementation was a significant development over the past several years. This represents a situation that must be utilized to its fullest. However, this must be advanced further to ensure that both the Crown and Treaty Nations have full mandates to establish the necessary tools, laws, mechanisms, and processes for Treaty implementation.

Treaty Right to Education and Life Long Learning

In my capacity as Chair of the Saskatchewan Indian Education and Training Commission, the Commission Chiefs through the FSIN and the Government of Saskatchewan, have signed an agreement aimed at eliminating gaps in education and employment incomes for First Nations. We currently see significant gaps such as the province receiving federal funding for 238 pre-kindergarten seats while First Nations have only one pilot project on reserve. Also in terms of comparability, provincial schools receive approximately \$10,800 per student whereas First Nation schools operating on reserve receive approximately \$6,500 per student. These gaps in equity and delivering quality education contribute not only to lower potential future lifetime earnings for First Nation people but the full extent of the Treaty Right to Education not being realized. Through a task force, which is contemplated within the agreement, a report will be generated that will aim to identify long-term solutions for eliminating those current gaps. It is a shared crucial policy imperative and will help to redefine the trajectory for our growth agenda in Saskatchewan.

The joint task force will focus on several key goals including:

- Improved early childhood outcomes and transition to school;
- Increased high school and post-secondary completion rates;



- Improved participation in the labour force and employment; and,
- Greater quality of life and enhanced self-sufficiency.

The agreement was signed in May 2011. Development of the task force and implementation of its mandate will begin by August 2011 with completion of its final report in August 2012. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was acknowledged in the work of the agreement and will help to inform the work of the task force on education.

Inherent Rights and Jurisdiction in Gaming

The gaming industry in Saskatchewan started in 1992 when the Whitebear First Nation created and opened Bear Claw Casino. In 1993, criminal charges were laid against White Bear First Nation which precipitated the discussions between the FSIN and the Province of Saskatchewan leading to the 1994 Gaming Agreement. In 1995, the Gaming Agreement was revisited and, as a result, the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority was created.

In 2002, negotiations resulted in a long-term 25-year agreement and the 2002 Gaming Framework Agreement (GFA) that sets out a five-year review period of gaming issues for the parties. In 2007, a proposal was submitted to the province whereby it could lead to a joint proposal to be submitted to Canada regarding jurisdiction and amendments to the *Criminal Code*.

With the upcoming five-year review scheduled for 2012, FSIN is strategizing on options for assuming jurisdiction for gaming operations in the province, which will include Internet gaming.

Future Sharing – “Our Fair Share”

In order for First Nations to participate meaningfully in Saskatchewan’s thriving economy, key investments need to occur. These investments are over and above what our entitlement rights are under Treaty. The premise behind Future Sharing is that the time and cost of doing nothing is no longer acceptable. Future Sharing is a business case for the province to make those key investments in education and training that will empower First Nation people with the tools required for full participation in the economy as the skilled work force, entrepreneurs and corporate executives. The initial phases of Future Sharing are to help inform the Province of Saskatchewan of its Treaty obligations to our rights holders, the First Nations of Saskatchewan.

Natural Resources Transfer Agreement

The FSIN still continues to work in the area of Resource Revenue Sharing as mandated by the Chiefs-in-Assembly as all that was shared under Treaty was the depth of the plough. The work on Resource Revenue Sharing will further complement the legal strategy on the 1930 Natural Resource Transfer Agreement which is being lead by the Chiefs of the Treaty Four territory. Our Treaty Rights Protection Fund will be a significant source of revenues to achieve our fair share of the natural resource wealth of our territories.

There are many other areas where the FSIN is actively pursuing Treaty implementation and advocating for Treaty protection and promotion. Those areas include the Women’s Commission, Just Relations, Indigenous Peace Keeping, Lands and Resources, Treaty Land Entitlement, Specific Claims, Economic and Community



Development and Health and Social Development, all of which is under the leadership of my colleagues Vice Chiefs Morley Watson, E. Dutch Lerat and Lyle Whitefish.

We are pleased to provide this report in respect to and on behalf of our Chiefs-in-Assembly.

Sincerely,

Chief Guy Lonechild,
Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations
Indian Governments of Saskatchewan

Regional Chief for Saskatchewan



REGIONAL CHIEF GEORGE STANLEY ALBERTA

With a tremendous amount of activity over this past year and looking ahead to what is in store from this new Parliament, I have been busy keeping the Chiefs of Alberta informed and planning for the possibility that certain legislation will be re-introduced, such as Bill S-11, *Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act*. Now that the Government of Canada has endorsed the United Nations Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), there will be more focus on the effects of the UNDRIP on our Treaty and Aboriginal rights.

Discussions continue with the Grand Chiefs of Treaties 6, 7 and 8 regarding the responsibility and accountability of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) since the signing of a Letter of Support for the Core Funding Proposal for “Legislative/Governance/Policy Transition”, which allows the regional office to provide assistance and support to First Nations of Alberta with any transitional requirements to any new legislation and policy. The Alberta regional office has also been providing assistance to leadership at the local, regional and provincial levels.



NATIONAL ACTIVITIES:

Justice

The Justice file was added to my portfolio, which is an enormous responsibility as it includes issues related to missing and murdered women. During a recent visit to the “Highway of Tears” and Duncan, B.C., I met with families of murdered and missing First Nation women, which brought to life the pain and frustration that our families are facing with regards to our current justice system and how it is failing to protect our women. I have also met with key RCMP Divisions in western Canada. The Alberta regional office will continue to insist on proper inquiries into investigations involving First Nation women and to ensure the justice system works equitably for all First Nation and Canadian citizens.

In March 2010, the Government of Canada announced that it would invest \$10 million over two years to improve community safety and to ensure that the justice system and law enforcement agencies can better respond to cases of missing and murdered Aboriginal women. This initiative will also explore proposed *Criminal Code* amendments. I have been working hard to procure funding so that the AFN can meaningfully participate in this national undertaking. We will be vigilant in overseeing amendments to the *Criminal Code* so that the law is not above our people, but works to protect First Nation citizens.

Water

It is too early to confirm if Bill S-11, *Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act*, will be re-introduced in this Parliament, although it was mentioned in the recent Throne Speech. When it was first introduced in the Senate on May 26, 2010, there was concern that it would have displaced First Nation jurisdiction and was inconsistent with section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1985*. The Bill would have created regulations regarding First Nations’ drinking water, but had no provisions for capacity to comply with these regulations.



Resolution 42/2010 directs the AFN to host a National Water Conference in Alberta in 2011. I have been assured that conference planning will proceed with my direct participation. The conference will provide an opportunity for discussion on water issues and development of a strategic action plan aimed at the recognition of First Nation jurisdiction over water.

Governance – Elections

The two-year terms of office under the *Indian Act* election system continue to be deemed as too short. A resolution (11-05-2007/#005R) passed at the Assembly of Treaty Chiefs (6, 7 and 8) called for the development of a region-wide election appeals system. The Grand Chiefs of Treaties 6, 7 & 8 were given a mandate and timeframe to present a draft document to the Alberta Chiefs. These Treaty organizations were asked to consult with First Nation communities, Elders and youth for research in the development of the Elections Appeals Process and to seek funding to cover the cost of developing an Elections Appeals Process system. The final report prepared by Marvin Yellowhorn is still under review. There is no current timeline for this initiative.

Bill S-4: Matrimonial Real Property Act

The recent Speech from the Throne confirmed the government's intention to re-introduce legislation on matrimonial real property on reserves. First Nations had expressed great issue with previous legislation, as it had significant impacts on jurisdiction on reserve lands, particularly Treaty reserve lands, and offended our constitutional right to self-government. Discussion on this issue will continue.

Specific Claims

The AFN has received funding for work on Specific Claims and Additions to Reserves (ATR). Significant work continues to be carried out and it has been noted that Canada has expressed a very narrowly defined role for mediation once a claim is filed.

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES:

In addition to attending AFN Executive meetings to discuss matters of national importance, I have been busy here in Alberta dealing with both natural and man-made disasters, as well as a First Nation blockade, organized in an effort to prevent an ecological disaster.

Alberta Oil Spill

The major oil spill near the Little Buffalo First Nation in northern Alberta has attracted national and worldwide attention. Industry officials estimate that approximately 28,000 barrels of oil spilled and seeped into the earth's ecosystems. If these estimates are correct, it means that 4.5 million litres of oil will contaminate the freshwater and all of the indigenous species of the area. Ducks and beavers had to be killed to avoid their immediate suffering yet no one seemed to care about the human dangers until journalists broke the story. In fact, Alberta NDP environment critic Rachel Notley said there needs to be a public investigation into Alberta's pipeline inspections and raised suspicion that there was either political interference as there was no news of the incident until after the federal election, or there are serious questions of environmental oversight in the province. Alberta Environment Minister Rob Renner said it was not necessary for him to visit the site and stated that the air monitoring equipment was activated as soon as the government learned about residents' complaints.



The Assembly of First Nations echoes the call for a thorough investigation by an independent body and development of a process for dealing with oil spills in Canada. We call on Environment Canada to report to the Chiefs of Canada, through my office, to advise the public what the government plans to do.

I travelled to Little Buffalo Reserve with an independent environment officer for a fly-over on May 5, 2011. The AFN, Little Buffalo and the surrounding communities are concerned about damage along traplines and to subsistence hunting. A damage assessment will need to be completed. We will be providing a full report of the findings to the Chiefs of Alberta as well as to the AFN Chiefs-in-Assembly.

Slave Lake Fire

Extreme fire conditions, created through strong, dry winds gusting up to 70 km/h combined with a lack of precipitation, were in place in most of the northern half of Alberta, including the devastated area in Slave Lake in mid-May. About 68 new wildfires started in the province over one weekend, which led to a number of evacuation alerts and road closures, in addition to several evacuation orders. In addition to Slave Lake, the communities affected by the wildfires include Wagner, Canyon Creek, Widewater, Loon River, Marten Lake, Little Buffalo and Fox Creek. A fire near the Loon River First Nation, about seven kilometres from the town of Red Earth Creek, has caused the suspension of cleanup operations at Plains Midstream Canada's Rainbow pipeline release site. I flew over this burnt out area to see the fire that was threatening our First Nation communities and met with community leaders. I also attended a meeting between the Alberta Grand Chiefs and the Premier of Alberta with some Cabinet members. Treaty 8 Chiefs filed, by resolution, a \$1 million request to compensate affected First Nations.

Cold Lake First Nation Blockade

In an effort to protect burial sites and other culturally significant areas, Chief Cecil Janvier and the Cold Lake Band Council filed an injunction on May 12, 2011 to stop development of a site that is to become part of a provincial recreation area. Subsequently the Alberta Ministry of Aboriginal Relations agreed to temporarily halt construction until the judicial review dealing with the issue of adequate consultation is heard in court in July. As quoted in *Alberta Sweetgrass* a Ministry spokesperson said, "Instead of getting too serious with the courts, the government came to an agreement with the First Nation and actually came up with a mutually developed court order". According to *Sweetgrass*, the Elders say they can tell stories of fishing camps that the Dene Suline returned to every season along the lake, as well as the practice of gathering berries and herbal medicines.

The *Edmonton Journal* says that the area has been studied once before and 5000-year-old artifacts were found and the proposed park also contains grave sites. The First Nation feels that the sensitivity of the spiritual aspects of it cannot work side by side with 5,000 partiers on weekends. The Ministry of Aboriginal Relations is working as a facilitator between the First Nation and the departments of Justice and Tourism, Parks and Recreation.

I attended the blockade which was conducted in a very civil manner by the Cold Lake First Nation Chief and Council with supporters being on hand. I will be making continued contact with Chief Janvier on this matter and will stand by for further developments.

Hiy! Hiy!

Regional Chief George Stanley



REGIONAL CHIEF JODY WILSON-RAYBOULD BRITISH COLUMBIA



Elders, Chiefs, delegates and guests, on behalf of the BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) welcome to the 32nd Annual General Assembly of the AFN. The year has gone by quickly as we continue to press ahead with implementing our **Building on OUR Success** Nation building agenda focussing on four interrelated pillars: 1) **strong and appropriate governance**; 2) **fair land and resource settlements**; 3) **improved education**; and, 4) **individual health**. The plan is to empower, connect and support each of our Nations as each Nation implements its Aboriginal title and rights, including treaty rights, with the vision to make the lives of our people better with practicing and thriving cultures. There is an amazing amount of work ongoing in our Nations in the BC Region and we are increasingly sharing and building on our individual and collective experience. This is incredibly positive and will speed up progress, allow us to solve problems collectively and create even more opportunity for our Nations.

Strong and Appropriate Governance: This year our primary focus at the BCAFN has been developing and launching the first edition of the **BCAFN Governance Toolkit: A Guide to Nation Building**. The Governance Toolkit is a guide to assist our Nations in navigating their way out from under the *Indian Act* at their own pace and based upon their own priorities. The initiative has taken on a life of its own and continues to grow. On June 22, 23 & 24, we successfully launched the Toolkit at a BCAFN Special Chiefs' Assembly and Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Vancouver. The Governance Toolkit is in two parts. The first part is a **Self-Assessment** in two modules that any Nation can use to evaluate the effectiveness of its governance, and the effectiveness of its administration. The second part of the Governance Toolkit is a comprehensive **Governance Report** that looks at options for governance reform and considers, subject by subject, the powers (jurisdictions) of our Nations. The Report is written from the perspective that the Nation is the building block of governance and that our Nations have the inherent right to govern. It looks at how we are moving in this direction along a continuum of governance options and reforms by providing a snapshot of what our Nations in BC are actually doing.

I am pleased to say that the Governance Toolkit was developed in-house by the BCAFN with the support and contributions of far too many individuals and organizations to list here. Drafts of the Report were reviewed by peer groups and the self-assessment modules were piloted in a number of our communities and revised extensively following insightful dialogue. One of our projects for 2011-2012 will be to develop a **Companion Community Engagement and Facilitators' Guide** for the Governance Toolkit. The Governance Toolkit is available on the BCAFN website, www.bcafn.ca, along with most of the documents that are referenced in the Toolkit.

Fair Land and Resource Settlements: In 2010-2011, we continued to witness the advancement of our rights, including treaty rights, through the courts. In May of this year, the **Nuuchahnulth** people, from the west coast of Vancouver Island, won in the BC Court of Appeal in *Ahousaht*, which upheld their Aboriginal right to harvest and sell fish in their traditional territories. Our Nations have also been successful through the courts and other processes in impacting resource development activities within their territories. Last year the **Xeni Gwet'in** and the **Tsilhqot'in National Government**, along with their supporters, were able to convince the federal Environmental Panel reviewing the proposed Prosperity Gold-Copper Mine that the



project would have resulted in significant adverse impacts on their people and their lands. Consequently Taesko's application was denied by the federal government. Most recently the BC Court of Appeal upheld the treaty rights of **West Moberly First Nations** to protect endangered caribou in north-eastern British Columbia. Also, the **Wet'suwet'en** were recently granted an injunction by the BC Supreme Court preventing timber harvesting activities in their territory. In other parts of the province, our Nations have been able to use their Aboriginal title and rights to secure access to benefits from proposed resource development activity where that activity is acceptable to the Nation.

What this experience reminds us of is that it is no longer possible for major industrial development to occur within our territories without our title and rights, including treaty rights, being respected and accommodated. While this is becoming better understood by both industry and government, each and every one of our Nations needs to be in a position to advance their rights, protect their interests and to take advantage of opportunities when they present themselves. Through the BC Leadership Council (the executives of the BCAFN, First Nations Summit and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs), we are collectively working to support all our Nations in strengthening their capacity and to empower all our peoples to secure fair access to lands and resources.

While advancements continue to be made in the courts and in other forums, treaty-making under the BC treaty process continues to stall. Progress is slow or has stopped at many tables; in many cases having been overtaken by other events or opportunities to resolve title and rights issues between the Crown and our peoples. In April, the **Maa-nulth First Nations** treaty came into effect amid much celebration in their communities. I was pleased to be in attendance to witness. The Maa-nulth treaty is the second modern treaty under the BC treaty-making process and the third modern treaty in BC including Nisga'a. The **Yale First Nation** has also signed their Final Agreement and their treaty is in the process of being ratified by BC and Canada.

With the Yale treaty, as with all the other modern treaty arrangements in BC, there were land disputes between neighbouring Nations. In some cases these have been resolved while in others they have not and remain flash-points for future uncertainty and potential conflict. The experience of Yale and others highlight the very real need for our Nations to address the serious issue of **shared territory/proper title holder** and the respective governance powers of our Nations within shared territory. The Leadership Council, on the direction of our Nations, continues to look for ways to resolve disputes regarding territorial boundaries and areas of shared decision-making between and among our Nations, in accordance with our customs and traditions. This is a priority for the BCAFN moving forward.

Improved Education: We need well-educated citizens to take advantage of our opportunities. One of the main focuses of our Nations in BC has been the implementation of the **BC First Nations' Education Initiative** to recognize and expand our Nations' control and jurisdiction over education. Agreements have been negotiated and federal and provincial legislation has been enacted. However, no Nation at this time has been able to actually assume jurisdiction over education. This is because there is no agreement on how to calculate the federal financial transfers around Canada's insistence on taking into account our Nations' "own source revenues". The question of own source revenue is quickly becoming one of the most pressing issues facing our Nations at different tables and needs to be addressed collectively. This issue has the potential to impact all Nations across the country, regardless of the governance initiative or the nature of the relationship with the Crown (treaty or non-treaty).



In BC, in addition to developing our own institutions of education, our Nations continue to partner with other organizations to advance our education agenda. One of the most exciting education initiatives in Canada involving our peoples is being led by former Prime Minister Paul Martin (the **Martin Aboriginal Education Initiative**). We were honoured and pleased that Mr. Martin accepted our invitation to attend our BCAFN AGM this year. We hope that there will be an opportunity to work together further.

Individual Health: Healthy citizens mean healthy and strong Nations. The **BC First Nations Health Council** continues to explore opportunities for increased BC First Nation control over the delivery of health care to our peoples. On May 26, 2011, at *Gathering Wisdom for a Shared Journey IV*, hosted by the Health Council, our Nations endorsed entering into a **BC Tripartite Framework Agreement on First Nation Health Governance** with the governments of Canada and BC. This agreement looks to BC First Nations having increased administrative control and decision-making authority over health care by taking over health service delivery from the federal government. In addition to the Framework Agreement, a “Consensus Paper” was also adopted by the Chiefs which sets out that any new health care governance arrangement be community-driven and Nation-based. While more control over our own health care is the objective, caution must always be exercised in moving forward to ensure that the most appropriate administrative structures are established to deliver the highest and best quality of programs and services to our peoples. Health care is complex and the costs are significant. Our Nations recognize this fact and in our negotiations it is always made clear that Canada and BC have primary responsibility for health care and to pay for it.

The BCAFN continues to support **IndigenACTION**. In April of 2011 a province-wide roundtable on healthy living and participation in sports was held in BC. Many of our health and recreation leaders from our communities were in attendance and strategies were developed to promote the IndigenACTION objectives. I look forward to continuing to work on this positive and dynamic initiative.

Reflections on the past year: Over the past year there has been a significant amount of work and progress made. A year that can be summarized in four words: empowerment, change, collaboration, and opportunity. Working together and combining our strengths it is possible for our Nations to address many of the difficult issues that still face us as we emerge from our colonial past. While progress is being made on many fronts, we still have many issues and challenges in our communities associated with the colonial legacy and for the most part impoverished state. We have work to do on the residential schools issue and must see that the work of the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission** is concluded, meets its objectives, and has the outcomes that are expected and required by the survivors. Work also must be completed on the support for students of day schools.

We also need to recognize and support the work of our peoples to address the ongoing social issues that our communities will continue to face during the period of transition and change moving away from the *Indian Act*.

In BC, we remain active and supportive of the important work addressing the issue of **murdered and missing women**. The reality is far too many of our women face violence and far too often go missing or are murdered. Challenges aside, the **Pickton Inquiry** in BC is an opportunity if respectfully conducted to not only increase public awareness of this serious issue but to identify solutions.



Finally, this year will be remembered by some of our communities as a year of natural disasters. Our thoughts and our support are with those communities that faced flooding and wildfires and that have gone through incredible upheaval in addition to the normal pressures of daily life in communities.

Looking Forward: There is no doubt this upcoming year will, again, be a busy one for the BCAFN. We will continue to roll-out the **BCAFN Governance Toolkit** and support the work of our Nations to protect our way of life for a better future. As we work on implementing the four pillars of the **Building on OUR Success** agenda, our leaders, our Nations and the Regional Office look forward to working with our friends and colleagues across Canada who are also addressing the same issues and concerns from the perspectives of your region. I also welcome my ongoing role in the national governance portfolio. There will, no doubt, be a number of resurrected legislative initiatives led by the federal government that will need to be addressed. While our Nations may sometimes have different approaches – reflective of our respective relationships with the Crown, based on historical treaties, modern treaties or Aboriginal rights – working together we are making a difference in the lives of our people and will continue to do so with dedication, commitment and resolve.

In closing, I would like to thank the Chiefs who have entrusted me with the responsibility to represent our collective interests during this period of Nation building. It has been a pleasure to work with each of you as well as with our National Chief and my Executive colleagues. Also, as always, thanks to our Board of Directors and to our small but dedicated staff at the BCAFN for all their hard work.

Gilakas'la,

Puglaas (Jody Wilson-Raybould)



REGIONAL CHIEF ERIC MORRIS YUKON



Chiefs, Elders, councillors, delegates and youth, it's my honour to extend greetings from our Yukon First Nation citizens. We acknowledge the hardships some of the regions have gone through this past year. It's never easy to deal with some of these challenges put before us; however, what sustains us and keeps us moving forward is the strength of our Elders and the strength of our culture. Our resilience and determination has brought us this far and will carry us well into the future.

I would like to acknowledge the work of our Chiefs and councillors and all the staff and citizens that support them in fulfilling their responsibilities. Much of what is achieved is done through dedication and team work.

I give great thanks to those that have supported me throughout the year with the work that I've done for the Assembly of First Nations (AFN). It has been a privilege to have worked with all levels of the AFN and to be part of a well structured and sophisticated organization.

This past year I've done extensive travel as compared to the previous year. The travel was related to the work required in the areas of climate change, negotiation of the Access and Benefit Sharing Protocol (ABS Protocol), development of a strategic plan for the National Aboriginal Council on Species at Risk (NACOSAR) and other areas of work related to the general operations of the AFN.

At the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity (COP 10/CBD), a key area of focus for ABS Protocol negotiations was to ensure the reference to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was incorporated into the document in such a way that it could be expanded upon at a later time, once the UNDRIP was endorsed by the United States and Canada. The UNDRIP is now fully endorsed and the implementation of its principles and articles into international instruments such as the ABS Protocol need to begin. Initially there was resistance to reference the UNDRIP in the ABS Protocol because it had not yet been fully endorsed but I believe through the persistence of our united Indigenous nations we were able to secure its reference in the document.

I take this opportunity to thank those that have been involved with the negotiations over the years. I had the honour to see the negotiation process come to a close. Some Nations were not completely happy with the end result, however, the fully endorsed UNDRIP may well address those concerns.

The ABS Protocol aims to provide a legal framework to ensure that biodiversity-rich developing countries get a fair and equitable share of benefits arising out of the use of genetic resources from their territories and that biodiversity-poor developed countries can access those resources with agreement of the host country.

At COP 10/CBD held in Nagoya City, Japan, the Decade of Biodiversity was declared for 2010 to 2020. This essentially speaks to the focus of the work in the area of climate change and its impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems. As you read this report, biodiversity-rich areas and ecosystems are being



impacted by the effects of climate change. Much talk happens as to how to mitigate these situations and what action is required to change this direction.

I attended the 16th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP16) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Cancun, Mexico. This is the annual meeting of the UNFCCC. Of the many layers of discussions and negotiations that took place, two important areas of focus were reducing emissions (mitigation) and financial support for climate change action in developing countries. I learned that this was also a process to set forth the work needed to be done before and at COP17 in Durban, South Africa in December of 2011. This was my first experience in this forum and I found it to be very complex.

Indigenous Peoples at COP16 advanced positions related to respect for our rights contained in UNDRIP, respect for free, prior and informed consent, and the recognition and protection of our traditional knowledge, ultimately, the respect and protection of our Mother Earth.

I had the opportunity to make a three-minute presentation to the UN on behalf of Indigenous nations. I prefaced my statement with, “We are gathered together today for our children tomorrow” and hope that it raised the sense of urgency of our work. The phrase is based on the statement “Together Today for our Children Tomorrow”, coined by one of our great Yukon First Nation leaders.

One thing that I found to be very interesting in regard to the decision-making process was the view that ‘nothing is agreed until everything is agreed’ and the challenge this created when it was being used to stop a situation or process from moving forward.

Our work with NACOSAR has involved finalizing the Terms of Reference for the Council which has gone to the member National Aboriginal Organizations (NAOs) and the federal Minister of Environment for review and approval. Other areas of focus have been developing a strategic plan and corresponding workplan. We make an effort to hold our meetings in different regions so that we can raise awareness of NACOSAR and give communities and organizations an opportunity to meet with the Council. We want to build a strong working relationship with the various bodies that work with the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA). Our work is supported by the NACOSAR Policy and Planning Subcommittee and we rely on their technical support and advice. Our goal is to be as effective and efficient as possible and fully represent the issues and concerns of our member organizations. We recognize the significance of our role and will continue to work hard.

Through the support of our National Chief and many others we continue to advocate and relay our concerns with the federal approach to drinking water, embodied in Bill S-11 (*Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act*). We continue to act on AFN resolutions that call for meaningful consultation and request resources for all regions to do impact analysis to determine the financial, technical and policy needs.

In the area of Housing, I'd like to put forth a quote brought to my attention by Dewey Smith who I work with in this area at the AFN. It comes from the late Chief Billy Diamond:

“The appalling lack of planning over the past 35 years must now be countered by courageous and bold action or we risk carrying the legacy of our sub-standard living conditions well into the next millennium. Our children deserve better and we have to take the necessary steps to ensure they will enjoy healthy and affordable homes.”

—Chief Billy Diamond, 1999



I attended the Regional Health Survey (RHS) National Conference in March where they released their latest national results. When it came to housing, the statistics truly reflect the above statement. Findings state that 70.8% of First Nation households reported houses in need of repair compared to 25.7% off reserve. In addition, 37.3% of First Nation households reported houses needed major repair compared to 10.2% off reserve. The rate of overcrowding in First Nation households is 4.2 people per unit compared to 2.5 people per unit off reserve.

With the current National Building Code Standards in place to ensure every home provides for health, safety, fire protection, structural stability and accessibility, the RHS findings depict a dismal situation.

Much of the work we are doing is supported by the resolutions passed by the Chiefs-in-Assembly which provide us with strategic direction. Our intent is to pursue the development of National Strategy that is respectful of the local, territorial and regional First Nation jurisdictions and continue the work of developing a regulatory environment that allows for our Nations to have control and input into programs and infrastructure development. In another area, we are looking for best practices that are related to home ownership and how these opportunities are created.

With regard to the Economic Partnerships portfolio, I feel that we need to provide a greater focus to this area. A lack of resources at times seems to be a challenge and limits the time we are able to get together to work on these issues. We take advantage of times when the Chiefs gather to meet and discuss some of our areas of focus, including a trade mission to China, a National Gaming Strategy and developing a relationship with the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development.

This report provides you with an overview of some areas of work I've done over this past year. I give thanks to all those that have been supportive of the work we do.

Gunalcheesh,

Regional Chief Eric Morris



REGIONAL CHIEF BILL ERASMUS NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

There are many issues that are before the Dene of the Northwest Territories. It has been a difficult year with the territorial government challenging and competing for authority and control over our lands and resources. We also know that working with the Conservative majority government may present some challenges; however, it should not matter which political party is governing in Canada when it comes to First Nations. We have a unique relationship with the Crown based on our Treaty rights and Aboriginal title. Canada has a fiduciary obligation to our nations that must continue into the future. We must continue to support our communities that are either implementing self-government agreements or in the process of negotiating new arrangements with the Crown. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), now endorsed by Canada, must continue to be the basis for implementing our rights.



KEY ISSUES AND/OR ACTIVITIES IN DENENDEH

On behalf of the Dene Nation and the NWT Regional Office of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), I would like to congratulate Edward Erasmus on his by-election of Grand Chief of the Tlicho Government. I would also like to congratulate Chief Gwen Cayan of the West Point First Nation in Hay River.

The Dene Nation will celebrate its 41st anniversary during the Dene National Assembly being held July 11-15, 2011 in Fort Providence, Denendeh. The theme of the celebration is “Our Land, Our People, Our Future”. Please visit www.denenation.com for more details.

Chief Arthur Tobac and the community of Fort Good Hope did an excellent job of hosting the 40th Dene National Assembly. We thank the many volunteers who worked tirelessly to raise funds for this event. A special thanks to the Sahtu Territory for a warm welcome into their region.

Devolution of Lands and Resources and Water in the Northwest Territories: A Devolution and Resource Revenue Sharing Agreement is the transfer of authority from the Government of Canada to the Government of the Northwest Territories. The Dene strongly oppose the Devolution Agreement in Principle (AIP) between the federal and territorial government which was signed in January 2011. A formal process is now underway to negotiate the devolution of NWT’s public lands and resources and rights in respect to water from the Government of Canada to the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT). Martin Goldney is the chief negotiator for the GNWT, taking over from Hal Gerein. The agreement proposes a one-time \$23 million grant to the GNWT to cover the transition of powers, as well as a \$4 million grant to Aboriginal governments for transitional expenses they may incur. The agreement proposes an annual transfer to the NWT to cover the costs of administering oil, gas, land, water and other resources. That transfer would amount to just over \$65.3 million a year, which is roughly how much the federal government currently spends to perform those same functions. At the same time, the agreement would reduce the federal government’s operating grant to the territory by 50 cents for every dollar in resource revenues the territorial government earns. The Dene believe it is a bad deal financially and argue that the agreement could hurt their land claim and self-government negotiations. The agreement will not serve to make the



NWT more financially independent of Ottawa. And most importantly, it goes against the principle of the Dene controlling their land and resources for future generations.

Alberta Tar sands Development: Dene leaders travelled to Washington, D.C. this spring at the invitation of US Senator Robert Menendez. The battle has been heating up regarding TransCanada's proposed Keystone XL pipeline, which would carry 900,000 barrels of tar sands oil from Alberta to the Gulf of Mexico each day. We were invited to speak to U.S. decision-makers about the impacts of the pipeline in Canada as comments are being sought on the draft Environmental Impact Statement. According to the draft, there would not be an impact from pipeline upstream in Canada despite the fact that, if built, it would create the imperative to produce almost a million barrels more per day of tar sands oil. In addition, it requires up to four barrels of water in order to develop one barrel of oil, which means approximately four million barrels of water will be required per day from the water system which offsets us downstream.

We are already feeling the effects of low water levels on the Great Slave Lake and the Slave and Mackenzie Rivers as the water flows north from the south. There is already more pipeline capacity than the tar sands are producing. There is an assumption that Canada will look to ship the oil to China if the U.S. doesn't take the extra oil coming from the expansion planned by the oil industry. This is in reference to Enbridge's proposed Northern Gateway pipeline, which would ship the oil to the B.C. coast and send it to Asia via supertankers. But, with mounting First Nation opposition to that pipeline and the strong legal rights they hold, Enbridge's plans may not turn out.

The two proposed pipelines have a few things in common beyond the fact they would ship massive amounts of dirty tar sands oil. Both are facing fierce opposition from the people living along the proposed routes because of the risk of spills like we've seen this year in Alberta and the NWT. Both pipelines face questions about the actual need for such a dangerous and expensive project. In documents recently received by U.S. Environmental Defense, federal civil servants stated that the proposed Gateway pipelines are facing opposition because of the role they would play in expanding production of dirty tar sands oil and holding North America back from the transition of clean energy. We made this point in Washington when meeting with the Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Energy, State Department and members of Congress and the Senate. Canada can't handle the added tar sands production that Keystone XL would demand. Another million barrels per day of tar sands production will impact local First Nations and the environment, and further hold Canada back from tackling climate change. We've urged them to pause and look at the full range of impacts the pipeline would have, something the Canadian government has failed to do. We made it clear that the Alberta and Canadian governments don't have comprehensive climate change plans and policies in place. And, that there is no plan to have less reliance on fossil fuels in the near future.

Site C Hydroelectric Dam: On May 27, 2011, the AFN expressed support for First Nations working to raise awareness of the implications of hydro-electric dam developments in British Columbia, including calls for a full review for the forthcoming environmental assessment of the Site C project on the Peace River. The B.C. government endorsed BC Hydro's proposed Site C hydroelectric dam project, triggering the next stage of development (environmental assessment) for a proposed 1100MW hydroelectric generating station on the Peace River in northeast B.C. The proposed Site C project would be the third dam and hydroelectric generating station on the Peace River.

In 2008 Chiefs from across Canada supported a resolution calling for comprehensive and meaningful consultations with all impacted First Nations, with specific respect to Treaty and Aboriginal title, rights and jurisdictions of the Treaty 8 First Nations and other First Nations within the Peace Athabasca and



Mackenzie watersheds. At that time, Chiefs-in-Assembly also called on the governments of Canada, British Columbia, Alberta and the Northwest Territories to engage in a comprehensive joint planning process with the affected First Nations in connection with the operation of the W.A.C Bennett and Peace Canyon dams and the proposed construction of the Site C dam or any other proposed hydro-electric or energy projects within the traditional territories of the affected First Nations. This includes the review and revision of the federal and provincial environmental assessment legislation to ensure the review processes include the Crown's obligations to impacted First Nations.

Following the April 2010 announcement by the Government of B.C. to move forward with the Site C Hydroelectric Project, Chiefs-in-Assembly reiterated their call for "full consultation and accommodation of impacted Treaty First Nations through a fair, open and transparent process" – a process that would include sufficient resources to ensure potential impacts to the traditional, environmental, social and economic interests of Treaty First Nations are considered and/or mitigated to ensure Aboriginal and Treaty rights are protected.

First Nation Elders, youth and elected officials along with non-Native farmers and ranchers travelled to Victoria, B.C. to present the Premier with a historic declaration opposing the dam. The document was signed by 23 First Nations from across B.C., Alberta and the Northwest Territories. The declaration was wrapped in a traditional birch bark container from trees growing in the flood zone of the proposed dam. And while neither then-Premier Campbell nor anyone from his government would meet with the delegation to accept the declaration, it was later formally introduced into the legislature by the New Democratic Party. In the Northwest Territories we have felt major impacts from damming the Peace River over the years. For example, the Mackenzie Delta, some 2,000 kilometers downstream, once had the greatest muskrat population in the country. Today, because of the low and fluctuating water levels muskrats are seldom seen. We must continue to work together to oppose this massive project and focus on development that makes sense to us.

Conclusion

It is important for all First Nations in Canada to work together for a strong national organization. Collectively, the AFN must work for our communities while we continue to pursue self-determination at the regional and community levels. Our Elders are telling us to be strong and to be more aggressive so we are not left behind and unable to move forward as we wish.

In closing, I thank the leadership and staff in our communities and regions for their hard work and efforts. We cannot move forward as a strong nation unless we are strong at all levels. Thanks to Dene Nation and AFN staff for their contributions throughout the year – they have shown consistent commitment and hard work. Thank you all for attending this AFN Assembly in Moncton. I wish you all the best in your respective communities and regions.

Mahsi Cho,

Regional Chief Bill Erasmus



AFN ELDERS COUNCIL

Since the inception of the National Indian Brotherhood/Assembly of First Nations (AFN), 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 32 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.

The Elders Council continues to play an important role in all facets of the AFN and its daily operations. Elders are the keepers of our traditions, values, languages and history. They are our guides to our future and the leaders in our community. They speak with honour and pride. The Elders are our teachers and they will always encourage First Nation leaders and champions to continue to enlighten and inform forums, such as Chiefs Assemblies, on their experiences, issues, successes and challenges. It is the responsibility of each of us to ensure the prosperity and safety of the little ones, just as our ancestors did for us.

The AFN Elders Council includes representatives from each of AFN's 10 regions, as well as two Resident Elders appointed by the National Chief. The AFN continues its work to acquire funds to support the work of the Elders Council, including input and participation into policy making and planning.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The AFN Elders Council continues to meet bi-annually at the Annual General Assembly and Special Chiefs Assembly to discuss issues and challenges facing the Council and to bring together new ideas. Resident Elders Joseph Taa-eee-sim-chilth Williams of Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations and Bertha Commanda of Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation continue to provide support and guidance at meetings and gatherings throughout the year.

AFN Council of Elders Guidelines and Protocols

The AFN Elders Council continues to meet to discuss guidelines and protocol. The "Assembly of First Nations Elders and Elders Council Guidelines and Protocols – Draft: July 29, 2005" has been updated and will be presented at the Annual General Assembly for adoption by the Chiefs-in-Assembly.

National Week of Action on Education

In support of the AFN Education Secretariat, the Elders Council Chair participated in the National Week of Action on Education held September 19-23, 2010. Elders play a crucial role in supporting formal and informal education in First Nation communities. They impart cultural teachings using the spoken language and role model traditional practices.

AFN Health Secretariat

The Elders Council Chair remains integral in providing guidance and vision in meetings applicable to Health. The Elders Council Chair participated in numerous meetings pertaining to First Nation health including: the National First Nations Health Technicians Network (NFNHTN), National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program (NNADAP), eHealth, and more recently, the Canadian Conference on Global Health.



AFN Social Secretariat

The AFN Elders Council met in Calgary on February 24, 2011 to discuss the barriers faced in accessing social programs, particularly income assistance, as it pertains to senior citizens.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- The Elders Council will continue to seek additional financial support from the federal government and alternative sources, so as to ensure First Nation cultures and perspectives are reflected in the work conducted regionally and nationally by the AFN.
- AFN staff will continue to provide administrative support, and champion the issues facing the Elders Council.



AFN WOMEN'S COUNCIL

The Assembly of First Nations Women's Council (AFNWC) works with the AFN Secretariat to ensure that the concerns and perspectives of First Nation women inform the work of the AFN. Council members hold portfolio responsibilities, which include participating in a wide range of panels, presentations and forums that are relevant to First Nation women. The work of the AFNWC has been established and supported by the Chiefs-in-Assembly through resolutions 12/2006, 2/2007 and 21/2009.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

Regular Meetings and Teleconferences

The AFNWC has engaged in regular meetings, in person at Chiefs Assemblies and also by teleconference, to discuss the AFNWC strategic workplan, events and activities. In January, the AFNWC appointed Adeline Webber as Interim Chair and Therese Villeneuve as the Interim Co-Chair, until a permanent Chair and Co-Chair are nominated and elected in July, 2011.

Executive Committee Engagement

The WC actively participates in AFN Executive Committee meetings and teleconferences. The WC has participated in eight Executive meetings to update members on activities of the Council related to the Gender Balanced Analysis (GBA) Implementation and missing and murdered women, as well as the interim chair's updates.

National Dialogue on First Nation Citizenship

The AFNWC has been engaged and involved in the ongoing National Dialogue on First Nation Citizenship. The AFNWC has offered its GBA Framework as a lens to examine current citizenship policy and ramifications and approaches for future citizenship reform.

10th Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII)

The AFN attended to UNPFII 10th Session and the UN Global Indigenous Women's Caucus preparatory meeting to ensure the AFNWC was connected to the process and informed of the Caucus statement to the UN assembly, which addressed the review of the Permanent Forum's past recommendations and implementation strategies for the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Gender Balanced Analysis (GBA) Framework Collaboration

The AFNWC is planning an integration agenda for 2011/2012 and beyond with the Youth and Elders Councils to ensure further comprehensive GBA development and policy implementation.

Women's Worlds 2011

Interim Chair Adeline Webber will be presenting a workshop on GBA for First Nations at this year's Women's Worlds conference, July 3-7, 2011. International guests and delegates will have an opportunity to learn about GBA in First Nation communities and how the First Nations GBA model can be understood and adapted in other Indigenous communities.



ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- The AFNWC will continue to make strides in advancing a culturally-relevant GBA on several fronts, including the development of a GBA Implementation Strategy, and piloting of the strategy in First Nation communities during the 2011-2014 fiscal years.
- The AFNWC will continue advocacy on the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada, including ensuring the root causes of this issue are examined and addressed.



AFN NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL

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

This national body represents First Nation youth across the country on issues that impact them on a daily basis. The Council provides insight on various youth-related issues to many committees and working groups, as well as the AFN Secretariat.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The AFN NYC has had an active year. Youth participation has ensured that AFN's efforts are more reflective of youth values and input, thus more representative of a significant segment of the First Nation population in Canada.

IndigenACTION

Launched at the 2010 Annual General Assembly (AGA), IndigenACTION aims to enhance support for Indigenous athletes and promote health, fitness and wellness in all First Nation communities. The AFN NYC continues to play a lead role in the rollout of this initiative, planning and in the delivery of three regional roundtables. The Council is eager to continue working on IndigenACTION as it moves into the next phase of developing a strategic plan and implementation of the recommendations made in the report released at the 2011 AGA.

Income Assistance – Active Measures

The AFN NYC was integral in the development of a toolkit that aims to decrease the number of First Nation youth who are overly dependent on income assistance as a means of financial stability. The AFN NYC provided input through two focus groups as well as in the development and promotion of the toolkit.

National Dialogue on First Nation Citizenship

The AFN NYC has made a significant contribution to the ongoing discussion of citizenship within our First Nation communities. They have participated in the planning of Virtual Roundtables and have provided a strong voice that demonstrates the interest and role that First Nation youth across the country have on this issue.

National Week of Action on Education

The AFN NYC participated in events taking place during the National Week of Action on Education in September, 2010. The AFN NYC was well represented at both the Advocacy Day on Parliament Hill and the rally which took place on the Hill later in the week. Education and the movement to improve the quality and access to education for First Nation youth remains a priority for the AFN NYC and they look forward to continuing their role to bring substantial change and progress to this fundamental aspect of First Nations' development and success.

Awareness

The AFN NYC finalized seven short videos on sexual health promotion with funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and Health Canada (HC). The videos were launched on the AFN website coinciding with the beginning of Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week (December 1-5) and World AIDS Day



(December 1). The AFN NYC also presented the video campaign before the Senate Committee on the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth.

Capitalizing on the momentum generated by the response to the videos, the AFN NYC has continued to work in the field of sexual health and related areas.

Work has begun on the planning of a joint project with the Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada (SOGC) on a youth-driven pilot that will see young leaders in First Nation communities assist in the promotion of positive sexual health practices.

The AFN NYC is currently working on an initiative that utilizes their knowledge of social media and other innovative means of communication to design a campaign to raise awareness of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and assist youth in First Nation communities find the necessary tools and outlets to both prevent FASD and provide care for those impacted by FASD.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Detailed plans and desired outcomes for the anticipated 4th National First Nation Youth Summit in the summer of 2012.
- Meet with the Elders and Women's Councils to define roles within the structure of the AFN and to discuss common objectives and how the three councils can work together to meet those objectives.
- Completed design of a pilot project on sexual health to be delivered jointly with the SOGC.
- Identification of Task Force that will seek to implement the recommendations made in the IndigenACTION report from the concluded roundtables.
- Completion of the Virtual Roundtables on First Nation Citizenship, culminating with a National Forum in November of 2011 and recommendations to the 2011 Special Chiefs Assembly.



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to the 32nd Annual General Assembly (AGA). We have continued on the new course that we embarked on in 2009 under the leadership of the National Chief and Executive Committee. Our directive is clear: the AFN needs to be as effective, efficient, accountable, and responsive as possible in order to best fulfill its mandate to advance First Nations' political priorities as the national First Nations advocacy organization.

We have continued to streamline operations of the AFN and worked to improve the ways in which we conduct our business in order to serve First Nations better. Consistent with the recommendations of the sustainability review, our focus has remained on maximizing our capacity by employing team approaches to reach organizational objectives and to implement financial and business planning to best optimize our performance as an advocacy organization.

As noted in December, we were able to reduce expenditures significantly at the end of 2010. However, we continue to operate in a restrictive funding environment with reduced core funding. This means that we face ongoing challenges and will continue to explore options to work more efficiently. We will also continue to look for alternative sources of revenue to ensure that we are able to follow the direction provided by First Nations effectively, without being constrained by federal funding parameters.

In response to what we have been hearing from First Nation leaders, we have expanded our role in facilitating national dialogue on issues of central importance to First Nation citizens. On March 7 and 8, 2011, the AFN convened the second national Planning and Dialogue Forum in Vancouver. Planning and Dialogue Forums are venues to discuss issues in-depth, share promising practices and bring together First Nation leaders, advisors, technicians, and youth representatives. The theme of the spring 2011 Planning and Dialogue Forum was "Strengthening our Nations: Advancing Capacity for First Nation Governments and Economies". The spring 2011 Forum had sessions on First Nations - Crown Relations, Institutional Capacity, Resource Development and Energy, First Nation Citizenship, Community Safety and Infrastructure, and Accountability. There was consensus among participants that in order to re-build our Nations, First Nations need to move beyond the *Indian Act* and build institutional capacity beyond the confines of external decision-making. Participants also noted the importance of sharing experiences and expertise and learning from each other in moving forward on the path to self-determined futures. A summary report and all materials are available on www.afn.ca.

The AFN will continue to create opportunities for dialogue and facilitate information sharing among First Nations. To this end, we have expanded and improved our use of social media to reach out to First Nation audiences. Our new website www.afn.ca is blackberry and PDA friendly and links up with our Assembly of First Nations/Assemblée des Premières Nations Facebook page, our Twitter updates, the National Chief's blog and monthly web addresses on YouTube, as well as webcasts of our assemblies and other events. We successfully employed our new media capabilities when we held a virtual town hall forum on the federal election in April and the first virtual roundtable on First Nation citizenship in May. These webcasts and



interactive live chats were very effective in reaching out to and engaging directly with a large number of First Nation citizens and leaders in an environmentally-sustainable and cost-effective manner.

Throughout the month of June, the AFN held a number of special events and organized activities to mark the inaugural Month of Advocacy, Awareness & Action. Our activities included hosting webinars on key topics, such the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the AFN Treaty Strategy, as well as hosting a Parliamentary Reception for Members of Parliament and Senators. Building on our strong track record of Parliamentary advocacy, the AFN provided opportunities for focused advocacy on Parliament Hill on June 21, National Aboriginal Day. We will continue in our efforts to advance greater understanding among Canadians of the enduring First Nations - Crown relationship enshrined in Treaty and the minimum standards outlined in the UNDRIP.

We look forward to the dialogue and your direction at the 2011 AGA.

Richard Jock
Chief Executive Officer



CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER



I am very pleased to be providing my first report as the Chief Operating Officer of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN). Over the past seven years I have met and worked with many of you in my capacity as Executive Director of the National Association of Friendship Centres. In January of this year I joined the AFN. It is an exciting and challenging time to join the team.

My responsibilities at the AFN are to oversee the operational activities of the organization. This includes finances, staffing issues, development of staff workplan and fulfillment of organizational priorities. I have long admired the incredible capacity that the AFN has for working at such a high level on so many files. These past few months have only increased my admiration for the tremendous work taking place.

There are many challenges which require attention. The AFN, like First Nations all across Canada, is operating in an environment of diminishing resources and increased reporting demands. In real terms the AFN has endured a 40% reduction in core funding, with \$500,000 being cut back this year alone. This has created a number of internal challenges as we are operating with reduced staffing levels and increased workloads.

One of the first opportunities I was presented with was to review the organization's operations and present recommendations for cost savings. The AFN had already begun the development of a "zero-based budgeting" exercise where all of the priorities of the organization are taken into account prior to any budgeting decisions being made. This provided the organization with a natural opportunity to identify ways to address these funding challenges. In the end the organization was able to identify the savings required to respond to this year's reduction in core funding.

This review also identified some opportunities for the AFN as an organization. The first is the need to continue with the internal team approach to work on files. Given the reality that our personnel size is decreasing while workloads are increasing we will need to continue to become more efficient in organizing our work. The second opportunity is to increase the amount of our own source revenue to offset our reliance on government funding. The AFN has already started down this road, but more specific targets and increased efforts are needed. Finally, the AFN must continue to realign our organization to address the mandate and priorities provided by Chiefs.

We are also looking at ways of modernizing our activities. The use of social media in our communication efforts is helping to reach a new audience. The use of webcasts and virtual summits are pulling more First Nation citizens and governments into our discussions and bringing many new voices to the table. It will be innovations such as these which help to continue the growth and reach of the AFN.

Once again, it is an honour to work with each of you and I am looking forward to the challenges and opportunities which are before us all! Mii-Gwetch!

Peter Dinsdale
Chief Operating Officer



STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

The Communications Unit produces, communicates and distributes information designed to advance the goals and priorities of First Nation 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 Communications Unit is implementing an active social media campaign using the AFN website, webcasts, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, e-mail blasts and online Virtual Summits on a variety of issues and themes.

AFN Communications activities and initiatives are guided by an over-arching strategic communications plan based on the direction and priorities of First Nations. The Communications Unit provides ongoing input and assistance on critical issues as they occur.

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, as well as strategies for specific initiatives and/or activities. The Unit works to develop materials and provide information to First Nations, 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 mainstream media, with regional distribution as applicable. The Unit also prepares speaking notes for the National Chief and AFN spokespeople that are used at a variety of events for a variety of audiences, including First Nation governments, groups and organizations, professional associations, national and international organizations, and government. Key events during this reporting period included the inaugural session of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Healing Our Spirit Worldwide gathering, Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business annual gala, AFN Advocacy Day on the Hill, First Nations National Week of Action on Education, the Treaties 1-11 Gathering, National Congress of American Indians annual convention, Canadian Club of Toronto, the Toronto and Vancouver Boards of Trade, the AFN-Holmes Group project, the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, numerous activities related to the AFN June "Month of Advocacy, Awareness and Action", AFN Planning and Dialogue Forums, the International Indigenous Summit on Energy and Mining and numerous regional assemblies and gatherings.

Since the 2010 Annual General Assembly (AGA), the Communications Unit has prepared and distributed more than 110 press releases/statements on a wide range of issues. Communications also prepares speaking notes, media lines, backgrounders, Questions & Answers documents, letters to the editor and editorials on current issues.

Communications seeks to establish 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 such as CBC, the *Globe and Mail*, the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network and regional media such as the *Moncton Times and Transcript*.

Over the past year, there have been several developments that have resulted in widespread national and international media coverage for the AFN and the National Chief, including the inaugural session of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, National Week of Action on Education held in September and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the stepping down of Auditor General Sheila Fraser, June's "Month of Advocacy, Awareness and Action" and the International Indigenous Summit on Energy and Mining.

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 to access information. For this reason, AFN utilizes a mix of traditional and new media to disseminate information as widely as possible.

The AFN issues regular updates on the National Chief's activities and work underway at the national office. Monthly National Chief's communiqués are distributed by fax to all First Nations, provincial/territorial organizations (PTOs) and tribal councils, and are also posted online in both print and video format.

The Communications Unit launched a redesigned website (www.afn.ca) in December that allows for easier navigation and clearer presentation and organization to enhance access to current information on AFN activities and priorities. The AFN also continues to expand its use of social media including a Twitter account (AFN_updates) and AFN Facebook page (Assembly of First Nations / Assemblée des Premières Nations), which has more than 1,000 followers. The AFN also has an e-mail subscription service (listserv) on its website through which users can sign up to receive all information publicly distributed by the AFN. AFN Communications also provides support for the various online Virtual Summits convened by AFN and the National Chief.

The Communications Unit also provides editing and desktop publishing services. Projects have included reports for the Annual General Assembly, Special Chiefs Assembly, Planning and Dialogue Forums, Virtual Summits on education, as well as products for the First Nations Rights Fund and the Environmental Stewardship, Health and Economic Partnerships units at AFN.

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's Office and other policy areas within the Secretariat.

During this reporting period, Communications staff contributed to various planning committees for the Planning and Dialogue Forums, International Indigenous Summit on Energy and Mining, and working groups on Parliamentary Relations and Federal Election Readiness, among others.



As part of a dedicated effort to consolidate and improve communications with all First Nations, the AFN released a communiqué in January to inform First Nation leaders and citizens how they can get information and communicate with the AFN on an ongoing basis. *Get Connected and Get Information from the AFN* can be found online at www.afn.ca.

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. The translation requirements of the organization have continued to increase, with translation averaging approximately 90,000 words per month.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- 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 and YouTube.



PARLIAMENTARY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) continued work to build strong relationships with Parliamentarians, provincial and territorial governments and representatives of other countries.

Along with specific focus on building and maintaining connections between First Nation leadership, Parliamentarians and senior public servants, the AFN monitors and provides strategic input and communications on legislation affecting First Nations. The AFN also seeks to link with international representatives in Ottawa to facilitate greater knowledge and awareness of First Nation contributions and the potential of economic partnerships with First Nations.

The AFN has continued to advance strategic issues of relevance to First Nations as part of the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group (AAWG) created in August 2009 by the Council of the Federation (CoF). This has included identifying areas for joint policy discussion with provincial and territorial governments that could be discussed between meetings of the CoF.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

Legislation and Engagement in Parliamentary Processes

Even in the short period before Parliament dissolved for the 41st General Election there were a number of Bills and studies with specific impacts on First Nations.

Key legislation followed during this session included:

- **Bill C-575: *First Nations Financial Transparency Act***, introduced by Conservative MP Kelly Block on October 1, 2010, required that salary, travel, honoraria and all expenses paid to First Nation chiefs and councillors through federal funds be published. In such event that these amounts were not disclosed, the Act would empower the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) to provide this information. The AFN worked to counter the underlying myths associated with this Bill and will continue to move forward on the development of true reciprocal accountability between First Nation governments and Canada.
- **Bill S-4: *Matrimonial Real Property Act*** was introduced in the House of Commons on September 22, 2010, after passing through three readings in the Senate. This essentially was the same Bill that had been introduced on two previous occasions with some minor amendments from review at 2nd reading by the Senate Committee on Human Rights. Significant flaws remained with this Bill – but openness had been expressed on the part of Canada to address issues during the last Parliament. The AFN will continue to advocate for respect and support for implementing laws as developed by First Nations in this area, as well ensuring attention to underlying issues of access to justice, adequate housing and domestic violence prevention.
- **Bill S-11: *Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act*** was introduced in the Senate on May 26, 2010. The Bill would have created regulations regarding First Nations' drinking water, but had no provisions for capacity to comply with these regulations. Additionally, the Bill would have displaced First Nation jurisdiction and was inconsistent with section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1985*. First Nation representatives resoundingly expressed their concerns with the Bill as it was reviewed by the Senate Committee on Aboriginal Affairs at 2nd reading. In an unprecedented move, the Committee invited



National Chief Shawn Atleo to provide additional commentary regarding a final presentation by the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs and on the possibility of INAC amending the legislation to respond to concerns raised by First Nations. The AFN will continue to pursue the principles outlined in Resolution 58/2010 regarding this Bill and will advocate for the provision of safe drinking water for First Nations.

The House Standing Committee on the Status of Women issued an interim report as part of its study on Violence Against Aboriginal Women in March 2011, which advocated for a coordinated and holistic approach to address violence against Aboriginal women.

Upon the announcement of the 41st General Election and dissolution of Parliament, all draft legislation and committee studies are no longer active. Legislation must be reintroduced by the new Parliament to be considered. A newly constituted committee can decide to endorse and move forward on reports of committees of a previous Parliament.

Given campaign assurances that the Conservatives will reintroduce many of these bills – and bring back Bill C-575 as government legislation rather than as a private members bill – the AFN will continue to actively monitor and advocate that First Nation rights and interests are paramount in the development of government legislation.

When Parliament is in session the AFN prepares weekly Parliamentary wrap-ups which provide a quick summary of legislation and committee business, and are sent via email and posted on www.afn.ca.

Election 2011

The AFN launched election related activities under the banner “First Nations Count!” with two main goals: to provide information and analysis for First Nation citizens to determine how they wished to engage in the election; and to increase the profile of First Nation issues broadly in the election. Specific activities included:

1. **First Nation Priorities** – In the first week of April, the AFN released a paper outlining First Nation priorities for the election, based on Executive discussion and resolutions from Chiefs-in-Assembly. The four priorities were: Affirmation of First Nations Rights; Fairness and Equity in Education; Partnership and Supporting the First Nation Economy; and, Ensuring Safety and Community Health. Copies of this paper were sent to all party leaders and posted on our website.
2. **Survey to Political Parties** – The AFN also sent out a questionnaire to all the parties with specific questions based upon the established priorities. A report was produced of all responses received and posted on our website.
3. **Summary of Party Platforms** – As the various platforms were released, the AFN summarized their content in an easy-to-read chart highlighting commitments of relevance to First Nation priorities.
4. **Virtual Summit on the Federal Election** – On April 14, 2011, the National Chief held a virtual summit on the federal election from Tsuu T’ina First Nation in Alberta. The virtual summit built upon the success of previous summits and engaged directly with First Nations and their citizens on their priorities for the election. The event was very successful with over 100 sites joining to participate.



5. Town Hall on the Federal Election – On April 27, 2011, a Town Hall on First Nation Issues was held in Toronto. All parties were invited. Candidates from the Green Party, Liberals and NDP attended the moderated event. The Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador (AFNQL) had a French debate the same night which was attended by representatives from the Green Party, Liberals, NDP and Bloc Québécois. The Town Hall was webcast live and segments were re-broadcast on APTN along with the French debate the following night.
6. Specific Media Outreach – The AFN sought to engage and educate the broader Canadian public on First Nation issues in this campaign. This included appearances on CBC (*Power & Politics*), CPAC and a guest editorial on www.cbc.ca. In addition, this election saw the growth of the use of social media for the AFN. A number of active Twitter accounts and Facebook updates helped to further provide information to a broader audience.
7. Keynote addresses to major audiences – timed to coincide within the election period, the National Chief delivered several important speeches to key audiences. All were covered by major media outlets and generated significant interest. These included the Vancouver Board of Trade on April 7, the Canadian Club of Toronto on April 11 and the national convention of the United Way in Calgary on April 14.

The AFN also partnered with Elections Canada (EC) to contact 313 First Nation communities in 20 Electoral Districts (largely those north of 55) about accessing polls and voter identification requirements. Calling was carried out by AFN staff over a three-week period. Overall we made contact with 283 of the targeted communities (89%).

Parliamentary Advocacy and Outreach

On February 1, 2011 the AFN hosted the Parliamentary Spouses Association to increase awareness and understanding of the role, priorities and mandates we are pursuing. The event was successful with over 20 spouses of current parliamentarians in attendance. The day began with an overview of the AFN's current activities, followed by a cultural presentation then lunch with the National Chief. The event was a great opportunity for the AFN to find a new and creative ways to continue our outreach.

The changed composition of the newly constituted Parliament potentially provides some opportunities for First Nations. A majority government creates a measure of stability, which should show a shift away from shorter term priorities to longer range planning and greater possibility for constructive partnerships. Also, the large number of new MPs, particularly in the Official Opposition, means that First Nations can proactively seek to educate and inform Parliamentarians on our issues and approach.

Council of the Federation / Aboriginal Affairs Working Group

The CoF is a body formed in 2003 consisting of all provincial and territorial (PT) Premiers. The CoF has invited leaders from the five National Aboriginal Organizations (NAOs) to meet with them in advance of their regular annual meeting since 2004. As a direct response to calls from AFN at the meeting of the CoF in 2009, the Premiers agreed to establish a working group consisting of PT Aboriginal Affairs Ministers and national Aboriginal leaders to follow-up on work between meetings of the CoF and to advance commitments made by PTs.



This year, National Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo and Manitoba Regional Chief Bill Traverse met with Premiers and Territorial Leaders for the CoF on August 4, 2010, in Churchill, Manitoba. The agenda included discussions on education and skills training, economic development and violence against Aboriginal women. The AFN challenged all jurisdictions to work with us, particularly on critical improvements in education to support our students and to improve completion rates at every level.

Most recent discussions amongst the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group (AAWG) have been oriented to developing workplans building upon the established priorities from last year's CoF meeting intended to lead towards the upcoming Council of Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC) and CoF meetings in 2011. Established priorities include education, economic development and the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls.

The third meeting of AAWG took place on April 19, 2011, in Ottawa.

In terms of priority issues moving forward at AAWG, the AFN and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami have agreed to the role of co-leads on education, the Métis National Council has taken the lead on economic development, and the Native Women's Association of Canada continues as the lead on the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls.

As co-lead on education, the AFN continues to support improving the relationship with the CMEC to ensure that efforts between the AAWG and CMEC are consistent moving forward. Furthermore, the AFN continues to call for a First Ministers Meeting on education and will continue to press for equitable funding levels on-reserve from the federal government with no downloading of responsibilities to provinces, to ensure First Nations are provided with the jurisdiction, opportunity and flexibility to design, build and implement the best education systems available in order to improve overall academic achievement standards, close existing graduation rates, as well as eliminate gaps in other success measures between First Nation and non-First Nation learners.

In regards to economic development, the AFN supports the direction to explore regional opportunities related to infrastructure, micro-financing and resource revenue sharing. The AFN also supports the sharing of best and innovative practices between regions.

The AFN continues to support all efforts on the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls, including ensuring that all resources available are directed at the work of families and victims involved, calling on the federal government to create an Federal/Provincial/Territorial/Aboriginal (FPTA) Task Force as well as exploring other forums for discussion on this critical matter. Other specific follow-up items are as below:

- National Aboriginal Women's Summit is planned to be hosted by the Government of British Columbia on June 17th – in Vancouver, BC.
- The Council of the Federation (Premiers) meeting is also hosted this year by the Government of BC and will be held on July 20th.
- EDUCATION FORUM – Fall 2011 to highlight innovation and success – AFN will consider strategies and opportunities to host this event, potentially as a virtual summit engaging all PTs and profiling success at the community / regional level.



All discussions of the AAWG are premised on the clear understanding and principle advanced by AFN that discussion, dialogue and implementation of strategies must be achieved through direct engagement at the regional level by PTs and respective First Nation counterparts. The role of the AAWG is to encourage this dialogue and activity on the specific topics.

International Relationship-building

The AFN hosted a special reception for all international delegations and embassies in the lead up to the Special Chiefs Assembly in December 2010. The reception was introduced as a cultural exchange that profiled the many successes, opportunities and importance of working with First Nations, in addition to the opportunity to meet First Nation leaders. The reception showcased examples of First Nation customs and culture through prayer, song, dance, and cuisine. Overall, the event was attended by 150 guests, within which there were 30 embassies represented.

The AFN has continued to meet with many international delegations and embassies as part of extending advocacy efforts beyond the Canadian borders. Key meetings undertaken by the National Chief through the first part of 2011 have included:

- Her Excellency Mrs. Teresita de Jesús Vicente Sotolongo, Ambassador of Cuba in Canada
- His Excellency Zhang Junsai, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Canada
- His Excellency Dr. Georg Witschel, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany in Ottawa
- His Excellency Andrea Meloni, Ambassador of Italy in Ottawa

In addition to the above meetings, both the embassies of China and Germany indicated an interest to participate in the International Indigenous Summit on Energy and Mining being held in Niagara Falls, Ontario on June 27-29, 2011. To complement Ambassador and senior representative plenary presentations, the AFN coordinated workshop sessions on their respective countries' trade opportunities and interest to work with Indigenous peoples.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Continue facilitating access to Parliamentarians and key decision-makers.
- Focused advocacy days throughout the year, including specific action to educate new Parliamentarians in June 2011.
- Continue providing timely information to First Nations on the activities of Parliament, including legislation and committee business.
- Continued efforts on international outreach.
- Continue to monitor key legislative initiatives, provide information to First Nations and advocate on their behalf to Members of Parliament and Senators.
- Further updates on progress arising from the CoF / AAWG process.



SUPPORTING FIRST NATION FAMILIES:

The rebuilding of our families and communities will promote education for our learners and participation in strong and sustainable economies locally and nationally. This is our time to empower our fast-growing youth population in ways that will ensure a future of opportunity, success and prosperity and promote the knowledge of First Nations languages, history, teachings and values.



EDUCATION AND LANGUAGES

The mandate of the Education Secretariat is to engage, inform and coordinate with First Nations in all regions on education issues through proactive collaboration with the Chiefs Committee on Education (CCOE) and the National Indian Education Council (NIEC). The Secretariat assists First Nations through policy development and analysis and advocacy. It works to advance the development of quality and comprehensive First Nation education systems through a focus on projects and initiatives inclusive of the following: Head Start, early years, elementary/secondary education, special education, post-secondary education (PSE), vocational training, comparable and equitable funding, accountability, languages and cultures. The Secretariat also works toward increasing educational access and attainment for First Nation learners.

Resolutions

- Resolution 11/2010 – Taking Action for First Nations Post Secondary Education: Access, Opportunity, and Outcomes
- Resolution 12/2010 – First Nations' Control of First Nations' Education
- Resolution 13/2010 – Support for Filing a Human Rights Complaint on Unequal Funding for First Nations Education
- Resolution 41/2010 – Support for Beaver Lake Education
- Resolution 49/2010 – United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and First Nations Education
- Resolution 54/2010 – Support for Shannen's Dream – Motion 571 (Funding Inequities in First Nations Education)
- Resolution 55/2010 – Actions Necessary to Save First Nations Languages from Extinction
- Resolution 56/2010 – Support for the BC First Peoples' Cultural Foundation and Increased Federal Funding for Language Revitalization

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

A budget and workplan for 2010-11 was negotiated and agreed upon in June 2010, however Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) did not approve nor provide funding until December 21, 2010. The workplan was adjusted in March, 2011 to reflect emerging activities related to the National Panel on First Nation Elementary and Secondary Education.

Call to Action on First Nation Education

The Chiefs-in-Assembly made education a priority through a clear statement by First Nation leaders and youth at the 2009 Special Chiefs Assembly. The AFN's Call to Action on Education followed in June 2010, resulting in a number of activities to advance and promote the importance of First Nation education. The Call to Action on Education focuses on Reconciliation, a First Nations Education Guarantee, Sustainability, Systems Development, and Supports and Partnerships.

The following activities have supported the Call to Action on Education:

- Release of two papers, *First Nation Control of First Nation Education* and *Taking Action for First Nations Post-Secondary Education: Access, Opportunity, and Outcomes*.



- Launch of the First Nations Rights Fund and legal review to explore various legal and legislative options to advance an agenda on education.
- Organization of the National Week of Action on Education, including Parliamentary advocacy, a Rally on the Hill, outreach to international embassies and support of community and regional action.
- Launch of *Shannen's Dream* for funding equity in First Nation education as an NDP parliamentary motion and as a social movement.
- Work by the Bloc Québécois on a bill focused on a statutory funding guarantee for First Nation education.
- Support of First Nation education as a priority by CMEC, the Aboriginal Affairs Ministers Working Group (AAMWG) and through the Council of the Federation's call for a First Ministers Meeting on First Nation Education.
- Dialogue between the National Chief and PSE students through Virtual Summits on post-secondary education.
- Advocacy with MPs and through the AFN Pre-Budget Submission regarding the clear need for investment in education.
- Support for WE day/ Free the Children initiatives – February focus on First Nation / Aboriginal Education.
- Launch of the National Panel on First Nation Elementary and Secondary Education in March 2011.
- Advocacy on the priority of First Nation education during the federal election.
- Advocacy at the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues with a focus on advancing key sections of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in relation to education.
- Keynote address on First Nation education at the Congress of Social Sciences and Humanities conference.
- Strengthening educational alliances with the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC), Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC), Canadian Association of School Administrators (CASA), Canadian Federation of Students (CFS), CMEC, Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT), Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) and the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE).

First Nations Education – Elementary and Secondary

In response to the AFN's Call to Action, the Minister of Indian Affairs announced the creation of a **National Panel on First Nation Elementary and Secondary Education** in December, 2010. The National Panel has a mandate to develop options, including new legislation, to improve the governance framework and clarify accountability for and to First Nation elementary and secondary education. It will, among other things, examine the comparability of funding and programs and services for First Nation education, including language and cultural programs. This Panel has a time-limited mandate to engage directly with First Nations and others through a series of regional dialogue sessions, a national session and site visits to advance a plan to implement sustainable solutions that focus on the success of our children. A non-binding report will be provided to the AFN and INAC. This is seen as the first phase of a multi-phase engagement. A formal AFN-INAC Joint Working Group has been established to meet on a weekly basis to provide direction and oversight on all matters, in collaboration with the Chiefs Committee on Education (CCOE) and the National Indian Education Council (NIEC). Various documents have been developed and gathered to support this process.



Performance Measurement and Data Management

The AFN participated in INAC's review of current data collection instruments and recipient reports to refine, define and clarify reporting and linkages for performance measures and the establishment of baseline data, and the identification of meaningful and appropriate targets. This included documenting feedback from First Nation working groups in the areas of performance measurement, data management, post-secondary education and special education regarding INAC's implementation plans for the new Education Information System. A Data Subcommittee consisting of regional First Nation technicians was established to develop guidelines for implementation including development of Terms of Reference and an Ethics Protocol for an Ethics Board and Shared Governance Committee as two key priorities. The principles of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP) guide this work.

Post-Secondary Education

A number of activities were organized to advance First Nation Post-Secondary Education. To expand our reach through new technologies, the AFN convened two Virtual Summits on Post-Secondary Education, in January and March 2011. These summits provided great insight on PSE, identified areas of success for First Nation students and institutions and highlighted the need for adequate funding to support these successes. An online survey was posted and a report on the responses is now available. A document of evidence-based models of First Nation Post-Secondary Student Support Programming outlined excellent models that exist in First Nation communities throughout Canada. Finally, a report was developed that outlined the critical role that PSE counsellors play in the success of students and program administration and highlighted counsellor skill sets, qualifications and responsibilities that benefit and impact standards for service delivery, including non-financial supports and practices that improve PSE participation and completion.

Special Education

A bibliography was compiled of current research on the evaluation of outcomes for high-cost special education students to help assess an ultimate outcome for the Special Education Program.

First Nations Languages

An environmental scan was conducted to identify impacts of cultural competency on First Nation learner outcomes through development of curriculum materials to support the integration of First Nation language, culture, traditions, and values using a holistic life-long learning model approach, and the resulting impacts on literacy and student achievement and outcomes.

The lack of dedicated funding for languages deterred the implementation of the actions contained in Resolution 55/2010 – Actions Necessary to Save First Nations Languages from Extinction. Press releases were prepared to honour the annual March 31st Aboriginal Languages Day and the International Mother Language Day on February 21st. In addition, preparation of speaking notes for AFN representatives provided strong messaging on the importance of immersion programs as the best means to promote, preserve and protect Indigenous languages in Canada.



Student Transition

The Secretariat developed “A Literature Review of Factors that Support Successful Transitions by Aboriginal People from K-12 to Postsecondary Education” as a comprehensive review of the transitions of Aboriginal persons to post-secondary education. The report includes a focus on factors and trends that affect post-secondary enrolment and success, building upon the Canadian Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC) recommendations to facilitate tracking and monitoring of students between First Nation and non-First Nation schools.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The vision is clear: education based on our rights; education that protects and nurtures our children; education that values our languages and culture; education that is fair and equitable; and education that gives our people the same opportunities for success as others in Canada in a way that upholds our Aboriginal and Treaty rights. In the advancement of these rights, the Secretariat will:

- Support the work of the CCOE-NIEC, First Nations and the National Panel to develop an implementation plan for First Nation education through the effective exercise of First Nations’ right to free, prior and informed consent regarding constitutional reconciliation that may deal with such matters as legislation, governance, funding, transparency, and accountability.
- Support the work of the INAC-AFN Data Collection Working Groups in the areas of data management, performance measurement, special education, PSE, and Elementary/Secondary Education to ensure that principles of OCAP and privacy are assured.
- Support research and analysis in areas critical to building capacity and enhancing and advancing First Nation control of First Nation education through a holistic lifelong learning model in the areas of First Nation languages, histories and cultures, special education, PSE and elementary/secondary education.
- Continue to seek resources and opportunities to ensure the promotion and preservation of Indigenous languages and implementation of Resolution 55/2010.

Education is the key to unlocking the full potential of First Nation citizens. It is the key to ensuring the continuity and growth of our languages and cultures; it is the key to better health; it is the key for improved economic opportunities; and it is the foundation for strengthening our Nations.



HEALTH AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Health and Social Secretariat (HSS) report is organized and aligned within our new structure: Strategic Policy, Public Health, Mental Wellness, Children and Youth, Information Management, Primary Care, and Social Development. Health strategies and decisions are developed in partnership with the National First Nations Health Technicians Network (NFNHTN) and the Chiefs Committee on Health (CCOH).

1. STRATEGIC POLICY

A. ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS (AFN) – HEALTH CANADA (HC) – PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY OF CANADA (PHAC) TASK GROUP WORK PLAN

The Task Group coordinates the highest level of work on health and has the potential for immense influence and change for program and funding sustainability, program coherence and innovation, such as that of the multi-jurisdictional partnerships approach. Phase One was completed and an agreement was signed on January 13, 2009, between the National Chief and the Minister of Health initiating work under Phase Two (2009-2011). In November 2011, a joint letter was signed by the National Chief and the Minister of Health renewing the AFN-HC-PHAC Task Group on First Nations Health from 2011-2012.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The AFN-HC-PHAC Task Group Advisory Committee is finalizing the development of the Phase Two work plan building upon previous accomplishments. Bridging from Phase One and recognizing the joint interest in multi-lateral collaboration, the Task Group has identified three areas of focus to jointly explore: Structural Change; Strengthening Relationships; and, Accountability. Within these key areas work will include developing and implementing projects which focus upon key priorities in addressing First Nation health issues such as social determinants of health, multi-jurisdictional and integration agreements, cost-drivers analysis for health programming, review of continuing mental health and addictions needs (including the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement), physical activity, sport and obesity.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- The AFN-HC-PHAC Task Group Advisory Committee will finalize the work plan and continue to collaborate in the implementation of workplan activities.
- Ensure that the needs of First Nations continue to be reflected in the work outcomes.

B. ABORIGINAL HEALTH HUMAN RESOURCES INITIATIVE (AHHRI)

The AHHRI is one of the \$700 million upstream investments whose authority and mandate ended March 31, 2010. Renewal of AHHRI was announced and approval of funding by Treasury Board took place in late 2010. AHHRI was renewed in 2010 for two years, with a budget of \$40 million. AHHRI has further been renewed for an additional three years from 2010-2015 at \$80 million.



KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The renewed AHHRI is focused on a number of issues including increasing of the number of trained and certified First Nation health managers and community-based workers. In the first two years of the renewed AHHRI, the AFN advocated and secured continued funding for established cultural competency projects. The AFN continues its advocacy efforts to obtain funding for new cultural competency projects as they remain unfunded under the AHHRI guidelines for years 2013-2015. The First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB) has also mandated AHHRI to fund the startup of the First Nations Health Managers Association (FNHMA) from 2010-2012.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Continue to work with regional First Nation partners to ensure that community needs are being addressed and met.
- Continue to advocate for funding of new cultural competency projects.
- Continue to work collaboratively with regional First Nation partners and participate in the creation and exchange of knowledge dissemination strategies.
- Work closely with FNIHB to address changes in funding levels.

C. FIRST NATIONS HEALTH MANAGERS ASSOCIATION (FNHMA)

AFN Resolutions 58/2008 and 46/2009 support collaboration to address First Nations health human resource shortages, support the development of the FNHMA and approve the First Nations Health Managers Competency Framework.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The draft Statement of Partnership between the AFN and FNHMA is currently on hold until the FNHMA addresses the parameters set out in Resolution 46/2009. While some issues have been addressed, many still remain outstanding such as by-laws and governance. The AFN continues to advocate for the outstanding concerns in Resolution 46/2009.

The AFN is also advocating further with the FNHMA to address concerns about the development of a certification-learning tool called “Certified Aboriginal Health Manager” (CAHM). Specifically, Resolution 104/2004 opposes pan-Aboriginal approaches and the AFN is working to implement this direction with the FNHMA.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Continue to advocate for the necessary changes to the FNHMA in an effort to reach agreement and sign a Statement of Partnership.
- Consider withdrawing support to the FNHMA should the parameters set out in Resolution 46/2009 and 104/2004 not be addressed.



D. ABORIGINAL HEALTH TRANSITION FUND (AHTF)

Originally, announced as a five-year initiative to end in 2010, the AHTF provided transitional short-term funding to federal, provincial and territorial governments and Aboriginal organizations to integrate provincial/territorial health systems and federally-funded health systems within First Nation and Inuit communities. The initiative was also meant to adapt provincial/territorial health services to better meet the needs of all Aboriginal peoples, including Métis and those living off-reserve. The fund was structured into three envelopes and was jointly managed and accounted for by HC. The initiative was extended for one year to allow for completion of project work and ended on March 31, 2011. This was replaced by the Health Services Integration Fund (HSIF).

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The Treasury Board requires that a comprehensive meta-evaluation be conducted on AHTF. This evaluation includes a synthesis of the research and an analysis of the activities funded under AHTF. Various partners have and continue to participate in the working group meetings to ensure that the outcomes reflect the communities involved in the activities.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Participate and provide input into the development of the final meta-evaluation report of AHTF to ensure report reflects distinction-based outcomes.
- Participate in ongoing knowledge exchange and transition to HSIF.

E. HEALTH SERVICES INTEGRATION FUND (HSIF)

Midway through 2010, a new program referred to as the “daughter” of AHTF was informally announced, the HSIF. Since that time, HSIF has been confirmed in the amount of \$80 million from 2010-2015 with the following breakdown:

2010-2011:	\$5.5 million
2011-2012:	\$11.5 million
2012-2013:	\$18.4 million
2013-2014:	\$21.4 million
2014-2015:	\$23.2 million

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The AFN participates and provides input into the development of advisory committees for the new HSIF. The AFN advocates for meaningful First Nation involvement including the development of guidelines, framework, and terms of reference for the HSIF National Advisory Committee (NAC) ensuring a distinction-based approach and development of a collaborative communications plan.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Continue to work with regional First Nation partners to ensure community understanding of integration.
- Strengthen First Nation membership on the HSIF NAC.



2. PUBLIC HEALTH (PH)

Public health focuses on the social, environmental and economic factors affecting health, as well as the communities and settings where people gather and live. Programs and services are designed to promote and protect health, and prevent injury and disease.

Protecting the health of First Nations and preventing disease is a priority area for both the AFN and FNIHB who have been collaborating to develop a First Nations Public Health Strategic Plan and longer-term vision. Following the completion of the AFN's Public Health Framework in 2006, support was secured for three five-year projects in Four Arrows Regional Health Authority, File Hills Qu'Appelle and Kenora Treaty 3. These projects are now entering into their fifth and final year. These initiatives recognize the need for increased capacity at the regional level, a more inclusive governance structure in the management of public health services, enhanced disease surveillance, integrated public health programming with the provinces, and an agreed upon legislative base on which to protect the health of individuals and their community.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The PH Pilot Projects have made strides in advancing their goals. A clear example of this is the Manitoba project that will commence the implementation of the community-developed PH Framework in two communities. Saskatchewan is actively collaborating with the FNIHB office and the Province to advance their Framework Model and Kenora, Ontario is actively working toward completion of its project goals. An evaluation of year four work will be ready by the end of summer 2011. Also, the Community Public Health Pilot Project Newsletter has started its quarterly distribution and will continue until the end of year five.

In addition to the focus on the pilots, the AFN Public Health team is establishing relationships with federal government departments and national organizations such as the Correctional Service of Canada, PHAC, Canadian Lung Association and the Canadian Asthma Society among others, to ensure the ongoing inclusion of First Nations in the development of new strategies to improve the health of First Nations.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Completion of year four evaluation in preparation for year five final evaluation process.
- Assist FNIHB with their consultative dialogues in each region for feedback on their public health vision for the Branch.
- Assist PHAC with their dialogue with First Nation regions in developing a PHAC policy framework on PHAC's role in First Nations public health.
- Development of an AFN Policy Framework on Health Impact Assessments and Social Determinants of Health.
- Establishment of the First Nation Public Health Advisory Committee.
- Review and update the AFN Public Health Framework.



A. CANCER

The incidence of cancer is rising faster in First Nation communities than in the general Canadian population. It is among the leading causes of death in some First Nation communities. While cancer was relatively rare in the past, common cancers such as breast, prostate, lung, and colorectal have increased remarkably over the last several decades in many First Nation communities.

With the rapidly growing First Nation population, cancer may soon become an enormous public health issue for First Nations and for Canada. There is a potential for cancer to surpass diabetes as the number one killer of First Nation peoples.

The AFN will continue to monitor the cancer care continuum (risk factors/prevention, screening, diagnosis, treatment, recovery, end of life/palliative care) to keep apprised of how First Nations might be affected. Efforts and limited resources this fiscal year will be focused on screening, liaison and raising awareness.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

Canadian Partnership Against Cancer (CPAC)

The AFN has obtained funding from CPAC for the 2010/2011 fiscal year. The main objective of the work to be done is to raise awareness of cancer as an emerging crisis for First Nations. Activities include policy development and analysis, capacity building, and development of communication components that will support the objective of raising awareness with leadership, all levels of government, professional organizations, and First Nation communities.

First Nations/Inuit/Métis (FN/I/M) Advisory Council on Cancer Control

The AFN has worked with CPAC and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) to draft Terms of Reference for the FN/I/M Advisory Council on Cancer Control. The AFN participates and provides support to First Nation representatives on the CPAC FN/I/M Advisory Council. The Advisory Council developed an action plan that was validated and began implementation in the spring of 2011.

Cancerview.ca Website

The AFN also participates on CPAC's Advisory Council for the FN/I/M website portal page. CPAC is in the process of developing a FN/I/M web portal for the Cancerview.ca website. Cancerview.ca connects Canadians to online services, information and resources for cancer control. The portal brings together resources for cancer prevention, screening, treatment, and supportive, palliative and end-of-life care. The FN/I/M portal will have a collection of FN/I/M specific resources for each of the population groups.

Canadian Cancer Action Network (CCAN)

The AFN is represented on the CCAN board by a First Nation cancer survivor. CCAN's priorities include playing a critical role in ensuring constructive and positive dialogue and development at both a provincial and national level. CCAN focuses on issues relevant to patient issues and ensuring patient voice by empowering and encouraging the cancer patient voice to be heard resulting in positive and quantifiable change. CCAN also works to establish strong, active and recognized presence in each province and territory, cultivate and pursue opportunities for effective dialogue and interaction with stakeholders through education and awareness, and establishing and implementing a strong and sustainable governance model.



ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Continue to raise the profile of cancer as an emerging crisis for First Nations, particularly in the area of screening, diagnosis and treatment, with political leadership, CCOH, NFNHTN and First Nation communities.
- Continue to approach cancer by way of the cancer continuum: Risk Factors/Prevention, Screening, Diagnosis, Treatment, Recovery, and End of Life/Palliative Care.
- Continue to identify key issues, explore options for policy change and other measures in cancer control.
- Continue to inform First Nations and leadership on cancer issues as they arise.
- Promotion of the Saint Elizabeth Health Centre's @Your Side Colleague (an interactive e-learning tool) to First Nation communities.
- Explore the linkages between environmental health and cancer.

B. TUBERCULOSIS (TB)

TB is not just a public health issue; it is a social justice issue and a true marker of poverty. First Nations currently have rates of TB that are 31 times that of non-Aboriginal Canadians. Overcrowded housing, poor access to health care and food insecurity contribute greatly to this national disgrace.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The AFN participated in the recently completed FNIHB 2011 Tuberculosis National Strategy, which is expected to start implementation this year and aims to address the burdens of TB in many First Nation communities. The AFN participated in World TB Day by releasing a communiqué and distributing advocacy material for use on this day.

The AFN continues to participate as part of the Canadian Tuberculosis Subcommittee to the Canadian Tuberculosis Committee. The AFN continues its partnership with the STOP TB initiative, and will be supporting planning of the North American Region agenda for the 2012 TB conference in the USA. The work has been completed on the animation and voice-over of the AFN National Youth Council developed cartoon strips. These will be distributed as DVDs to all communities. The AFN also recently established a partnership with the Social Determinants of TB (STTB) research study based at the University of Alberta.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Implementation of the FNIHB 2011 Tuberculosis National Strategy in most regions.
- Ongoing participation in the STOP TB initiative, raising awareness of TB issues in First Nation communities.
- Animated cartoon strips to be distributed for the next World TB Day Campaign.
- Distribution of the preliminary results of the STTB study.



C. ASTHMA AND THE LUNG HEALTH FRAMEWORK

Respiratory ailments are more prevalent in First Nation communities. The AFN is working through partnerships to improve programs and policies into bettering promotion, education, access and incidence.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The First Nations Regional Longitudinal Health Survey (RHS) revealed that a significant number of First Nation people reported to have asthma. The AFN continues to collaborate with the Canadian Asthma Society on a project to adapt education materials for First Nation children, youth, and adults on asthma triggers.

The AFN continues working with the National Lung Health Framework (NLHF), and has recently joined ITK and the Métis National Council, as well as FNIHB and PHAC in a FN/I/M working group to identify common priorities for implementation of the NLHF.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Development of a priority areas and action plan for the Core FN/I/M working group.
- Distribution of the results from phase I of the NLHF sponsored research studies.
- Development of a Lung Health Action Plan for First Nations.

D. PANDEMIC PLANNING AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Health Emergency Preparedness has been a top priority for all First Nation communities since the H1N1 pandemic. The AFN has been actively engaged with key stakeholders in an effort to ensure that all First Nations have access to appropriate prevention and treatment responses for any future health emergency.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The AFN has been participating on a Trilateral First Nations Pandemic Working Group (TFNP) with PHAC and FNIHB since 2006. Following an independent evaluation, the working group mandate has been extended for one year to develop and monitor the implementation of a workplan on pandemic influenza preparedness and response for First Nation communities. The workplan includes such activities as developing materials on emergency response, distribution of previously developed tools, knowledge transfer and publication of articles/results.

The AFN developed a webinar, based on the Influenza Like Illness (ILI) guide that will be accessible as an online tool to all communities in 2011, with the intention of preparing community workers in early identification of possible influenza outbreaks.

A questionnaire has been developed to collect data on e-Health utilization during H1N1. It has been distributed to selected communities in each region and results will be available later in the year.

Recently, the AFN has started participating in the federal government's "Senior Officials responsible for Emergency Management" group, advocating for First Nation interests at the federal and regional levels.



ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- The ILL webinar tool and the feedback results will be shared and future instruments will be planned accordingly.
- The final report on the results of the e-Health utilization questionnaire will be shared and recommendations made.
- Distribution of the materials produced by the TFNP.

E. ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH

The AFN is committed to working collaboratively with our First Nation regions and FNIHB's Environmental Public Health Division to assist with the reduction of environmental public health related issues. The AFN recognizes the importance of preventing disease through environmental public health stewardship as it relates to preventing disease and monitoring programs.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

Activities including policy development, capacity building and communication components support the objective of raising awareness with leadership, all levels of government, professional organizations, and First Nation communities.

The AFN Health and Social Secretariat (HSS) provides information to Chiefs regarding the human health effects of emerging environmental health issues such as the recent oil spill in Alberta.

An assessment is being prepared to gather information on environmental public health concerns and priorities as well as to identify current ongoing programs. An action plan is also being developed to increase awareness and distribute information regarding environmental public health issues.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Raise awareness of environmental health issues among First Nation leaders and community members.
- Communication to First Nation communities and leadership on emerging environmental public health issues.
- Explore the linkages between environmental health and cancer.

F. FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

Food security exists when there is a comprehensive continuum of resources in a community's food system. The continuum of resources ranges from those providing short-term relief of acute food insecurity, to those that build the capacity of the community to feed itself, to strategies that redesign the food system toward a more economically, socially and environmentally sustainable model.

The AFN works on ensuring and increasing First Nation participation in the development of food security related policy and initiatives in collaboration with FNIHB, PHAC, INAC, AFN regions, and other stakeholders.



KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

Nutrition North Canada (NNC)

The NNC program began full implementation on April 1, 2011. The NNC program intends to bring healthy nutritious foods to residents of the north. The new program is now a market-driven/retail-based model that aims to be a sustainable, efficient, cost-effective and transparent means of helping Northerners access nutritious food in eligible communities. The NNC will replace the old Food Mail program with a number of changes being incorporated into the new program. Health Canada (HC) is playing a larger role in the NNC program by introducing nutrition promotion and retail education initiatives to support healthy eating. These activities will be culturally-appropriate and community-based to deliver vital information on the use, marketing and preparation of nutritious foods.

The AFN continues to monitor the progress of INAC and HC in the development and implementation of the new NNC. The AFN presented to the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Nutrition North Canada Study on November 1, 2010, along with other First Nation and Inuit stakeholders.

As per Resolution 78/2010, the AFN has been mandated by the Chiefs-in-Assembly to undertake a comprehensive impact analysis of the Nutrition North Canada program.

Food Security Reference Group (FSRG)

The AFN participates on the FSRG to ensure collaboration towards improved food security for First Nations and Inuit. Key activities include building on a previously developed promising practices document, developing tools for community planning, exploring opportunities for influencing agendas to include food security, and continuing to build the evidence base.

AFN Food Security Working Group (AFN FSWG)

The AFN FSWG was approved as a subcommittee to the National First Nations Health Technicians Network (NFNHTN) in April. The AFN FSWG will be meeting in the fall of 2011 to draft its Terms of Reference and set priorities.

Peoples Food Policy Project (PFPP)

The AFN participated in the drafting of the Indigenous Food Sovereignty Chapter of the Peoples Food Policy. This was launched in April 2011 by the PFPP. The PFPP aims to influence and encourage the development of Canada's first food policy.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Conduct an impact analysis on those First Nation communities using the NNC program, those who are remote but are not eligible and those communities removed from the eligibility list from the previous Food Mail Program.
- Develop a First Nations Food Security Position Statement.
- Develop AFN Food Security Working Group Terms of Reference and priorities.



G. INJURY PREVENTION

Injuries are a major cause of morbidity and mortality in First Nation communities especially among youth and young adults. Injury prevention is concerned with modifying behavioral or contextual factors that place First Nations at greater risk for unintentional injury, morbidity and mortality from injuries when they occur.

Resolution 34/2008 supports the work on Injury Prevention. Resolution 57/2009 supports the development and implementation of the National Comprehensive Injury Prevention Strategy.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

Work at the national level is focused on raising awareness of injuries and their impact, building capacity for communities to carry out injury prevention work, and relationship development with the goal of addressing programming gaps with the adaptation of existing injury prevention programming. Much of this work is guided by the First Nations Regional Injury Prevention (FNRIP) Advisory Group.

Raising Awareness

A First Nation Injury Prevention communications plan has been developed and is designed to coordinate and promote injury prevention efforts from a national perspective with the overall goal of safe and healthy First Nation communities that are injury free. This includes the promotion of and participation at the Canadian Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion Conference in November, 2011. The AFN is a co-lead on the Aboriginal Stream component of the conference which includes First Nations, Métis and Inuit speakers, workshops, presentations and research. The FNRIP Working Group continues to implement the National Comprehensive Injury Prevention Strategy. In July 2011, FNRIP members will meet to further develop their workplans, activities and strategies to raise the profile of injury prevention nationally, regionally and locally.

Community capacity in injury prevention

The First Nations and Inuit Children and Youth Injury Indicators Working Group launched their report on First Nations Injury Prevention Indicators for Children and Youth in March. The report and indicators can be used to measure and evaluate the health of First Nation children, youth and their families in relation to injury prevention.

In 2010, the AFN began participation on the British Columbia Injury Research and Prevention Unit's First Nations and Inuit Injury Indicators Working Group in the successful grant application for the 'Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Team in Child and Youth Injury Prevention' project. The project will identify and address gaps that will lead to the generation, translation and mobilization of new knowledge for end-users and stakeholders who develop and deliver policy and programs, and advocate for children and youth in Canada. In addition, the AFN participates on the First Nations Canine Management Network, a group developed to share resources, strategies and information among First Nations on managing their community dog populations.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Implementation of the National Comprehensive Injury Prevention strategy (including development and refinement of AFN's Injury Prevention Business Case, workplan, handbook, and press kit) with direction from FNRIP working group as per Resolution 34/2008 and Resolution 56/2009.



- Continued discussions with FNRIP and the Canadian Red Cross (CRC) on next steps from the AFN-CRC community injury prevention needs assessment survey and report.
- Development of a collective evidence base on injury prevention, including the collection of community-based stories on successes with injury prevention activities.

H. HIV/AIDS AND SEXUAL HEALTH

First Nations are acquiring HIV at a disproportionately higher rate than the general Canadian population; in particular, the rate among First Nation women and young adults (under 30 years of age) are much higher than those observed in Canada. As well, two-thirds of new infections are acquired through injection drug use; a proportion that is two times higher than that seen in Canada overall.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

Raising Awareness

The AFN continues to implement the HIV/AIDS and Sexual Health communication plans with a focus on youth-oriented mediums. The AFN NYC finalized seven short videos on sexual health promotion, which are available on the AFN website. In March, the AFN signed on to the Vienna Declaration, an international statement seeking to improve community health, calling for the incorporation of scientific evidence into illicit drug policies. The AFN has co-authored and endorsed a Joint Policy Statement, “Sexual and Reproductive Health, Rights, Realities, and Access to Services for Aboriginal People in Canada”, which will be published in the *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Canada* in June 2011.

Research and Policy Analysis

The AFN continues to foster a partnership with the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC) and will enter into a Statement of Partnership at the 2011 AFN Annual General Assembly. The AFN is a partner on the Native Youth Sexual Health Network’s project, entitled “Taking Action II: Using Arts-Based Approaches to Foster Aboriginal Youth Leadership in HIV Prevention” for 2011-2012. In addition, the AFN is participating on the Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network’s (CAAN) National Toolkit Committee to identify, collect and evaluate resources, materials and research on HIV/AIDS and Aboriginal people.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Re-establishment of the Young Eagles Challenge with CAAN and the AFN NYC.
- Collaborate with the AFN NYC and SOGC on the development of community-based pilot projects on sexual health for First Nation youth.
- Development of CAAN’s National Toolkit of HIV/AIDS materials.
- Implementation of the Taking Action II project to build the capacity of Aboriginal youth leaders to address the issue of HIV/AIDS in their own community.



I. IMMUNIZATION

Vaccines are proven to reduce the burden of disease, many of them potentially fatal, during childhood and adulthood, thus, improving life and health quality and representing one of the most cost-effective preventable public health interventions.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

Active collaboration with FNIHB and PHAC has allowed for the identification of data and program gaps. Data flow and analysis has proven inadequate to draw a clear picture of the immunization status of First Nations.

The AFN continues working with FNIHB in the development and implementation of a social marketing campaign aimed at young parents and decision-makers promoting the importance of immunization. This initiative is strongly based on the use of social media and electronic distribution channels such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter, as well as printed materials and DVDs.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Information gathering on the immunization status of First Nation communities per region will be completed.
- National Immunization Status Scan proposal will be submitted to FNIHB.

J. DIABETES

The Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative (ADI) works to reduce type 2 diabetes by supporting health promotion and disease prevention activities and services delivered by trained community diabetes workers and health service providers. In 2010, the federal budget included a commitment of \$275 million over five years for the ADI to sustain initiatives in First Nation and Inuit communities for children, youth, parents and families; the development of community-led food security plans to improve access to healthy foods, including traditional foods; diabetes prevention in pre-pregnancy and pregnancy; and enhanced training for home and community care nurses on clinical practice guidelines and chronic disease management.

The First Nations Diabetes Working Group (FNDWG), with regionally-appointed First Nation representatives, provides ongoing support and guidance to the ADI, as well as other related diabetes initiatives and AFN activities.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

Life-Giving Medicine Wheel Workshop

The FNDWG Life-Giving Medicine Wheel workshop and video is a tool in self-care management and also works to increase awareness and knowledge of diabetes during a women's gestational/prenatal period. The AFN continues to advocate for funding to assist in translating the Life-Giving Medicine Wheel video to ensure circulation to First Nation communities.



AFN Fitness Challenge - *Just Move It*

Since the successful completion of the 2nd annual AFN Fitness Challenge in 2009, the AFN diabetes file has been in discussion with the ADI to take the AFN Fitness Challenge to the next level. Subsequently, discussions have been underway with FNIHB, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) and Indian Health Services - Healthy Native Community Partners in the United States (US) on the potential of expanding the “Just Move It” initiative across Canada. “Just Move It” is a national online network running across the US that promotes physical activity through the sharing of American Indian community activities, tools and resources. The Indian Health Services - Healthy Native Community Partners are enthusiastic about creating an international network and extending this opportunity to First Nation and Inuit communities in Canada.

Traditional Knowledge and Natural Law Approaches

The AFN continues to explore Traditional Knowledge and Natural Law approaches in strengthening the social determinants of health and the goal of restoring sustainable First Nation communities. The AFN led a session at the National Aboriginal Diabetes Association’s (NADA) 6th National Conference on Diabetes and Aboriginal Peoples. The AFN and the Global Country of World Peace and Global Mother Divine Organization presented on the topic of “Indigenous Knowledge for Natural Health and Well Being – First Nations as Custodians of Natural Law and Restoring Healthy, Sustainable First Nations Communities” in follow up to the November 2010, Canadian Conference on Global Health. The FNDWG members continue to restore knowledge in harvesting traditional medicines/foods as well as exploring traditional meditation as a potential tool for regulating diabetes and techniques to facilitate chronic stress reduction in First Nation communities.

Family Action Plan

The AFN is exploring collaborations with the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission (FNQLHSSC) and the University of Laval in efforts to build on the FNDWG’s “Women as Agents of Change – Family Action Plan” to address the diabetes and obesity epidemic in First Nation communities. The FNQLHSSC has developed “Empowering Words of First Nations Women – Family Resource Guide” and Train-the-Trainer manual/promising practices to increase awareness and knowledge on diabetes and other health-related concerns. To facilitate dialogue and direction on the story of diabetes and men in First Nations communities, the AFN is developing a survey on “What is the Diabetes Story for Men?” to strengthen the development of a Family Action Plan.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- The FNDWG will continue to support the Diabetes Life-giving Medicine Wheel Walk developments and video presentations at varying forums.
- Continue to explore the development of the “Just Move It” international online initiative in Canada for First Nation and Inuit communities, with a potential to launch in 2011, including the development of a partnership agreement with Healthy Native Community Partners and the ITK.
- The FNDWG members continue to explore traditional meditation as a potential technique for regulating diabetes and tools to facilitate stress reduction in First Nation communities.

K. HEALTH LITERACY

Health Literacy is a concept or idea that is predicated on the premise that both health and literacy impact an individual’s health and well-being. In Canada, Health Literacy is understood to be a concept, process, outcome and public health goal with potential to impact areas such as disease prevention, health education



and promotion, surveillance, and the delivery and access to health care. Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) include Literacy as a determinant of health and is incorporated in the SDOH Framework and the AFN Public Health Framework.

Health Literacy is defined as: “The ability to access, understand, evaluate, and communicate information as a way to promote, maintain and improve health in a variety of settings across the life-course.”

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The AFN, along with a number of other national government and non-government organizations, have begun discussions to establish a National Health Literacy Council of Canada. The Council will be comprised of member organizations that are national in scope and cut across all sectors including health, education, civil society, and social justice. The AFN will co-chair the Council in partnership with PHAC. The goal of the Council is to promote awareness and understanding of health literacy, engage with key partners who have a role to play in health literacy, inform policy and promote coherence across all sectors related to health literacy, and mobilize coherent action by many players and sectors across all levels.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Ratified Terms of Reference.
- Establish workplan and critical path.

3. MENTAL WELLNESS

Mental wellness files within the AFN include mental health, suicide prevention, addictions (including prescription drug abuse), mental health supports for residential school survivors, and tobacco. Throughout 2010/2011, the AFN has focused on advocacy within federal and national programs and initiatives. Advocacy within federally-funded programs/strategies includes: the National Aboriginal Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy (NAYSPS), National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program (NNADAP), Brighter Futures, Building Healthy Communities, Indian Residential Schools Resolution Health Support Program (IRS RHSP), First Nations & Inuit Mental Wellness Advisory Committee (MWAC), and Federal Tobacco Control Strategy (FTCS). Advocacy within national strategies includes: the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC), and the MHCC First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Advisory Committee (FNIMAC).

A. MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The AFN Mental Wellness Committee (MWC) was established as mandated by the NFNHTN in April, 2010. The MWC provides technical expertise and knowledge to the Mental Wellness portfolio and to provide mental health and addiction information to the regions. The last meeting was held in November, 2010.

The AFN continues to be a key partner in the MWAC. The MWAC has most recently been working towards final approval of the Strategic Action Plan and creating next steps for the committee.

The AFN is currently collaborating with the MHCC to develop a First Nations-specific strategic direction. While this work is only in the draft stages, the strategic direction will help guide the ongoing work of the



MHCC at the national level. The AFN will also work with the MHCC as it adapts the Mental Health First Aid course for First Nation communities. The MHCC FNIMAC efforts to use cultural safety as a pillar of its anti-stigma campaign, and the development and promotion of “Indigenous-determined” ethical guidelines for mental health and addictions programming are ongoing.

The Mental Health and Addictions Directorate (MHAD) cluster within FNIHB at Health Canada is currently conducting an evaluation of its programs. The AFN was invited to join a working group to advise on the evaluation of the MHAD cluster. The evaluation will be a key opportunity to identify gaps and areas for improvement in the administration and dissemination of funds and programs within the MHAD. The AFN has advocated for the inclusion of community-based informants to ensure there are community perspectives brought forward regarding the efficiency, relevance and effectiveness of MHAD administration of funds and programs.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- A second gathering of the AFN MWC will be held.
- A plan/strategy for the next steps for the MWAC will be developed and the Strategic Action Plan will be disseminated pending approval.
- The Strategic direction for First Nations within the National Mental Health Strategy will be developed in collaboration with the MHCC. The adaptation of the Mental Health First Aid program for First Nation communities will continue with AFN input.

B. SUICIDE PREVENTION

As a part of upstream renewals, the National Aboriginal Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy (NAYSPS) was renewed at par for an additional five years. AFN efforts have now focused on advocating for evaluation summation that reports findings, supports increases and enhancement past 2015 promotes mental wellness, community empowerment and youth leadership at the community level.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

In 2008, the AFN National Youth Council (AFN NYC) finalized a Youth Leadership Development Initiative entitled, “CEPS: Cultural, Economic, Political and Social Youth Leadership Development Curriculum” that has been without a printing and dissemination plan. As a result, the AFN has re-engaged the AFN NYC and is currently working with them to produce an implementation guide and strategy for community-based dissemination later in the fiscal year.

In addition, over the past year, the AFN has been working with Health Canada to develop the contents of a First Nations specific suicide prevention toolkit for frontline workers. The toolkit includes:

- Eleven fact sheets on different aspects of suicide:
 - Suicide and colonization—how history, politics and society have contributed to making First Nations more vulnerable to suicide
 - Factors that protect youth from suicide, and the importance of engaging them
 - Risk factors and common warning signs for suicide
 - How youth seek help
 - The stigma linked with suicide, and the importance of talking about the issue
 - How to help someone at risk of suicide in your community



- o Self-care and its importance for frontline workers
- o Media guidelines for reports on suicide
- o The myths on suicide and the facts that disprove them
- Posters
- Presentation and contact cards
- Full tool-kit on CD
- Evaluation forms

The toolkit has been validated and is currently with Health Canada for publication and dissemination.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Launch and national dissemination of the CEPS Youth Leadership Development Curriculum.
- Launch of the NAYSPS Suicide Prevention Toolkit for Frontline Workers.
- AFN to host, in partnership with FNIHB, a National Youth Forum focused on community empowerment and youth leadership.
- AFN to produce a story book that promotes community-based mental wellness projects and initiatives. Stories, artwork and photography submitted by Aboriginal youth will be showcased throughout the book.

C. ADDICTIONS

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

In partnership with the National Native Addictions Partnership Foundation (NNAPF) and Health Canada (HC), the AFN continues to be a key partner in the NNADAP Renewal Process. The NNADAP Renewal Process has been unique in taking an approach to developing a renewed program framework that is informed by culture, evidence and needs. The renewed program framework is currently at the final approval stages and awaiting printing. The renewed program framework will be unique in taking a systematic approach to supporting First Nations in addressing addictions prevention and treatment needs. The framework will be launched at the July 2011 Annual General Assembly and presented to Chiefs-in-Assembly for final ratification.

The AFN continues to work in partnership with NNAPF and HC on the NNADAP Renewal Leadership Team. The Leadership Team is responsible for advising on the transition and change management from renewal through to implementation.

Prescription drug abuse (PDA) is an increasing concern for First Nation communities and the mental wellness portfolio will address this issue through data-reviews and advocating for further research and policy development regarding PDA.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Ratification of the final version of the NNADAP Renewed Program Framework at the AFN AGA in July 2011.
- Ongoing presentation of the NNADAP Renewed Program Framework to First Nation communities, professionals and associations working with First Nations in the area of addictions.



D. MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS FOR INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SURVIVORS

The AFN has advocated for thorough provision of mental health supports for survivors, their families and communities throughout all components of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

In 2009, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) said Health Canada (HC) would provide mental health support at TRC National and Community Events. As a result, the AFN has focused on advising HC on the provision of mental health supports and planning for safe spaces through participation on a Resolution Health Supports Advisory Committee (RHSAC), participation at the regional level through Regional Implementation Working Groups and a direct working relationship with the Mental Health and Addictions health support planning team. Through participation on these working groups and strong relationships with FNIHB, the AFN has also been directly advising Mental Health and Addictions Directorate (MHAD) on various components of the Indian Residential School Resolution Health Support Program and TRC event planning.

In June 2010, the first National Truth and Reconciliation event took place in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The AFN was present for the two-day training leading up to the event, the four-day event and an additional day afterwards to partake in debriefing and assessment of the overall event. The AFN provided support to Health Canada and TRC workers throughout the event and has been working with each group closely as the Inuvik and Atlantic TRC events draw near.

In addition, the AFN has been exploring ways to work with the National Native Addictions Partnership Foundation (NNAPF) to hold regional dialogue sessions with stakeholders and key partners to help identify gaps in health support services with regards to the IRS process and TRC Community and National Events. It will also help to identify needs/gaps emerging with the sunset of the IRS RHSP in 2015.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Partnership with NNAPF to hold regional dialogue sessions with stakeholders and key partners to identify gaps in health support services with regards to the IRS process and TRC Community and National Events.
- Continued operations of an Advisory Committee tasked with advising HC on thorough mental health support planning for TRC truth and reconciliation activities.

E. TOBACCO

Through the Federal Tobacco Control Strategy (FTCS), the AFN received funding to develop a National First Nations Tobacco Control Strategy, host two national tobacco forums, re-engage a National First Nations Tobacco Control Network and conduct knowledge development and transfer activities.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The AFN has re-engaged a national tobacco network and the AFN Tobacco Action Circle (TAC), which advises the AFN on federal and national tobacco control initiatives. The AFN TAC has guided the



development of an Action Plan to Develop a First Nations Tobacco Control Strategy. The strategy will be informed by existing and new culturally-competent evidence, community-based promising practices, and community/regional feedback.

The two forums focused on sharing successes, best practices, producing recommendations in the area of integrating smoking cessation and prevention messaging into existing tobacco programs as well as collecting feedback on the draft Action Plan to create a National First Nations Tobacco Control Strategy.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Host knowledge exchange activities on tobacco control, cessation, and prevention in collaboration with AFN Councils (Women, Elders and Youth) and continue promotion efforts to support traditional tobacco use as a smoking cessation and tobacco control tool.
- Review and inclusion of key findings from an environmental scan on community-based tobacco control, prevention, cessation, and re-investment initiative into the Action Plan.
- Regional review of draft Action Plan to create a National First Nations Tobacco Control Strategy.
- Ongoing national distribution of the updated youth information booklet “Keep it Sacred: Don’t Misuse Tobacco”.

4. CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The newly formed Children and Youth Team continues to advocate for increased culturally-appropriate prevention and intervention strategies and programming that will lead to improved outcomes for First Nation children and youth.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

Childhood Obesity

With RHS data demonstrating an alarming increase in childhood obesity rates since the 2002/03 report, the AFN has made addressing the childhood obesity epidemic a priority. The AFN is conducting an update of a 2006 report entitled, “Protecting Our Gifts and Securing Our Future: First Nations Children and Obesity: A Growing Epidemic”.

Children’s Nutrition

The AFN continues to raise awareness of the need for a universal school nutrition program and promote organizations such as ONEXONE and their National First Nations Breakfast Program.

Aboriginal Head Start

The AFN formed a community-based working group that reviewed the Aboriginal Head Start On Reserve (AHSOR) Principles and Guidelines and Early Childhood Development (ECD) Operations Guide in order to ensure that these two Health Canada resources were adaptable and suitable for First Nation communities.

Maternal Child Health

In the area of Maternal Child Health (MCH), the AFN continues to examine the complex issues of infant attachment and bonding especially as it relates to the intergenerational impacts of the residential school experience. Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) rates continue to be higher in First Nation communities



than in the mainstream population, so AFN and Health Canada will be examining culturally-appropriate ways that this issue can be addressed at the community level.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

In the area of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), the AFN Youth Council met in March to discuss FASD awareness and intervention. The Council continues to work towards achieving their goals of the Five-Year Action Plan to address FASD.

Partnerships

Working in partnership with other non-governmental organizations such as the Canadian Paediatric Society (CPS) and the Canadian Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists ensures that the issues that affect First Nation children remain a priority with the federal government. In March, the AFN was part of the planning committee and attended CPS's 4th International Meeting on Indigenous Children's Health in Vancouver, B.C.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Phase II of the Childhood Obesity report will include greater community engagement to widen the circle of key informants to share their lived experiences with issues surrounding childhood obesity and to identify key issues and best practices.
- A Child and Youth Tobacco Framework to feed into the Action Plan to Develop a First Nations Tobacco Control Strategy will be developed.
- Increased partnerships with high profile organizations such as UNICEF and ONEXONE and other non-governmental organizations to ensure increased advocacy for the improved health of First Nation children and youth.
- Launch of a Youth FASD Awareness campaign to be targeted for the September 9, 2011 (National FASD Awareness Day).
- Address the issue of parenting, increased father involvement and the role of the family.
- Increased attention to the lack of youth-specific health programming especially as it relates to mental health and sexual health.

5. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT - eHEALTH

As eHealth becomes incorporated within the Canadian healthcare system, First Nations have been making strides in ensuring that they are part of this health care revolution. For example efforts are underway with Canada Health Infoway to include First Nations within their "eHealth Blueprint". Work is also ongoing with Health Canada to identify requirements for the inter-operability of eHealth and the sharing of eHealth data across jurisdictions.

Another priority this year has been to engage the regions. In addition to site visits across the country, the AFN hosted a National eHealth Policy Forum to bring First Nations, federal and provincial eHealth stakeholders to the table to highlight eHealth policy requirements. To further ensure that the regions are engaged and supported, a national body of First Nations eHealth representatives has been established. The main priorities of the National eHealth Advisory Committee (NeHAC) is to draft a "First Nation eHealth Framework" as well as a "First Nation eHealth Information Governance Position".



KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

National Strategic eHealth Policy Forum

The National Strategic eHealth Policy Forum outcomes report indicated eight key policy directions for eHealth. A key finding from the report is the recommendation to coordinate a national body of First Nations eHealth leads. As a result, the National eHealth Advisory Committee (NeHAC) was formed. With eHealth representatives from each region, NeHAC is tasked with implementing the recommendations from the eHealth Policy Forum.

Canada Health Infoway (Infoway)

NeHAC is currently working on a First Nations eHealth Framework that aligns with the Infoway eHealth Blueprint. In addition, the AFN has written a letter of support to Infoway to support funding for Client Registry Phase 2 project for the Kenora Chief's Advisory.

Health Canada - Health Infostructure Strategic Action Plan (HISAP)

There are currently eHealth Readiness Assessments underway to determine First Nations requirements for eHealth applications in Ontario (Giiwednong, Sioux Lookout), Quebec, Manitoba, Nova Scotia (Membertou), and Saskatchewan (Fort Qu'appelle). Further work is required to ensure that future HISAP projects are First Nations driven and based on First Nations community priorities.

Information Governance and Panorama

The AFN is currently developing First Nations eHealth Governance Framework to support integration of FN eHealth Projects with First Nations.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Endorse "First Nations eHealth Framework" that aligns with Canada Health Infoway eHealth blueprint.
- Continue to support the regions to work with the provinces and territories to develop sustainable, interoperable eHealth applications.
- Participate and engage with Health Canada on the implementation of HISAP.
- Develop "First Nations eHealth Governance Position" for ratification by NFNHTN and Chiefs.
- Ongoing NeHAC meetings to facilitate implementation of eHealth Strategic Planning Forum recommendations.
- Coordination of "Convergence Forum" in the fall of 2011 to support trilateral partnerships between Health Canada, Provinces/Territories, with the support of Infoway and Canada's Health Informatics Association (COACH).
- Continue to develop and utilize the NeHAC Web Portal to facilitate communications and information exchange between the National e-Health Advisory Committee.
- Engage the regions to identify e-Health requirements and develop informatics expertise.
- Develop communication tools such as portals to support regions in e-Health development.



6. PRIMARY CARE / HEALTH BENEFITS

A. NON-INSURED HEALTH BENEFITS (NIHB)

The national NIHB Program provides coverage to registered First Nations and recognized Inuit to support them in reaching an overall health status that is at least comparable with other Canadians. Benefits under NIHB include eye and vision care, dental, medical transportation, drugs, medical supplies and equipment, crisis mental health counseling, and approved health services outside of Canada.

Resolution 30/2010 passed at the 2010 Annual General Assembly directs the AFN to request that the Minister of Health terminate the contract between Brogan (an international pharmaceutical data company) and FNIHB which shares data from NIHB. In December 2010, a letter addressed to the Minister of Health requesting termination of the contract between Brogan and NIHB was issued and the AFN is waiting for a response from the Minister's office.

Resolution 76/2010 directs the AFN to seek a Senate Order of Reference to study the NIHB Program. The letter to the Senate has been issued and the AFN is looking forward to a favorable response.

The AFN is seeking sustainable funding to address population growth and increasing costs to the NIHB Program.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

Population Growth and Program Funding Shortfall

A large driver in this increase will be the addition of new beneficiaries to the NIHB Program. The Federal Budget will need to consider estimates of approximately 50,000 new Status Indians as a result of the *Mclvor* case and another 27,000 Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nations from Newfoundland who were recently recognized under the *Indian Act*. This amounts to a 9.7% increase in the NIHB Program eligible population growth. In addition, the AFN has estimated that increases of 6.3% to 9.3% are required in various benefit areas when growth of the existing client population, inflation, changes in health service utilization and health status, and effects of technological change are examined.

During the past 15 years, NIHB has been actively implementing cost containment measures, or barriers to accessing NIHB health care, which present a significant risk to maintaining patient safety. With over 30% of our communities located more than 90 kilometers from a physician, it is common for First Nations to travel long distances to receive basic health care, including dental services, dialysis, mammography, chemotherapy and mental health.

With the stressors on dental, pharmacy, transportation, medical supplies, equipment, mental health services, and no additional funding or a resolution to the population increase, First Nation children, adults and elders will face an uphill battle and possible crisis for accessing basic health care needs and benefits.

Dental Care

The NIHB Program will be implementing some changes to the dental fee structure for 2011. Fees for most dental procedures will increase by the Canadian Price Index (CPI + 0.5%) and fees for select preventive services will be set a 100% of the 2010 provincial fee guides.



The NIHB initiated a nationwide two-year Endodontic Trial Project (Root Canals) as of April 1, 2011 to assess the merits, feasibility and the appropriateness of removing the pre-determination requirement for standard root canals treatment on posterior teeth (bicuspid and first molars).

Vision Care

In the 2009/2010, NIHB undertook a review of the Vision Care Policy and the AFN identified gaps in coverage. The AFN worked with the Vision Institute of Canada and the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) to provide recommendations for improving access and vision benefit coverage to NIHB Vision Care Program which will be considered before roll-out of Health Canada's new Vision Care Framework. NIHB is also streamlining processes to improve efficiency and client access, and encouraging the CNIB to register with the NIHB claims processor to facilitate claims payments.

Medical Supplies and Equipment

The AFN is advocating for the streamlining of prior approval requirements for Prosthetics and Orthotics and accepting prescriptions from General Practitioners.

NIHB Client Handbook

The joint AFN/NIHB client handbook is scheduled to be printed in early July and copies will be mailed to each First Nation community.

NIHB Navigators

The AFN is currently working on developing a national database and template for navigators to store data on NIHB access issues. This will enable AFN and the regions to compile reports and build a case to advocate for change, make improvements to the NIHB program, and reduce hardship on First Nations trying to access the program. Regions that currently don't have navigators in place are the NWT, Yukon and Manitoba.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Continue to advocate for increased and sustainable NIHB Program funding.
- Reduced policy restrictions to the NIHB Dental Program and improved access to benefits.
- Continue to advocate for NIHB Navigators in each region/territory.
- Presentation to the NIHB Presentation to the Standing Committee on Health.

B. HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE (HCC)

The First Nations and Inuit Home and Community Care Program (FNIHCC) was established to assist individuals who suffer from chronic and acute illnesses to receive treatment in their homes. This in-home care enables the person 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 to maintain some of their independence.

HCC care can include nursing care services such as personal care like bathing and foot care, home support meal preparation, and in-home respite care. FNIHCC includes the authority for additional support as required. These additional services can be accessed and obtained if there is sufficient funding in place for palliative care and rehabilitation services.



Each is assessed on a case by case basis dependent on the availability of funding, however, funding for these cases and services is not always available or accessible.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The AFN Health Secretariat and First Nation Partners of the HCC Committee work very closely and continue to seek support from FNIHB to continually address the many in-home care issues and follow up on the recommendations made by First Nation nurses, who play a very vital role in the delivery of the program at the community level.

Some of the key concerns and issues identified with First Nation health systems is the inability to offer competitive salaries due to funding.

First Nation nurses, as an example, are compensated much less than their non-First Nation counterparts working off reserve. First Nation communities have a very difficult time competing with other governments and their lack of resources has very often hampered the recruitment and retention of health care service providers. Wage parity remains a long standing cause for concern and major issue within HCC.

Most often First Nation HCC nurses are not able to provide the same quality and level of care to patients. In addition, many First Nation HCC nurses do not have access to the same training opportunities as provincial nurses. Funding levels remain a key cause for concern for retention of existing nurses.

Resources and funding levels have not increased in HCC since 1999. This lack of funding has created a serious shortfall and does not allow communities to keep up with current demands and challenges. The AFN continues to advocate for increases in these funding levels.

A consideration and proposal currently being discussed at the federal level was the possible integration of Health Canada's HCC program with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada's Assisted Living (AL) Program.

The Joint Working Group on Continuing Care (CC) finalized a Policy Options Analysis Paper in 2008 which provides a comparative analysis of three options outlined to identify the need for an increase in funding and CC services such as increased home care services, palliative care, supportive housing options, and accessible long-term care facilities either on reserve or within close proximity.

Discussions on integration of the two programs have taken place over the past year. One of the main concerns which needs to be clearly addressed is the critical need for a substantial increase to the program's funding levels. Integration will place additional burden of reporting on First Nation HCC nurses.

Many HCC nurses already must travel long distances and work much longer hours to ensure client/patient care, very often in dangerous and difficult conditions. Most First Nation communities are struggling to support the current level of service provided by health units. Recruitment issues have further complicated matters and will become a greater cause for concern.

Quality Improvement

The Quality Improvement Working Group (QWG), established in October 2006, continues to strive for the enhancement of quality in HCC service delivery. Currently, the QWG is assisting in the development of a Quality & Risk Management Improvement Guide, which is being piloted in eight communities. The Guide's purpose is to build capacity for Quality Improvement within First Nation and Inuit communities.



The AFN participated in the review of the Study Three “Final Evaluation” which is a summary or “wrap-up” study that will include HCC Studies One and Two and other home care research.

Phase 4 of the Home and Community Care Project

Work has recently been completed and presented to the First Nation HCC partners working group. The “Creating a Healthy Work Place” manual will highlight the importance of creating a healthy work environment for nurses in First Nation communities. This phase, lead by the AFN, entailed four documents which looked at the challenges First Nation nurses face working in First Nation communities and recommendations that can be made towards improving these conditions.

This project is in collaboration with FNIHB and will also underline the growing demands for services and emerging concerns/priorities for health care workers. The final draft has now been completed and will form part of the Healthy Workplace manual. This work was guided by the regional HCC partners who were involved in the process from the outset, and was presented at the recent First Nation partners meeting.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Continued examination of proposals to potentially merge the INAC Assisted Living program and the Health Canada HCC program, which has generated concerns from First Nation partners.
- Translation, dissemination and delivery of the “Creating a Healthy Work Environment for nurses” will be completed. Training/orientation and use of the manual will need to be completed.
- Continue to bring forward First Nations Partners’ HCC concerns to FNIHB senior management and advocate for increased funding levels.
- Continue to participate in the National Evaluation Study, QWG, and the Abuse of Older First Nation Seniors, Alzheimer’s, Palliative Care committees in order to better respond to questions and concerns raised by communities.

C. CONTINUING CARE (CC)

The Joint Working Group (JWG) on CC finalized a Policy Options Analysis Paper in August 2008, which provides a comparative analysis of three options identified to address the need for improvements in funds and continuing care services, such as increased home care services, palliative care, supportive housing options, and accessible long-term care facilities either on reserve or within close proximity.

As part of the improvements it was recommended that the in home care services funded by INAC be transferred to Health Canada (HC) for integration with the FNIHCC.

A Costing Study was completed, which provides the estimated costs for all proposed improvements to continuing care, including enhancements to HCC, supportive housing, facility-based care, and palliative care.

The final costing report was presented to the JWG in 2008. The JWG confirmed their support for the integration and expansion of federal program components, particularly to increase higher levels of care to meet the needs of First Nations living in or in close proximity to their communities.



The JWG also strongly recommended increased political support and promotion by First Nation leadership to bring focus to this important issue as it moves through the federal government policy development and approval process.

The final Options Analysis Paper was scheduled to be presented to the CCOH in April 2010. The report will be used by HC and INAC to generate discussions at various levels of government to determine how to address the need for improvements to continuing care services. Research and various reports confirm that the status quo is not an option. Current programs and policy framework has no capacity to meet changing needs and growth of the population.

It is critical to close the gaps between existing continuing care services accessible to First Nations and those accessible to the general Canadian population.

One major program change that is being recommended by both the AL Program Evaluation (2007-08) and the CC Policy Options Analysis Paper is the proposed transfer of authority and funding for the “in-home care component” of the AL program to HC to be integrated with the FNIHCC Program. This aligns with the ongoing work to develop a seamless continuum of care and will require further discussions and coordination between INAC and HC.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The AFN has stressed the need to ensure First Nations input before the departments proceed with integration. Both HC and INAC have indicated that many steps need to be taken before integration could occur and agreed that First Nations would be engaged prior to any action on integration. However, there have been extensive discussions between the two federal departments (HC-INAC) with no First Nation involvement. Neither the AFN nor First Nation regional representatives have been included in these discussions.

Prior to the call for a federal election, briefings of Ministers were to have taken place. The election delayed these briefings.

The existing home care programs (FNIHCC and AL) face major sustainability issues due to limited funding and additional reporting requirements with the merger which is currently moving forward without First Nation involvement.

The CC Research report indicates that HC and INAC need to increase current allocations for HCC by 90% plus another 50% over the next five years due to population growth, inflation, and costs related to increases in acuity.

These issues are briefly mentioned in the Policy Options Analysis Paper but the paper does not include any recommendations to address sustainability because this issue was outside the scope of the CC initiative. Both HC and INAC agreed to continue to work with their respective First Nation working groups to develop a process to address the sustainability issues for the existing programs.



ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Brief relevant Ministers as to the implications of changes and the necessity for First Nation input and involvement.
- Continue to advocate for the increase in funding levels and seek federal government support, as outlined in the CC Options and Analysis Paper, for improvements to CC services.
- Have input into the discussions and decisions currently underway and move forward on the proposed integration of the “in-home care” component of AL and the FNIHCC Program.

7. SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The AFN Social Development Secretariat follows the mandate provided by the Social Development Policy Framework, which proposes the long-term vision of “an inclusive, holistic and culturally-based social development system under First Nation control that builds healthy, safe and sustainable communities”. As such, the AFN Social Development Secretariat has the responsibility to work in the areas of First Nations Child Welfare, Income Assistance, National Child Benefit Reinvestment, Family Violence Prevention, and Assisted Living.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The 2010-2011 fiscal year was one of great accomplishment for the Social Development Secretariat. Following a budget cut from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) in 2008-2009 and given that no funding had been secured for 2009-2010, the Social Development Secretariat had been for the most part dismantled. As such, work for the 2010-2011 fiscal year did not begin until funding was secured, thus leaving three months to complete 16 deliverables. Despite the delay in receiving the annual funding, a new Social Development team was formed and worked diligently with renewed vigor to achieve its deliverables.

The funding received for the 2010-2011 fiscal year was focused on work in the areas of Income Assistance, Family Violence Prevention, Assisted Living, and participation in INAC’s Performance Measurement Strategy.

Performance Measurement Strategy

The AFN was actively engaged in the development of INAC’s Umbrella Performance Measurement Strategy for Social Programs. AFN Social Development regional networks were invited to engage in discussions with INAC counterparts to discuss and provide input on the strategy. This initiative has resulted in an ever-green strategy and the AFN has been promised that its involvement will be a part of the review process throughout the lifecycle of the strategy, including its six-month review cycles.

Income Assistance

The INAC Income Assistance Program “serves a broad client base including seniors, single parent families, the unemployed, those with physical and mental disabilities, youth at risk and the working poor.” While the program has the authority to provide pre-employment assistance programs and other active measures, current funding limitations restrict the scope of the program to providing basic social assistance. Active measures can be defined as the activities, services and supports required by individuals wishing to complete their education and training, and/or attain employment or self-employment. The income assistance program authorities currently include active measures but funding increases have never been



secured for their implementation. With that said, First Nations have significantly increased their uptake of available funding for active measures pilot projects in an effort to develop creative approaches to delivering pre-employment services (active measures) in First Nation communities. In addition, there has been a particular emphasis over the past year to focus efforts on breaking the youth cycle of dependence on income assistance.

The First Nations Income Assistance Working Group (FNIAWG) was originally formed to develop and implement the Social Development Policy Framework Income Assistance Action Plan. Since its development, other priority areas for discussion and action have ensued, including: regional negotiations and implementation of active measures, a youth strategy for income assistance and breaking the cycle of dependency; special areas of impact from the income assistance program, including shelter allowance and housing, inadequacies surrounding Old Age Security (OAS), Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) and Canada Pension Plan (CPP) for First Nation Elders; and information sharing of best practices of active measures to assist regions in developing their own measures and prevention strategies. The renewed funding and federal focus on income assistance facilitated re-establishing the FNIAWG and thus resulted in two meetings since January 2011. The AFN was also able to facilitate the attendance of the FNIAWG at the annual Active Measures Conference, which showcased best practices in active measures across Canada, provided valuable insight into current initiatives and highlighted issues to be incorporated in the FNIAWG's national agenda. The FNIAWG is currently re-establishing national priorities, including the finalizing of a National Resource Guide on Active Measures, a National Compendium of Active Measures Projects, and planning of a National Social Development Learning Event for spring 2012.

A large focus within the AFN's work on income assistance has been centered on the need to reduce the growing numbers of youth engaged in the cycle of dependency on income assistance. Much of the work in this area to date has been done in collaboration with the AFN NYC. A one-day dialogue session was held with the NYC to obtain their perspectives on the cycle youth dependency on income assistance. From this forum a video entitled "Investing in Social Change for Future Generations" was developed, as well as a report on the dialogue session and a toolkit to assist youth in breaking free from income assistance. In addition, the NYC assisted in the development of a mobile information kiosk which was used to showcase and distribute the youth dialogue video at the Gathering our Voices Conference 2011, in Prince Rupert, BC, which welcomed over 1,000 Aboriginal youth delegates.

In an effort to meet the needs of First Nation francophone youth, a two-day Francophone Youth Dialogue on Income Assistance was held in Sept-Îles, QC. Unlike the youth who participated in the National Youth Dialogue with the NYC who were mainly students or employed, the participants in the French dialogue session were all active recipients of income assistance. A report from this meeting, as well as a French video "Investir dans le changement social pour les futures generations", was developed.

An identified priority by the FNIAWG has been the lack of take up and difficulties in accessing benefits of the OAS/GIS/ CPP programs for First Nation Elders and elderly. Valuable feedback was obtained by the AFN Elders Council and the First Nations Veterans Working Group through their participation in a dialogue session with the Social Development team to identify issues and develop a draft set of recommended actions on OAS/GIS/ CPP. In addition, the Social Development team also arranged to have an information session provided to the group by Human Resources Skills and Development Canada (HRSDC) on the benefits available and how to obtain easier access to these benefits.



Assisted Living (AL)

The vision for the AL program as stated in the Social Development Policy Framework is: *“To assist individuals, children and families in living as independently as possible for as long as possible and ensure, where possible, in-home and in-community care to allow people to remain within their communities.”*

The AFN has been working with its regional partners to address the transfer of in-home care from INAC’s Assisted Living Program to Health Canada’s (First Nations and Inuit Health Branch) Home and Community Care (HCC) Program. The Social Development team held a one-day meeting with the HCC Partners (working group) to discuss issues relating to the transfer. The discussion resulted in the development of a list of issues relating to the transfer, as well as a list of proposed solutions to facilitate the transfer and engage First Nations in the process.

Family Violence Prevention

Family violence and violence against women continue to be key issues for First Nation women and their families. The AFN’s Social Development Secretariat is working to improve the quality of life of First Nation families affected by family violence, and to increase the services and supports available to these families. In an effort to reconnect and rebuild previously existing relationships with stakeholders, the AFN participated in an annual meeting of INAC-funded shelter directors hosted by the National Aboriginal Circle Against Family Violence (NACAFV). From this meeting arose an opportunity for the AFN to play a critical role in facilitating knowledge exchange through the sharing of best practices and providing a mechanism to encourage online discussions between shelter directors and NACAFV via the Social Development Secretariat’s newly developed webpage and web portal. The membership-only access web portal was developed for First Nations Shelter Directors to have the opportunity to share information via real time online meetings and discussion boards.

Social Development Webpage/Web Portals

The development of a mechanism to share information related to social development between regions and communities has been a priority for some time. As such, a new webpage was developed for the Social Development Secretariat that would house key information, provide links to organizations/community projects (where available) within the regions, and share an events calendar identifying national, regional and community events related to social development. In addition, in an effort to improve communication with regional partners and stakeholders, membership only access portals were developed for the FNIAWG and the First Nation Shelter Directors, so as to have real time online meetings, discussion boards and sharing of information intended for members only.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- **First Nations – INAC Policy Advisory Group (FNIPAG):** The FNIPAG will be re-established to ensure that valuable First Nation input is provided into the Umbrella Performance Measurement Strategy to facilitate the development of meaningful culturally-appropriate measurement tools for First Nations. The FNIPAG is essential to providing an overarching coordinated approach to advocating and advancing First Nation social development issues.
- **Income Assistance:** The FNIAWG will continue its work on the Active Measures initiative, the improvements to the Income Assistance program and the region by region negotiations for funding for active measures. In addition, a National Learning Event, organized by the FNIAWG, is planned



for spring 2012. Work will also continue with the AFN NYC on developing youth initiatives that work towards breaking the cycle of dependency on income assistance, including finalizing and implementing the Youth Action Plan on Income Assistance. The AFN will also continue its work with HRSDC and other stakeholders to improve the living conditions of First Nation Elders and the elderly through the OAS/GIS/CPP Program.

- **Assisted Living:** The AFN Social Development Secretariat will facilitate the development of a national First Nations Assisted Living Working Group to address salient issues related to Assisted Living, including but not limited to: providing feedback and input into the development of a change management strategy, as well as the development of a framework for integration to facilitate seamless transfer of in-home care from the Assisted Living program to the Home and Community Care program.
- **Family Violence Prevention Program:** The AFN Social Development team will continue to work with its partners including the AFN Women's Council, National Aboriginal Circle Against Family Violence (NACAFV), and the First Nations Shelter Directors to improve the quality of life of First Nation families affected by family violence and increase the services and supports available to these families.
- **Chiefs Committee on Social Development:** The AFN Social Development team is attempting to re-establish the Chiefs Committee on Social Development. Given the current political climate, the AFN believes that it is necessary to have a strong leadership body to advance a national social development agenda, particularly in the areas of child welfare, income assistance and assisted living.



INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

The Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA) is not only a historic agreement; it is a path toward healing and reconciliation for First Nations, Canada and the churches. The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) continues to play a key and central role in the implementation of the IRSSA.

Resolutions 6/2010 (*Protecting the Rights of Former Indian Residential Schools Survivors in the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement*) and 22/2010 (*Redress for Day Scholars*) support this work. Resolution 66/2010 supports the call for commemorative markers (monuments) for all Indian Residential Schools. Resolution 69/2010 supports a call for personal apologies to residential school survivors in a manner consistent with Treaty-making practices (handshaking) in their traditional territories.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The AFN will be entering into a contract with the Independent Assessment Process (IAP) Secretariat to provide IAP Assistance Workers (form fillers) during the application process which is open until September 19, 2012. The AFN will provide the training, implementation and management of the process. The deliverable is 1,400 IAP applications. The Indian Residential School (IRS) Unit will recommend that the AFN Executive seek an extension to the IAP deadline due to the lack of advocacy for former Indian Residential Schools (IRS) students in remote/isolated First Nation communities.

The IRS Unit coordinated a one-day information session on the IRSSA in December, 2010. Parties to the IRSSA provided updates and Chiefs and frontline workers were able to address regional concerns with implementation of the IRSSA. Justice Murray Sinclair, Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), provided an update on national and regional events and the Commemoration project. The information session was webcast and is available online at www.afn-irs.ca.

The IRS Unit continues to support advocacy for compensation for Day Scholars. A legal opinion and workplan were completed and a briefing note on the Day Scholar issue was presented to the AFN Executive. The IRS Unit coordinated a meeting with the National Administration Committee (NAC) to address this issue; however, it is not within their mandate. In order for Day Scholars to access the IRSSA, it would have to be amended by consent of all parties and approved by the courts. Day Scholars are able, however, to access to the Independent Assessment Process and TRC and Commemoration activities. The IRS Unit will coordinate a side meeting on Day Scholars during the AFN's 2011 Annual General Assembly.

The AFN has written to the federal government regarding Resolution 66/2010 (apologies to IRS students in their traditional territories).

The IRS Unit continues to participate in the TRC All Parties working group. The national schedule of events includes: Inuvik - June 2011; Halifax - fall 2011; Saskatchewan - spring 2012; BC - fall 2012; Quebec - spring 2013; Alberta - fall 2013; and a final wrap-up in Ontario in June, 2014.

The closing deadline for the Common Experience Payment (CEP) is September 19, 2011. The AFN is working with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) to discuss the surplus of more than \$40 million in funding. Given the large surplus, plans will be developed to provide former IRS students with access to the \$3,000 personal credit for education purposes, with the balance directed to the NIB Trust Fund.



The IRS Unit has developed a website on residential schools, which includes an initiative to establish a Facebook page on every residential school to encourage reunions between former classmates and share stories, photos and support. The website also provides an opportunity to engage the children and grandchildren of former IRS students in an effort to help understand the intergenerational impacts of residential schools.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Submission of a proposal for commemorative markers through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Commemoration fund during the next call for proposals in 2011. This will be done in conjunction with the Church groups.
- Continue to provide a facilitative role in support of redress for Day Scholars.
- Maintenance of the Indian Residential Schools (IRS) website as a key social media tool for former IRS students, churches and government.
- Continue to provide updates on the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement to regional assemblies and IRS conferences.
- Ongoing work with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada on the Common Experience Payment surplus funds.



INDIGENACTION

IndigenACTION was launched on July 18, 2010 by National Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo and the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Youth Council. IndigenACTION is a national effort to build on the spirit and energy of the 2010 Olympic Games and aims to foster partnerships and enhance existing relationships to improve the quality of life for Indigenous peoples by promoting healthy lifestyles, community togetherness and community-based economic spin-off opportunities. This will include securing greater investment and support for our own athletes, as sport has great potential to encourage, motivate and create confidence in our young people.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

Under the leadership of Olympian Waneek Horn-Miller and the AFN Youth Council, phase one of the initiative included hosting regional roundtables to identify best practices, common goals and recommendations to support and stabilize new and existing initiatives and organizations that support young Indigenous athletes and work to improve fitness and well-being in our communities. Participation in the roundtables included athletes, recreation and fitness leaders, academics, public institutions, the private sector and community members.

The roundtable process was supported by the AFN and a number of sponsors, including Tim Hortons, Nike, New Relationship Trust, Motivate Canada and the BCAFN. The roundtable report will be completed for presentation to the 2011 Annual General Assembly.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Develop a survey for additional input into the roundtable process.
- Host a virtual summit on Sport, Fitness and Wellness.
- Host one or two roundtables in the Atlantic region.
- Establish a working group to develop an action plan based on the recommendations from the roundtable process/report.
- Host a national conference or participate in the National Health Forum planned for November 2011 to present the action plan and international best practices.



EXERCISING AND IMPLEMENTING OUR RIGHTS:

First Nations have inherent rights that give them the control to make the decisions that affect their lives. The AFN will support First Nations in implementing those rights and the treaties using clear standards, such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We say to Canada that we are all Treaty people, and we have responsibilities to one another and an obligation to honour those sacred promises. It is our time to act on First Nations inherent rights and authority by supporting traditional governance, achieving acceptable consultation and accommodation standards, and securing resource revenue sharing.



NATIONAL STRATEGY ON TREATY IMPLEMENTATION

The Assembly of First Nations' (AFN) National Strategy on Treaty Implementation is guided by the resolution *Sacred Treaties – Sacred Trust: Working Together for Treaty Implementation and Advancing our Sovereignty as Nations* (No. 07/2010) adopted by the Chiefs at the 2010 Annual General Assembly in Winnipeg.

First Nation leaders have affirmed a path to move forward not based on the *Indian Act*, but based on the original Treaty relationship, our rights and on strengthening and building our governments.

The goal of the National Strategy on Treaty Implementation is to support First Nation governments through political coordination and advocacy in a manner that enables the implementation of Treaties. The strategy calls on the AFN to fulfill its advocacy role as part of a coordinated approach to stand behind the efforts of Treaty holders to secure the full recognition and respectful implementation of Treaties with the Crown.

The endorsement of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) provides a significant focal point and a common framework to guide Treaty implementation, self-determination, and the recognition of rights. The AFN will continue to aggressively pursue the fullest and unqualified implementation of the UNDRIP with the Crown.

The National Strategy is based on seven pillars including: Ceremony and Protocol, Political Action, Legal Action, International Advocacy, Economic Action, Direct Action, and Social Change and Community Development. The AFN continues to make progress on important pillars of the national strategy, including:

- Engaging our Elders to ensure that proper protocols and ceremonies serve as the foundation of our work on Treaties as well as recognition of those demonstrating utmost leadership in advancing Treaty rights.
- Facilitation of roundtables with both pre-confederation Treaty nations and Numbered Treaty nations to begin to establish appropriate processes for Treaty implementation with the Crown that identifies common principles flowing from the Treaty relationship.
- Work on exploring the full range of issues pertaining to the establishment of an independent Treaty Tribunal, including examining models in other jurisdictions such as the Waitangi Treaty Tribunal in New Zealand.
- Research on developing new approaches to First Nation land and property rights based on Treaty. The basis for this work is that First Nations need to reassert their inherent jurisdiction over their lands and resources within reserve boundaries and within their traditional territories, through new land regime models that increase First Nation control and decision-making.
- Research to explore a new fiscal relationship arrangement based on a Treaty relationship that is truly government to government, and not based on existing contribution agreement models.
- A Rights Fund has been established and fundraising efforts are ongoing to ensure that resources are available to pursue alternative remedies to Treaty implementation where it is considered strategic to use legal action in aid of political action.
- Consistent with the UN International Year of the Youth, the AFN will ensure that First Nation youth are a vital part of the National Strategy on Treaty Implementation moving forward in a 'Call to Action' to terminate the colonial relationship once and for all.



KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

In March 2011, the AFN held a Roundtable with Pre-Confederation Treaty holders. The roundtable was intended to bring together pre-confederation Treaty holders to better understand local and regional views on the principles of Treaty implementation, as guided by the AFN National Strategy on Treaty Implementation.

The essential focus of the roundtable was on First Nations-Crown engagement. This included a discussion on historic efforts at Treaty implementation, the role of dispute resolution as a mechanism for Treaty implementation, a discussion on the UNDRIP, discussions to better understand local and regional perspectives on the Treaty relationship, a dialogue on Treaty Commissions and exploratory tables, and future efforts to move forward in partnership with the Crown.

Chiefs, councillors and other representatives from all of the respective pre-Confederation Treaty areas – namely, British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec and the Atlantic – traveled to Ottawa to participate in this roundtable representing a wide variety of Treaty areas.

On this basis, participants were invited to consider two fundamental questions:

1. What is required for Treaty implementation?
2. What role does dispute resolution play in this regard?

While the presentations and discussion around these and other issues were expansive, there was a high-level consensus on the part of participants that:

- a) The issue of Treaty implementation will require that both parties identify the appropriate representatives required to advance issues of implementation, including providing appropriate mandates and resources to ensure successful Treaty implementation; and,
- b) That the establishment of an appropriate dispute resolution forum would be a central element in effectively advancing implementation as a mutual imperative.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Draft proposals around the development of a renewed approach for Treaty implementation based on recognition of the nation-to-nation Treaty partnership. This would include recommendations pertaining to the need for new mandates, policies, mechanisms, tools, and structures for both the Crown and Treaty holders to achieve Treaty implementation in the true understanding of the original spirit and intent.
- Expansion on the priority of dispute resolution as an essential mechanism for Treaty implementation where Treaty conflicts may exist, what dispute resolution should look like, and what mandates, laws, processes and/or mechanisms would be necessary to resolve disputes related to Treaty.
- Education of younger First Nation generations on the history of Treaty and Treaty implementation, as well as education of Canadians on Treaty as a priority.
- Improved communications at the local, regional and national levels.



COMPREHENSIVE CLAIMS

Resolution 10/2010, passed at the Annual General Assembly (AGA), advanced the need for the establishment of a First Nations and Crown process to jointly review the existing Comprehensive Claims Policy with a view to ensuring that Aboriginal title and rights are dealt with in an equitable and expeditious manner.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

In accordance with the direction set out in the resolution, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) has established a Comprehensive Claims Policy (CCP) Working Group that has met three times since the 2010 AGA. The specific outcomes from the meetings have been the development and advancement of a proposal to the federal government to seek resources for the CCP Working Group to conduct its work; that the proposal, as developed, has enabled the National Chief to engage in discussions with the Prime Minister and Minister of Indian Affairs regarding the advancement of a joint CPP reform process to address process issues, but to also advance the need for an independent tribunal to deal with disputes in negotiations.

In the most recent meeting of the Working Group there was discussion and reaffirmation of a national consensus statement regarding the federal comprehensive claims policy:

The Assembly of First Nations, the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, and the First Nations Summit, hereby join together publicly to re-affirm the Aboriginal Title and rights of all First Nations of British Columbia and Canada.

Canada's Comprehensive Claims Policy is predicated on the denial of our rights and title. We categorically reject this policy and Canada's implementation of this policy.

We call upon Canada to assert the honour of the Crown and to adopt a new policy of recognition, affirmation and implementation of Aboriginal title, consistent with its adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The Government of Canada has indicated an interest to work with First Nations on policy change. However, Canada has not yet responded affirmatively to engage in the process and developmental work envisioned by the AGA Resolution.

Discussions are ongoing to ensure that the objectives expressed in Resolution 10/2010 are included in a larger Canada-First Nations joint workplan that will seek to address the many challenges that exist with Canada's policy regarding Aboriginal and Treaty rights.

A related matter concerning the implementation of Modern Day Treaties/Land Claims Agreements has been identified as a matter for the Comprehensive Claims Working Group. The Chiefs-in-Assembly have directed increased advocacy in the context of modern day treaties to pressure the federal government to honour their obligations for Treaty implementation.



The Chiefs Committee on Claims (CCoC) has been informed of this and discussion is planned for the next meeting (timing to be confirmed). Efforts to coordinate activities with the Land Claims Coalition are underway.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Establishment of a joint Crown and First Nations policy review and development process.
- Development of strategy regarding modern day Treaty implementation.
- Update on progress to the Chiefs-in-Assembly resulting from the activities of a new working group regarding policy review and other related strategic activities.



IMPLEMENTING THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2007. The Chiefs-in-Assembly have also adopted the UNDRIP in various resolutions including Resolution 37/2007. The UNDRIP is an expression of the fundamental rights of Indigenous peoples around the world, which sets out the principles of partnership and mutual respect that should guide the relationship between states and Indigenous peoples. It provides ways to measure and assess the way states are respecting and implementing the rights of Indigenous peoples.

On November 12, 2010, Canada announced that it had advised the President of the United Nations General Assembly that it was endorsing the UNDRIP.

At the 10th session (May 2010) of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, National Chief Shawn Atleo made the following intervention on behalf of First Nations in Canada and many supporting non-governmental organizations (NGOs), individual First Nations, regional First Nation entities and provincial-territorial organizations (PTOs):

As a consensus international human rights instrument, the realization of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) is crucial to the survival, dignity and well-being of Indigenous peoples worldwide. UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, James Anaya, concluded in his August 2010 report to the UN General Assembly (A/65/264):

Implementation of the Declaration should be regarded as a political, moral and legal imperative without qualification, within the framework of the human rights objectives of the Charter of the United Nations.

Our organizations strongly agree. In view of the rampant and persistent human rights violations globally, the full and effective implementation of the Declaration is urgently needed.

We welcome the fact that the Declaration is being used by UN treaty bodies to interpret Indigenous peoples' rights and related state obligations under international treaties. Use of the Declaration is also being made by UN specialized agencies and the Human Rights Council's special rapporteurs and independent experts. The Declaration is increasingly being relied upon by domestic human rights commissions and courts.

Some States, such as Canada and the United States, are dishonouring their endorsements of the Declaration at home and abroad. They are interpreting UNDRIP in a manner that contradicts its terms and adversely affects Indigenous peoples worldwide. They are reneging on their international obligations to respect, protect and fulfill Indigenous peoples' human rights.

We recommend the following measures to the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII) as a means to promote and systematize the implementation of the Declaration at the national, regional and international levels. These recommendations include that the PFII:

1. Recommend that the Human Rights Council (HRC) authorize the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) to conduct an annual review on the manner in which UNDRIP is being



interpreted and implemented at all levels (EMRIP, 26 August 2010 Report to the HRC (A/HRC/15/36), Proposals 4 and 5).

- 2. Create a searchable database of specific measures, including best practices, taken to implement the Declaration (as proposed by the North American Indigenous Peoples Caucus).*
- 3. Make recommendations regarding states that undermine UNDRIP, domestically or internationally, through actions that run counter to its provisions.*
- 4. Urge states, in conjunction with Indigenous peoples, to establish national plans of work to implement the Declaration with clear timelines and priorities. States should report regularly on the progress and shortcomings in implementing UNDRIP to their national legislatures and to the PFII.*
- 5. Urge states, in conjunction with Indigenous peoples, to undertake a review of existing laws and policies to ensure compliance with UNDRIP (as called for in the UN Special Rapporteur's Interim Report of 9 August 2010).*
- 6. Urge states to uphold the international human rights standards in UNDRIP so as to ensure full respect and implementation of all Indigenous peoples' rights, including those in Treaties with such peoples.*
- 7. Urge all levels of government and all multilateral agencies to ensure that all relevant staff are familiar with the Declaration and provided clear direction and support to uphold its provisions.*
- 8. Urge states, in conjunction with Indigenous peoples, to promote broader public awareness of and human rights education on the Declaration as a principled, universal framework for justice and reconciliation. States must fulfill their international obligations to uphold the human rights of all.*

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The AFN/National Chief has been actively advocating the implementation of the Declaration in its communications with the federal government and other governments, with the private sector and with Canadians in general. More specifically, the advocacy regarding the implementation of the Declaration is captured in policy discussions with federal officials and in appearances on Parliament Hill regarding various legislative hearings.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- To develop a First Nation implementation plan with the Government of Canada regarding the reflection of 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 efforts at educating First Nation leaders, technicians and citizens regarding the content and usage of the UNDRIP as a set of rights and standards for inclusion in all of their policy, negotiation and law making responsibilities and undertakings.



SUPPORTING FIRST NATION GOVERNMENTS AND NATION RE-BUILDING:

The AFN will support First Nations, as the rightful holders of title, rights and as signatories to treaties, to engage with governments and serve their citizens wherever they live. The AFN will advocate for full recognition of First Nations' jurisdiction and sustainable transfer agreements to support our responsibilities to our people. It is our time to re-build our nations by uniting and taking the necessary steps towards replacement of the Indian Act.



SPECIFIC CLAIMS

The heading of specific claims contains two broad components: (1) those issues relating to specific claims directly, and (2) those issues relating to Additions to Reserves (ATR).

Work in these areas is mandated by a number of resolutions, beginning most significantly with Resolution 08/2007 (Specific Claims) passed in relation to Canada's 2007 announcement of its Specific Claims Action Plan entitled *Justice at Last*.

A number of related resolutions have been passed since this announcement including: 24/2010 Using Alternative Dispute Resolution to Settle Outstanding Specific Claims; 82/2008 Endorsement of the Think Tank Principles for Large Specific Claims; 50/2007 Specific Claims Tribunal Act; and 09/2010 Improving the Additions to Reserves Policy. More recently, at the Special Chiefs Assembly in December 2010, resolutions were passed relating to very large specific claims (84/2010 Support for Land Rights over \$150M) as well as landless bands (87/2010 Support for Landless Bands).

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

Specific Claims

Canada's 2007 announcement of *Justice at Last* was focused on the establishment of a new independent tribunal to adjudicate specific claims valued up to \$150 million. The AFN began its work with Canada based on this initiative in July 2007, focusing on the joint development of the *Specific Claims Tribunal Act* (SCTA) and a companion Political Agreement signed in November 2007. The SCTA came into force on October 16, 2008.

The AFN's work over the past year has emphasized a number of key areas relating to specific claims. These have included some engagement with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), as well as work with the new Specific Claims Tribunal of Canada, and coordination with a variety of First Nation groups with claims related interests.

Delays in the receipt of project funding from INAC once again stalled some areas of work during the 2010-11 fiscal year, but the AFN was able to initiate discussions relating to, among other things, claims funding for First Nations, and exploring Canada's proposal for mediation. In its engagement with the Chiefs Committee on Claims, the AFN has determined that Canada's current approach to the provision of mediation services does not live up to the commitments set out in *Justice at Last*, nor does it live up to the mandate provided to the AFN by Resolution 24/2010 passed at the Annual General Assembly in July 2010. As result, the AFN continues to advocate for a renewed approach to the provision of mediation by Canada, rather than engaging Canada in the substantive implementation of their approach.

While some progress has been made in our engagement with INAC over the past year, a significant amount of additional work has been carried out in relation to the Tribunal. The Tribunal issued its draft Rules of Practice and Procedure in June 2010. The AFN took the initiative of commenting on the draft Rules and has since helped to coordinate advocacy efforts in this regard with the Tribunal. A group of 11 stakeholders – all of whom had commented on the Tribunal's draft Rules – met with the Tribunal in October 2010 to discuss the draft Rules. The AFN was able to coordinate the submission of a consensus document



from among several of the stakeholders on the Rules, and this document received a receptive response from the Tribunal. It is expected that when the Tribunal's Rules are finalized that they will reflect the AFN's input and that of the other stakeholders.

The Tribunal has convened a second meeting of the Advisory Committee for late May 2011 to discuss mediation in relation to the Tribunal. The Tribunal intends to use mediation as part of its case management process. To this end, the AFN has coordinated the First Nation stakeholders on the Advisory Committee to develop a consensus submission, this time relating to mediation. It is hoped that by working together with other stakeholders that Canada will reconsider its current approach to mediation for specific claims. The Tribunal is expected to begin to hear cases in the coming fall.

Support for First Nations with claims over \$150 million also remains a part of the AFN's advocacy efforts consistent with Resolution 84/2010. These claimants do not have access to the Tribunal and, therefore, can have significant difficulties in advancing their claims in a manner that treats them fairly or impartially. As a result, the AFN is working to coordinate these efforts, including preparation of a submission to the House Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, which has been conducting a study of the new process. The AFN also expects to appear before the committee as a witness.

Additions to Reserve

Reforming the Additions to Reserve (ATR) process is an issue identified as a part of the work that began to take place in 2007, and is identified as a specific area of activity in the Political Agreement of 2007. A Joint Working Group (JWG) was formed with Canada in the fall of 2009 to fulfill the commitments made in the 2007 Political Agreement, including the commitment "to work together to inform ongoing policy work associated with Specific Claims and other related matters".

The JWG agreed to first tackle the policy gap regarding ATRs for lands purchased with awards from the Specific Claims Tribunal. This work has resulted in a draft interim ATR policy statement that creates a new category within the existing policy to provide priority to ATRs flowing from the Tribunal.

However, during the course of JWG discussions, all participants recognized the need for greater improvements to the ATR policy and practices to ensure a more efficient and effective transfer of land for additions to reserves. The JWG has identified many issues that prevent or limit the efficient and effective transfer of land to reserve and discussed proposed remedies.

A workplan has been developed to guide future work. The workplan identifies policy, legislative, and operational issues that are not exhaustive but represent the subject areas that have been raised during JWG discussions. It also identifies issues which go beyond the scope of the JWG, but which may impact on ATRs.

The AFN has hosted five regional meetings in the period January-March 2011 to provide information about this initiative and to gain perspective on these issues from regional technicians. One more regional meeting is expected to take place early in the current fiscal year (subject to the receipt of funding), and plans are underway to carry out a series of case studies based on this work.

Subject to ongoing engagement with the Chiefs Committee on Claims, it is anticipated that discussion on ATR will continue to take place over the current fiscal year. This will include confirmation of a revised



Interim Policy on Additions to Reserve on the part of Canada, as well as further research and engagement with First Nations regionally on the part of the AFN.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Monitoring and engagement of the Tribunal as it becomes fully operational.
- Progress and reporting on the provision of mediation services under *Justice at Last*.
- Advocacy and support for First Nations with claims over \$150 million.
- Ongoing engagement with the Chiefs Committee on Claims.
- Planning and input for the five-year policy and statutory reviews.
- Hosting of a final regional dialogue session on ATR and completion of several case studies.



CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

Legislation passed by Parliament opens the doors for discrimination complaints to be made in regard to decisions under the *Indian Act*. An Act to amend the *Canadian Human Rights Act* S.C. 2008, c. 30, came into effect on June 18, 2008. For Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), this took effect upon the passing of the legislation in 2008, but for First Nation governments it took effect on June 18, 2011.

It was the enactment of section 67 in the first version of the *Canadian Human Rights Act* (CHRA) in 1977 that shielded any decisions made pursuant to the *Indian Act*. Recognizing that the repeal of section 67 and the full application of the CHRA has the potential to trigger critical capacity, implementation and planning issues for First Nation governments, the Chiefs-in-Assembly directed the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to undertake a study to determine the preparation, capacity and fiscal and human resources that will be required in order for First Nations to meet the challenges under the CHRA (AFN Resolution 05/2008, *Implementation of Bill C-21, Repeal of s. 67 of the Canadian Human Rights Act*).

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

An AFN report “Assessing the Readiness of First Nation Communities for the Repeal of Section 67 of the *Canadian Human Rights Act*” based on a dialogue with First Nations in all regions of Canada about the repeal and the broader issue of protecting First Nation human rights was issued in March 2010 and updated in December 2010. The source of the information in the report was from 10 regional engagement sessions that were held between January and March 2010.

Among the findings in the report are that: 1) awareness of the repeal of section 67 and the CHRA is low; 2) communities have limited capacity to create and review policies to ensure compliance with the CHRA and to develop First Nation human rights policies and operational guidelines; and 3) approximately 1,700 public buildings and 21,000 band-owned houses are estimated to require accessibility improvements to ensure access for disabled persons living in the communities.

The AFN contributed a chapter, which summarizes this report, to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs report to Parliament in June 2011.

Despite the advocacy of AFN officials and the National Chief with the Minister of Indian Affairs and federal officials, the fiscal hardships associated with ensuring that communities are ready for the repeal of section 67 have not been addressed.

The Canadian Human Rights Commission has been engaged in an Aboriginal Initiative aimed at providing much needed education tools with an emphasis on knowledge development, prevention and alternate dispute resolution to assist First Nations in understanding and coping with the new reality.

AFN officials and the National Chief have met with representatives of the Canadian Human Rights Commission including the A/Chief Commissioner in an effort to establish relations to enable joint initiatives aimed at identifying and implementing innovative approaches to assist First Nation governments in coping with the new challenges.



ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- The AFN will continue advocacy regarding the need for the federal government to support the financial and capacity needs of First Nation governments. Furthermore, the AFN will pursue partnership and cooperative approaches with the Canadian Human Rights Commission and others to respond to the needs and developmental work of First Nation governments on these matters.



FIRST NATION CITIZENSHIP

Bill C-3: *Gender Equity in Indian Registration Act*, was proclaimed into force on January 31, 2011. The Bill amends section 6 of the *Indian Act* so that grandchildren of women who had previously lost their status upon marriage are now eligible for registration under the Act.

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) continues to advocate for adequate resources to be provided to First Nations to respond to any increases in membership as a result of these amendments.

In the tabling of Bill C-3, the Minister announced an exploratory process to examine broader issues surrounding registration, band membership and Citizenship that could not be addressed through the Bill. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) had refused to move on this process until successful passage of the Bill.

Guided by Resolution 17/2010: *Principles for an Exploratory Process on First Nations Citizenship*, the AFN is facilitating a national dialogue on First Nation citizenship.

The engagement uses new technologies to encompass a wide-range of perspectives and reach those not usually involved in AFN planning or decision-making. It will feature virtual roundtables, an interactive web portal, multi-media submissions and a National Forum on First Nation Citizenship, November 15-16, 2011 at the Enoch River Cree Resort in Alberta.

The first roundtable was held on May 9, 2011 and featured the AFN National Youth Council leading discussion under the broad themes of Identity, Nationhood and Change and focused on the following four questions:

1. What does First Nation citizenship mean to you today? How is this different from your grandparents? Will it be different for your grandchildren?
2. What is your understanding of the roles and responsibilities of citizens and their governments?
3. How would you like to see citizenship in your Nation move forward?
4. What tools are required to make this change a reality?

Over almost three hours, the roundtable was accessed by over 500 sites and the online chat received more than 600 comments. The full roundtable was archived on www.afn.ca and continues to be viewed. Additional roundtables and discussion will be planned over the summer and early fall and the AFN will seek multi-media submissions from First Nation citizens that capture their understanding of what citizenship means within current contexts, roles and responsibilities of citizens and their governments, how they would like to see their Nation move forward and the tools required for them to make these changes a reality.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Continued advocacy to secure commitment from Canada to ensure First Nation governments are adequately funded for all of their citizens, including any new pressures resulting from the implementation of recent amendments to the *Indian Act*.
- Maintain a multimedia forum for dialogue, exchange and advancing First Nations' perspective and approach on asserting and implementing First Nations' jurisdiction over citizenship.



- Host National First Nation Citizenship Forum, November 15-16, 2011 to seek extensive input and discuss key elements of an Action Plan on Implementing Jurisdiction over Citizenship.
- Resulting Action Plan on Implementing Jurisdiction over Citizenship provided to Chiefs for deliberation and decision at the December 2011 Special Chiefs Assembly.
- Launch of Action as determined by Chiefs-in-Assembly, including tabling of recommendations to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Parliament.



URBAN STRATEGY

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) has received a mandate through Resolution 18/2010 to develop an Urban First Nation Strategy to inform our efforts in this growing area. The Urban Strategy is intended to strengthen connections between First Nation governments and citizens, to move away from the restrictions of the *Indian Act*, and to work towards a continuum of services and the portability of rights for First Nation citizens.

Grounded in the core principle that First Nation leaders represent their citizens regardless of residency, there are many aspects which this strategy could address. The following five elements of the Urban Strategy have been identified as priorities:

1. Protection of First Nation Rights and Interests
2. Occupying Urban First Nation Space
3. Advocating for Improved Federal Government Response
4. Strengthened Relationships with Key Urban Partners
5. Exploring Options for Organizational Change

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The AFN has continued to work with partners, such as the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC), to move forward on the development of a nationally-facilitated, regionally-coordinated and locally-led First Nations Urban Strategy. For this purpose, the AFN and NAFC are signing a Statement of Partnership at the 2011 Annual General Assembly (AGA) to formalize the partnership between the organizations and commit to joint initiatives in key strategic areas, such as advocacy, research and communications.

The AFN has continued to facilitate dialogue with First Nation leaders and citizens on urban First Nation priorities. At the National Research Conference on Urban Aboriginal Peoples the AFN hosted a Policy Roundtable, entitled *Developing a First Nations Urban Strategy*, on February 23, 2011.

The AFN has also communicated First Nation priorities with respect to urban realities through parliamentary advocacy. On March 2, 2011, Regional Chief Rick Simon appeared as a witness before the Senate Social Affairs, Science and Technology Committee which convened a panel on urban Aboriginal peoples as part of its study on current social issues pertaining to Canada's largest cities. Consistent with the resolution mandating our engagement, the AFN stressed the need to strengthen First Nation citizens' inherent and Treaty rights regardless of residency and to assert First Nation jurisdiction in urban areas.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Creation of a First Nations Urban Strategy Advisory Committee with representation from Chiefs and technicians.
- Regional engagement in the further development of the Urban Strategy.
- Dialogue with officials responsible for the Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS) to advocate for the inclusion of First Nation perspectives in the renewed UAS.
- Strengthening the integration of an urban policy and advocacy lens in all areas of AFN engagement.
- Presentation of the template for the Urban Strategy.



JUSTICE

Resolution 61/2010 called on the AFN Executive to establish an independent public inquiry into Murdered and Missing Women in Canada; call on all levels of government to engage First Nations on national, regional and local levels to develop action plans to support families and address the root causes of violence against Indigenous women; call on governments to support community-based initiatives and Sisters in Spirit; ensure proper facilities for victims of crime; and, advocate and lobby for the protection and safety of First Nation women and children across Canada as per the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

Resolution 83/2010 calls on the AFN Executive to facilitate a national justice conference in the fall of 2011 to bring together key stakeholders from First Nations, criminal justice, police and government agencies to develop a national justice strategy and workplan; direct the AFN Executive to develop a terms of reference for a national multi-jurisdictional Justice Inquiry that could include an independent review of police actions with respect to police shooting of Aboriginal peoples, deaths in custody and murdered and missing women, and a mandate to make recommendations for the development of public policy to address the socio-economic issues that give rise to crimes; and, direct the AFN Executive to seek resources necessary to build capacity to support furthering the action plan and obtain real results and improvements in justice for First Nations.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The National Chief has advocated the urgency of the issue of Murdered and Missing Women in various presentations including at the United Nations Permanent Forum. Amnesty International indicates that Canada has a clear and inescapable obligation to ensure the safety of Indigenous women, to bring those responsible for attacks against them to justice, and to address the deeper problems of marginalization, dispossession and impoverishment that have placed so many Indigenous women in harm's way.

The National Chief has also met with the President of the Native Women's Association of Canada, where he acknowledged the contributions of Sisters in Spirit and agreed to work together on the issue of Murdered and Missing Women. The AFN participated as a National Aboriginal Organization in a Native Aboriginal Women's Forum in June 2011.

The National Chief met with RCMP Commissioner William Elliot to discuss renewal of an AFN/RCMP Public Safety Protocol. Instead of renewing the protocol, it was agreed to develop a workplan specifically on the issue of Murdered and Missing Women as a key issue and achieve results on a single issue.

The National Chief and Alberta Regional Chief George Stanley also participated in two RCMP briefings on Murdered and Missing Aboriginal Women from the four western provinces of BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Details of the briefings help to inform a workplan between the AFN and RCMP. RCMP briefings also reveal disproportionately high numbers of Aboriginal murdered and missing men. Statistics also reveal that Aboriginal homicides in one region accounts for 82% of cases.

The AFN secured a small Project Funding Agreement in Phase 1 of a proposal "Taking Action on Murdered & Missing Women" for the 2010-11 fiscal year to develop and initiate contact with provincial and regional



support services in preparation for regional workshops on Murdered and Missing Women as well as provide support to the families of Murdered and Missing Women. A Phase 2 application is in process.

The AFN made an application for and has received standing in the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry being held in British Columbia (BC).

The issue of the public safety and health of our communities is addressed in many of the National Chief's speaking engagements. The AFN is seeking the resources necessary to coordinate a national conference with key stakeholders and First Nation leadership, tentatively targeted for September 12-15, 2011 in Vancouver. This will also provide an opportunity for further discussions on the development of national, regional and local community-based programs and infrastructure for the safety of our Aboriginal women and families and resources required to meet the needs. Current public safety and security policies that impact our families and communities will also be highlights of a national conference.

Both resolutions call on the AFN Executive to develop a Terms of Reference for an independent multi-jurisdictional public inquiry that could conduct an independent review of police actions, Aboriginal deaths in custody and Murdered and Missing Women. A literature review of all past inquiries, commissions and research on this issue would be beneficial so that informed choices about the type of public inquiry and terms of reference could be developed.

With respect to policing, the AFN has met with officials from Public Safety regarding the evaluation of the First Nations Policing Program and has advanced the need for enhanced capital and other capacity requirements to ensure appropriate and effective policing in First Nation communities. Despite indications that the level of funding in the Aboriginal policing program was to decrease for the 2011-12 fiscal year, advocacy by the AFN/National Chief resulted in the maintenance of funding levels in the policing program through dedicated funding allocations in the federal budget.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Implement the AFN/RCMP workplan on Murdered and Missing Women, including the development of a website for Missing Persons and Children.
- Secure financial commitments for the National Justice Forum and facilitate coordination with key stakeholders and First Nation leaders.
- Represent national interests of First Nations at the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry in BC.
- Develop a Terms of Reference for an independent multi-jurisdictional public inquiry that would include an independent review of police actions, Aboriginal deaths in custody and Murdered and Missing Women in Canada.



BORDER CROSSING

First Nations have Indigenous and Treaty border crossing rights as recognized and affirmed in instruments, such as the Jay Treaty of 1794, section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, and Article 36 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Issues of interest in this policy area are cross border mobility, enhanced border security, transport of cultural/sacred items, and Indigenous identification cards.

In the current context of heightened identification and security standards through the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), effective June 1, 2009, crossing the Canada-US border has presented complex challenges for First Nation citizens. In many instances, First Nation communities are divided by the international border which means that border crossing is a daily necessity.

The Chiefs-in-Assembly have asserted that the remedies that are currently available, including passports from Canada and the US and the new Secure Certificate of Indian Status (SCIS), do not meet the needs of First Nation citizens. Resolution 20/2010, Support for Recognition of Nationhood of Iroquois Hotinonsionne Confederacy and the Validity of Indigenous Passports, calls for the use of Indigenous passports and urges the Government of Canada to work with First Nations in establishing their own system of secure identification based on their nationhood, citizenship, jurisdiction, and inherent rights.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

In order to continue the dialogue between First Nations and various agencies from Canada and the US, a funding proposal for an International Indigenous Cross Border Rights Summit was submitted.

The AFN has continued to engage Indian and Northern Affairs Canada in order to be able to provide First Nations with information on the roll-out of the Secure Certificate of Indian Status.

The AFN has provided support to First Nation leaders in their engagement with Canadian and US agencies on the development of Indigenous identification systems.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Co-hosting an International Indigenous Cross Border Rights Summit and report on outcomes of the multi-lateral dialogue.
- Continuing to engage Canada on the development of First Nation border secure identification cards.
- Monitoring the national implementation of the Secure Certificate of Indian Status and keeping First Nations informed on document requirements.
- Facilitating the exchange of technical expertise on secure identification systems.



ADVANCING ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL INTERESTS:

First Nations can be active players in the economy and, in doing so, help build our economies, create wealth and jobs and support our people in shaping the national economy. It is our time to take a leadership role as Indigenous peoples to balance development opportunities and conservation of the earth through environmental protection and green development. We are the first to feel the impacts of environmental degradation, like climate change, yet we are often the last to be heard. Our voices must be heard, our rights must be respected and we must be part of the solution.



ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

The Environmental Stewardship Unit (ESU) helps First Nations navigate the complex relationships between environmental issues within three main thematic areas: environmental health, environmental protection and natural resource management. The ESU has a mandate to conduct research, develop policy, advance environment-based initiatives, and advocate on behalf of First Nations. A broad spectrum of international, national, regional, and local environmental issues fall within the scope of this mandate.

The ESU seeks to inform decision-making to affect real and positive change on multiple environmental and rights-based issues. Projects and activities within the ESU consider a wide range of interacting variables and draw upon the best available knowledge to advocate in key areas identified by First Nations as priority issues, including chemical contaminants, traditional foods, climate change, fisheries, forestry, international agreements, mining, nuclear waste management, species at risk, and other emerging issues.

The ESU supports First Nations as leaders in the environment. Throughout its activities, the ESU endeavors to create new opportunities and tools for First Nations to build capacity, engage youth, utilize traditional knowledge, and show the way to environmental excellence. The programs and initiatives reported below have been acknowledged as important in effecting real and meaningful change; are in line with overarching goals for environmental stewardship; and promote self-reliance, sustainability and social equity.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

Environmental Health

ESU activities on environmental health and contaminants are at the forefront of research-advocacy programs in Canada. The ESU is engaged in meaningful partnerships with First Nations to produce high-caliber research results that promote healthy environments. Initiatives in this area include the First Nations Biomonitoring Initiative, First Nations Food, Nutrition and Environment Study, First Nations Indoor Air Survey, and the First Nations Environmental Contaminants Program. Programs such as the First Nations Environmental Health Innovation Network have been established to promote new partnerships among First Nations and the academic community to better understand the intimate relationship between the environment and First Nation health.

ESU studies exemplify principles of community Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP). All First Nation communities participating in ESU studies are directly involved in the research and own, protect and control how collected information is used. The ESU supports participant communities in understanding the data collected in the research process, thereby creating a stronger awareness of environmental health while creating the capacity to use this data to advocate for change.

Air Quality

The ESU is involved in numerous initiatives involving indoor and outdoor air quality, including the First Nations Indoor Air Study (FNIAS) and participation in the development of Canada-wide outdoor air standards. The air quality work carried out by ESU aims to assist First Nations by increasing the amount of substantive knowledge available on indoor air quality, documenting the impact of improved indoor air



quality on health, and by helping to create standards and a regulatory framework for improving outdoor air quality.

The FNIAS seeks to establish links between health and indoor air quality and promote better cardiovascular health. The study was conducted in Swan Lake, Manitoba and tested indoor air in several volunteer households for environmental contaminants and particulate matter. The residents of participant households underwent non-invasive cardiovascular health tests to determine possible health risks to indoor air contaminants. Commercial air filters were used to determine if improved indoor air quality improves health. Preliminary results seem to indicate that cardiovascular health improves with improved air quality. Full data analysis is currently underway. Once completed, the results will be communicated back to individual participants and the community. Although individual results will remain anonymous, a report will be written and made available to all First Nations on ways and means to improve indoor air quality, prevent respiratory illness and improve cardiovascular health.

The ESU has recently been engaged by Environment Canada to participate in meetings and stakeholder outreach in the development of ambient air standards. These standards seek to create enforceable and targeted emission levels aimed at protecting health and the environment. The ESU will provide First Nation perspectives and concerns regarding ambient air standards, how these will be achieved and how emissions will be regulated.

Chemicals Management

The ESU intends to increase First Nation knowledge on toxic exposure and chemicals management. In 2010-11, the ESU conducted a Toxic Exposure Survey to gather information on which chemicals are currently in use in First Nation communities and to gauge handling practices and awareness about chemical safety. Additionally, the ESU created a series of fact sheets on specific chemicals of concern such as Persistent Organic Pollutants, Mercury, Bisphenol A (commonly known as BPA) in plastics, and Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs), as well as information on understanding threshold values, guideline values, and standards. The fact sheets include information on the chemical, its toxicology and the risk associated with exposure.

The ESU sits on the Chemicals Management Plan Stakeholder Advisory Council, a multi-stakeholder committee that contributes to the implementation of the Chemicals Management Plan (CMP). The purpose of the Council is to provide stakeholders and First Nations an opportunity to offer advice and input on the implementation of the CMP. Information on the CMP is relayed to First Nations through the AFN's Environmental Managers Network. Pending plans by government to initiate CMP II, the ESU intends to continue participation in the CMP.

First Nations Biomonitoring Initiative

The First Nations Biomonitoring Initiative (FNBI) is an innovative study specific to First Nations that assesses exposure to environmental contaminants on a national scale. The ESU received a mandate for the study in Resolutions 49/2009 and 34/2010. The study collects and analyses blood and urine samples for the presence of a pre-determined list of chemical contaminants. The study will provide baseline data for future inquiries on the health impacts of chemicals in the environment and will allow researchers to track trends over time. The study methods were designed to ensure First Nation participation, confidentiality and control over the data and its use.



In late 2010, the ESU launched a FNBI pilot project and sampled blood and urine from 252 participants in two selected communities in Manitoba. Samples were sent to the *Institut national de santé publique du Québec* for analysis. The ESU expects to receive and disseminate the results of this pilot project this October, 2011.

In the summer of 2011, the ESU intends to launch the national project to include 550 participants from 14 randomly selected communities south of the 60th parallel. Participation in the study is strictly voluntary and requires the informed consent of each participant. Before samples are collected, the ESU provides participants with an overview presentation, information pamphlets and a consent form which details the purpose of the study and how data will be used and kept anonymous. The full-scale project plan/methodology has received ethical approval from the Health Canada-Public Health Agency Research Ethics Board (REB).

The ESU has had several opportunities to present the goals and objectives of this initiative to First Nation leadership. Presentations have also been made to academia. The FNBI is an example of what is achievable through partnership and direct work with First Nations and will be used as a case study in best practices.

First Nations Food, Nutrition and Environment Study

Since 2008, the ESU has undertaken the First Nations Food, Nutrition and Environment Study (FNFNES) with First Nation communities to increase the understanding of traditional food safety. The FNFNES is a total diet study which collects data on nutrition and diet, and tests traditional foods for environmental contaminants, drinking water for trace metals, surface water for pharmaceuticals, and hair samples for the presence of mercury as an indicator of exposure. The FNFNES is conducted in equal partnership with the University of Northern British Columbia and Université de Montréal. The study was mandated by Resolution 30/2007.

The FNFNES is intended to be implemented in 100 communities across the eight AFN regions south of 60 over the course of 10 years. The study began in British Columbia and a regional report has been released. In Manitoba, data collection is complete and food and water samples are currently being analyzed. Field work will begin in Ontario this fall and will be carried out over a two-year period. All communities in the study have been randomly selected with participation being voluntary.

Results from the BC component of the study showed that food security is an issue. However, it was found that those who included traditional food in their diet are healthier than those that depend entirely on market food. Analysis of food and water samples did not reveal any health concerns in terms of contaminant levels.

The ESU has made several presentations on the FNFNES project to First Nation audiences across Canada. The ESU will continue to promote this project as an example of a partnership that responds to the needs of First Nations.

First Nations Environmental Health Innovation Network

The ESU promotes First Nation-led environmental research through the First Nations Environmental Health Innovation Network (FNEHIN). FNEHIN aims to assist First Nations in identifying, researching and solving environmental health problems by providing relevant information and supporting partnerships in a network



approach that builds capacity, strengthens institutions and promotes self-reliance. FNEHIN provides First Nation communities better opportunities to lead environmental health research by highlighting opportunities, facilitating partnerships and providing access to materials that may assist in decision-making. The FNEHIN also offers the ability to improve knowledge about environmental health issues by posting research, documents, news, events, and videos online.

Since becoming the secretariat of the FNEHIN in 2010, the ESU has rebranded, re-launched, and updated the content of the FNEHIN website. In 2010-11, the ESU held a meeting with national, provincial, territorial, and community organizations to identify major First Nation environmental health concerns. Moving forward, the ESU will focus on promotional efforts through various forums, gatherings and events to develop the FNEHIN. The ESU will strive to make the FNEHIN website a one-stop access point for important and relevant health information and resources for First Nation communities. The FNEHIN website can be visited at www.fnehin.ca.

National First Nations Environmental Contaminants Program

The AFN is the Program Champion of the National First Nations Environmental Contaminants Program (NFNECP), which is a collaborative research program between the AFN and the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch of Health Canada. The NFNECP is designed to assist First Nation communities that wish to assess the extent of community exposure to environmental contaminants and the potential for associated risk to their health and well-being. The program focuses on building and enabling research capacity in First Nation communities by promoting the value of First Nation traditional views on the role of the environment in achieving optimal health and well-being.

Moving forward, the ESU is committed to providing continuing support to the NFNECP and building upon strong partnerships and collaborative relationships with program partners and First Nation communities. The ESU will continue to be active as a member of the steering committee and will be conducting a program review in 2011-12.

Environmental Protection

ESU activities in environmental protection focus on the conservation, preservation and maintenance of the environment and its capacity to provide resources for future generations. It is important to stress the need for environmental protection and biodiversity maintenance in the face of ever increasing climate change challenges, growing population pressures and competing resource-use. Environmental Protection activities focus on four main areas: climate change, mining, control of mercury emissions, and nuclear waste management.

Climate Change Mitigation (domestic)

First Nations are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and will be faced with a number of climate-related challenges that may pose serious threats to community health and well-being. The ESU has called for the Government of Canada to implement programs focused on First Nation climate change adaptation and preparedness. In an effort to help First Nations prepare for climate change impacts, the ESU works to establish adaptive capacity in First Nation communities by improving education, awareness and communications at all levels of adaptation programming from policy to implementation.



The climate change portfolio is mandated by Resolutions 82/2006 (*The Impacts of Climate Change on Indigenous Peoples in Northern Canada and the Circumpolar World*) and 61/2006 (*The Impacts of Climate Change on First Nations Communities*). In response to the mandates set by Chiefs-in-Assembly, the ESU completed a climate change gap analysis which identified gaps in federal and provincial climate change adaptation programming and provided realistic recommendations for the Government of Canada to improve its climate change programs.

Pending application approvals for new opportunities, the ESU intends to proceed with a climate change program directed towards communications, education and capacity building. The ESU will continue to support First Nation communities on climate change education and initiatives into the future, including areas such as carbon financing.

Climate Change Mitigation (international)

Important environmental decisions, frameworks, principles, and guidelines are emerging on the international level. These international decisions and principles have the potential to directly impact First Nations in Canada. The ESU is engaged in matters related to the Kyoto Protocol, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and Rio+20. When possible, the ESU participates with Canadian international delegations and other stakeholders at various fora to advance First Nation interests and concerns in international negotiations, conferences and meetings. Funding to attend international meetings is often an issue.

Global Mercury Negotiations

The ESU is engaged in ongoing work regarding the impact of mercury on First Nations. Currently, the United Nations Environment Program has created a Global Mercury Partnership to negotiate a Global Mercury Convention. The ESU has participated in meetings and teleconferences with Environment Canada and other national Aboriginal organizations to discuss the international negotiations and the impacts of mercury on First Nations. The AFN will continue to be involved in the development of a global mercury regime and will advocate for First Nations on the Canadian delegation using the example of mercury poisoning in the Grassy Narrows First Nation in Ontario as an example of why Canada and First Nations must be involved.

Mining

In 2002, the Canadian government amended the Fisheries Act's Metal Mining Effluent Regulations (MMER) to allow the reclassification of lakes and other freshwater bodies as "tailings impoundment areas." This legislative amendment opened the door for the government to approve the use of pristine lakes and surface waters as tailings ponds for toxic mine effluent. Since 2002, the practice of impounding deleterious substances in lakes has resulted in the destruction of more than 12 fish-bearing bodies of water and has impacted First Nation treaty rights and the right to food, social and ceremonial fisheries. The ESU supports First Nations whose rights are being violated by this practice.

Nuclear Waste Management

The ESU is working to ensure that First Nations potentially impacted by the siting of a deep geological depository for nuclear fuel waste, both directly and indirectly, receive sufficient support to make free and informed decisions. In 2010-11, the ESU developed and distributed fact sheets and backgrounders to First



Nations in regions most impacted by the nuclear waste siting process and has attended several meetings where the process was explained.

The Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) recently announced that four communities have passed the initial screening process to host a facility to store Canada's nuclear fuel waste currently being stored at reactor sites. This screening process is preliminary and does not commit any of these communities to housing nuclear fuel waste or proceeding to the next stage of the assessment process. Each community may proceed with further technical and social assessment processes if they remain interested in hosting a waste facility. The ESU will continue to support these communities and other First Nations by providing information needed to make informed decisions.

The AFN held a workshop at Nakoda Lodge on traditional decision-making and consensus building to gain input and advice on how traditional decision-making and consensus-building in First Nation communities can be applied to a modern setting. The ESU also attended several Elders and Youth forums, as well as Aboriginal liaison training, sponsored by Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO). The results of these activities will be used to develop a toolkit for First Nations on traditional decision-making.

Natural Resources Management

Natural resources management activities in the ESU largely focus on balancing the use of forests and forest products, lands, wildlife, and aquatic resources with the capacity of the environment to provide for future generations. Natural resources management includes programs aimed at facilitating informed decision making as well as considerations regarding the impacts of activities on ecosystem resources. The ESU's work focuses on forestry, mining, wildlife protection, and fisheries. In addition, the ESU is exploring opportunities in other areas, including parks and protected areas management.

Species at Risk

The National Aboriginal Council on Species at Risk (NACOSAR) was established in 2005 to provide advice to the Minister of Environment on the implementation of the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA). The AFN's two environment portfolio holders, Regional Chief Eric Morris and Regional Chief Roger Augustine, sit on NACOSAR. Regional Chief Morris is currently co-chair of the Council and is assisted by an ESU staff member who represents the AFN on NACOSAR's Policy and Planning Committee.

The ESU is committed to providing relevant information on the SARA to assist First Nations across Canada. Early in its engagement in NACOSAR, the ESU developed a SARA Toolkit, which is currently being updated. It is expected that the Toolkit will be distributed to all First Nation communities in 2011.

The ESU has responded to a number of potential listing requests from Canadian Wildlife Services and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. Most recently, the ESU provided comments on the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) submission of 36 species assessments to the Governor in Council. The ESU has completed reviewing Canada's draft policy suite on species at risk and forwarded its recommendations to Canada on how to incorporate First Nation interests in the policies.



Forestry

The forestry component of the ESU is involved in several areas of concern, including forest leadership, carbon finance, forest biomass energy, and forest conservation. The ESU is actively developing a forestry program to advance First Nation interests in forest protection and environmentally-sustainable development. The program under development seeks to holistically address all issues of natural resource development both within the forests and outside, using an eco-system approach to promote responsible long-term development and sustainable management.

In March 2011, the ESU and the National Aboriginal Forestry Association (NAFA) jointly hosted a National Forum on First Nations Forest Land Stewardship, as mandated in Resolution 37/2010. Participants at the meeting suggested that First Nations promote forestry excellence through a comprehensive natural resources institute capable of helping First Nations make informed development decisions. The ESU believes that an institute would facilitate the smart growth of new First Nation industries, would assist First Nations in taking a leadership role on sustainable resource management and extraction, and would provide a model in line with international principles set forth in the Convention on Biological Diversity and United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The ESU will continue to scope out and plan for the creation of an institute to fulfill these goals.

Support and direction for the carbon finance program is provided in Resolution 37/2010. The carbon finance program is designed to build First Nation capacity to address a growing interest in cap and trade as well as carbon finance regimes. This interest includes access to and removal of forest biomass for energy generation and ownership of any carbon credits or extra value that may be related to forests located on treaty lands.

The program aims at building First Nation capacity in carbon finance through advocacy efforts to ensure provincial carbon finance schemes accommodate, adhere to and respect Aboriginal title and rights with direction provided by a First Nation Ad Hoc Working Group on Carbon Finance and Clean Energy. Further efforts include the development of a unified position on clean energy and carbon finance which conforms to First Nation environmental values, as well as the development of a First Nation specific carbon offset and green technology fund and educational tools on carbon finance.

The ESU has scoped the potential for future green energy projects and is seeking opportunities to promote renewable energy sources on reserve. Planning will continue throughout 2011-12.

Convention on Biological Diversity and Access and Benefit Sharing of Genetic Resources

The ESU is actively involved in the negotiation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). In 2010-11, the ESU worked to fulfill the mandates of Resolutions 38/2010 (*First Nations Sovereignty over Biological and Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge*) and 35/2010 (*Joint Development of Domestic Access and Benefit Sharing Policy*). The two resolutions call for the assertion of First Nation sovereignty over their biological and genetic resources and traditional knowledge, and unequivocally state that the Government of Canada should work with First Nations to design a policy supporting that position.

In line with Resolution 38/2010, the ESU has been monitoring international negotiations on the implementation of the CBD's provisions related to access and benefit sharing of genetic resources, traditional knowledge, and Canada's long-term commitments. The ESU has called for the inclusion of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples into the *Nagoya Protocol on Access and*



Benefit Sharing of Genetic Resources. Within the scope of Resolution 35/2010, the ESU has continually monitored Canada's plans for CBD implementation and advocated for First Nation positions. The ESU will continue to monitor the proceedings of the Convention and advocate for the meaningful engagement of First Nations on issues concerning biological diversity and access and benefit sharing.

Internal Coordination within AFN on Advancing Environmental and Economic Interests

Environmental topics are often multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary. The ESU works closely with the Economic Partnerships Secretariat and the Housing and Infrastructure Secretariat to effectively coordinate multiple approaches to complex, multifaceted issues to advance environmental and economic interests. In February 2011, the Secretariats met to plan a path forward to effectively and collaboratively address the complex issues facing First Nations. The ESU aims to take a proactive approach to holistically address certain environmental concerns. The ESU actively supports other initiatives and will contribute an environmental perspective to other units as requested. This includes the International Indigenous Summit on Energy and Mining and the Holmes on Homes Project.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The ESU will continue to cultivate new opportunities to promote the leadership of First Nations and will address emerging environmental issues as they arise. The ESU anticipates the following activities and outcomes within the next year:

- Continued involvement in activities related to the Convention on Biological Diversity and Nagoya Protocol, including continued advocacy for First Nation positions on access and benefit sharing.
- Implementation of the Biomonitoring Initiative, including sampling of 550 voluntary participants from 14 randomly selected communities across Canada.
- Release of the Biomonitoring Initiative pilot project results.
- Updated chemical fact sheets to help First Nations reduce exposure to chemicals.
- Ongoing work to secure opportunities to improve First Nation preparedness for climate change and its associated impacts.
- Continued involvement in climate change programs.
- Expansion of the First Nations Environmental Health Innovation Network to new First Nation members and partners.
- Release of toolkits and guides on environmental health and toxics concerns, issues, and research.
- Presentation of final First Nations Food, Nutrition and Environment Study (FNFNES) reports for First Nations in Manitoba.
- Presentation of the First Nations Indoor Air Study report to Swan Lake First Nation, MB.
- Implementation of FNFNES in Ontario.
- Steps forward to form an institute to promote First Nation leadership in natural resource industries.
- Release of a report of AFN's promotion and involvement on the National First Nations Environmental Contaminants Program, along with a review of the program and a prospectus showcasing past results.
- Continued collaboration with the Nuclear Waste Management Organization.
- Ongoing advocacy for First Nation positions on Species at Risk.



ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIPS

The AFN Economic Partnerships Secretariat addresses several policy areas that support economic growth and community development. These include the broad categories of economic development, labour force and human resources development, connectivity, trade relations, and building resource revenue options. In the last year, resolutions have focused on furthering work on economic and trade cooperation and taxation issues.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

Economic Development

Since the 2010 Annual General Assembly (AGA), the National Chief has spoken at a number of events and meetings in support of First Nation economies. This included a keynote address at the March 2011 Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada (PDAC) convention held in Toronto, the largest mining event in the world with over 27,000 delegates. In addition, the National Chief promoted First Nation economic growth at the BC Alternative Energy Conference in February, and economic cooperation and trade partnerships in a keynote address at RES 2011, the Native American economic development conference in March. Interviews with the Business News Network, Canada West Foundation and other national media have also provided opportunities to promote First Nation economic involvement and responsible development.

The Chiefs Committee on Economic Development (CCED) met during the 2010 AGA and the December 2010 Special Chiefs Assembly. If possible, a meeting will be arranged during the July 2011 AGA. The proposed agenda will include funding for Secretariat activity, economic cooperation, trade, academic projects, special projects on labour force training, and policy options for CCED consideration.

At the December 2010 SCA, the Secretariat coordinated side events on taxation and gaming, in conjunction with CCED meetings or CCED member involvement. Meeting summaries are available by contacting the Economic Partnerships Secretariat.

As announced to the First Nation leadership at the 2010 AGA and SCA, the AFN is planning to host its first-ever International Indigenous Summit on Energy and Mining on June 27-29, 2011 in Niagara Falls, Ontario. The AFN has planned the event in collaboration with the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI). The British Columbia First Nations Council on Energy and Mining and the Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers have also contributed to the agenda. The AFN is anticipating approximately 600 delegates. The event will include an Indigenous Caucus on Energy, discussion on a draft energy strategy to support First Nations, and a report on a virtual institute to support First Nation interests in exploring opportunities in the energy and mining sector. Overall the event will include three Indigenous caucus sessions, 20 workshop sessions, four courses, two cooperative roundtables, four short courses, and three tours. At the time of writing this report, more than 80 speakers and presenters have been confirmed, in addition to 20 industry sponsors.

In follow-up to the Statement of Partnership signed with the National Centre for American Indian Enterprise Development (NCAIED) at the 2010 AGA, the AFN and NCAIED have continued to develop joint projects. The four primary projects are focused on trade education, information development, scoping out trade



policy, and a trade model. As part of the AFN-led projects, the Secretariat has drafted three key papers on an inventory of programs and initiatives to support trade activity, a fact finding paper, and an overview of existing trade agreements.

In February, the National Chief met with His Excellency Zhang Junsai, the new Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Canada. The National Chief invited the Ambassador to address the International Indigenous Summit on Energy and Mining and the 2011 AGA. The National Chief and the Ambassador spoke of the need to begin exploring cultural exchanges, economic and trade cooperation, trade missions and creating more awareness about each other's nations. The AFN has planned for a side event to further explore a trade mission to China and a trade mission of businesses representatives from China to First Nations. The AFN has continued to work toward a trade mission and exchange with China. The AFN postponed the initial proposed dates in May due to the federal election, and is now focused on October 2011.

First Nation Labour Force and Human Resources Development

On May 17-18, 2011, the First Nation Technical Working Group on Human Resources Development met to resume activity following the initial transition period from the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy (AHRDS) to the new five-year Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS). The working group was provided an opportunity to brief the National Chief and the AFN Chief Executive Officer on their perspectives on the new strategy. The working group discussed issues around the transition, many of which related to ensuring that the importance of human resources and labour force development is made known in government and industry circles. In addition, operational matters and regional office relationships were noted as a key challenge for some First Nation agreement holders. The working group also held a teleconference call on March 31, 2011.

The AFN was a partner on two national projects funded by the Aboriginal Skills and Training Strategic Investment Fund (ASTSIF) since January 1, 2010. The objectives of the projects were to build partnering efforts and new relationships with sector councils and bridge cooperation more directly to the First Nation ASET holders. The funding was a result of the federal government's Economic Action Plan to stimulate the Canadian economy out of the current recession. Both projects ended on March 31, 2011.

The AFN and the Railway Association of Canada's First Nation Railway Training and Employment Project had 35 First Nation students enrolled in railway conductor courses held at colleges in Vancouver, Winnipeg and Thunder Bay. Both CN and CP have pledged to interview all graduates. In addition, a Railroad to Success training program was conducted by the Prince George Nechako Aboriginal Employment and Training Association (PGNAETA). Railway Career Awareness kits for ASET offices have also been developed, in addition to A Best Practices Guide for Recruitment and Retention of First Nation Railway Employees. A website is available at www.yourlifeontrack.ca.

The AFN and Mining Industry Human Resource Sector Council (MiHR) have developed a Ready to Mine: Mining Essentials Training Program for Aboriginal Peoples. The AFN, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), Métis National Council (MNC), the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), members of industry, and educators have also been involved in the development of the training standards. The AFN held a lead role in facilitating the research and design of the Trainer's Guides and Learner's Workbooks. A two-day Train the Trainer Workshop was held at the AFN on October 14-15, 2010. Three pilot sites operated with a total of 35 students, located in Hazelton, B.C., Marathon, Ontario and Lake of the Woods, Ontario. The 12-week pilot site courses concluded at the end of February, 2011. There were a total of 22 graduates.



A number of mining companies have committed to hiring the graduates. The program was assessed and validated by the development committee, along with trainers from the pilot sites, during a two-day meeting in Toronto in March, 2011. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) has approved funding for Phase II of the Ready to Mine “Mining Essentials” Project. The training manuals will be also be translated into French.

Both the railway and mining projects were featured as two of the most successful national ASTSIF projects at the HRSDC “Knowledge Circle” Conference in Montreal in January, 2011. As well, the Railway Association of Canada (RAC) highlighted the AFN-RAC project at the Railway Government Interface (RGI) national meeting held in Ottawa on May 17, 2011.

First Nations E-Community

Resolution No. 16/2008 mandated the AFN to seek support for new and existing initiatives for the continued development of integrated Information Communications Technology (ICT) services at the community and regional levels until a comprehensive framework is in place. Resolution No. 54/2009 also urged the AFN to advocate for high-speed broadband internet connections in all First Nation communities.

On November 22-24, 2010, the AFN coordinated an ICT National Working Group meeting with First Nation ICT specialists which also included presentations from federal officials responsible for broadband infrastructure and connectivity initiatives. The meeting discussions focused on the further refinement and development of a First Nation connectivity strategy focused on First Nations infrastructure driven by community needs and requirements, immediate access to managed and scalable network services, meeting community ICT human resources and labour requirements, and ensuring First Nation ICT is sustainable through ongoing core funding. In follow-up to the meeting, the AFN has developed three discussions papers focused on geographic and organizational challenges to meeting First Nation ICT infrastructure needs, First Nation broadband operations, maintenance and sustainability, and a draft paper on First Nations IT labour force and human capacity. The working group has established linkages regarding information management initiatives and First Nation connectivity requirements, and received presentations from the First Nations Statistical Institute (FNSI) and the First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC). The working group met by video and teleconference call in the spring to continue their input toward these initiatives.

The AFN continues to communicate the need for greater attention to First Nation community connectivity requirements through the distribution of regional e-profiles at key events and the development of a First Nations E-Community brochure that further communicates the First Nations E-Community concept and First Nations connectivity priorities.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Pending confirmation of funding, coordination of a National First Nations ICT Working Group meeting.
- Continued focus on sectoral collaboration with health, housing and infrastructure and education portfolios within the AFN.
- Further the development of a First Nations E-Community strategy.
- Revisions and implementation of the AFN workplan on human resources development.
- Finalize report on the International Indigenous Summit on Energy and Mining and a follow-up plan.
- Continue to coordinate activity for economic trade initiatives, research and proposals, where feasible, for trade missions with NCAIED and China business communities.
- Provide updates on the projects with MiHR and RAC.



HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

MANDATE

Resolution No. 81/2008 called for a direct and inclusive role for First Nations in the evaluation of the 1996 On-Reserve Housing Policy. The evaluation process includes a critical look at the manner in which the policies, programs and activities of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) were devised; the degree of First Nation consultation and influence in the developmental process; regional variations of interpretation of policy intent and decision-making; and that the evaluation process be seen as the starting point of meaningful participation in all future activities in the renovation of the 1996 Policy in preparation for the next Treasury Board Submission and its accompanying Memorandum to Cabinet.

Resolution No. 14/2007 called for the recognition of First Nation Governments to manage and control housing and infrastructure programs from a local, tribal council, Treaty organization, or provincial/territorial organization structure. It also called for the transition of management and control of all housing matters from the federal government to First Nations, with an appropriate First Nation network of support, including national and/or regional First Nation 'Centres of Excellence' that are local, territorial and regional in scope and be made available to ensure an adequate First Nation capacity development framework.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

Evaluation of the 1996 On-Reserve Housing Policy

INAC and CMHC, with the engagement of the AFN Chiefs Committee on Housing and Infrastructure (CCoHI) and the Technical Working Group (TWG), actively participated in a two-year process of reviewing the *Evaluation of the 1996 On-Reserve Housing Policy*, its programs, activities and initiatives, and assessing the need for change.

Resolution No. 81/2008 was put forward in an effort to ensure that the policy evaluation process, inclusive of planning, contracting, data collection and reporting, respect the authority and jurisdiction of First Nations and work with First Nations and their duly-authorized representatives and organizations to accomplish this effort through regional, territorial and local First Nation initiatives. It also resolved that there be direct involvement of First Nations in the management and delivery of the evaluation process in First Nation communities and that any external consultants engaged in these activities be First Nations in origin and agreed to by First Nations and their duly-authorized representatives and organizations in the process.

A final draft report has been completed and has been made available by the AFN following its posting on the INAC Audit and Evaluation Branch website at http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/pub/ae/index_e.html.

The report recommendations have been agreed to by the Director General of INAC's Community Infrastructure Branch.



Recommendations:

1. Develop a policy statement building on the 1996 Policy that lays out objectives and is flexible enough in its application to meet the different needs of First Nation communities.
2. Work to clarify roles and responsibilities and strengthen accountabilities.
3. Advance First Nation capacity-building initiatives in order to better manage and monitor housing stock, advance local First Nation operational control, and to achieve the minimum standards of the National Building Code to ensure long-lasting and environmentally-sustainable housing units.
4. Work to ensure houses are built to address overcrowding and deterioration and to maximize the use of resources to alleviate current and future housing pressures.

A Management Response and Action Plan based on evaluation recommendations has not been provided to the AFN and no attempts have been made to clearly define or articulate an INAC or CMHC position to First Nations.

INAC Community Infrastructure Branch has bluntly informed the AFN that they have no plans to respond to the acknowledged recommendation of the Evaluation Process other than to better clarify roles and responsibilities. Neither INAC nor CMHC have indicated they will work to strengthen accountabilities to First Nations on their programs, activities or initiatives.

The Holmes Group Project

An initial meeting between AFN staff and the Holmes Group (Holmes on Homes) took place at the AFN Planning and Dialogue Forum in March, 2010. Discussion explored the potential for a joint project that would identify a First Nation community to pilot activity in the area of Green Community Design and Planning. This “green” focus would look at issues of infrastructure, utilities, land use, new home construction, existing housing renovation, and community buildings such as schools and band offices.

The project will demonstrate the necessary actions that lead to heightened environmental responsibility, focus on energy efficiency and cost effectiveness, and meeting the First Nation continuum of needs. It will demonstrate holistic green community planning and design.

The AFN has actively facilitated a process that engages First Nations in project selection, design and implementation. The AFN website will be used as a vehicle of communication to chronicle and document the process and its features so that all First Nations may undertake similar activity. The National Chief and Mike Holmes announced at the December 2010 Special Chiefs Assembly that the pilot project would take place in Atikameksheng First Nation in Northern Ontario.

The Holmes Group has also agreed to assist the AFN in developing the Centre of Excellence defined in Resolution 14/2007. Their assistance will focus on defining the parameters of the First Nation regulatory environment and the operational controls necessary to achieve green and sustainable First Nation community design. Project outcomes will include the Green and Sustainable Community Planning Tool, the Centre of Excellence and a Green and Sustainable Housing Standard for First Nation Housing. Discussions are also underway to create a First Nation Housing Design Challenge with Douglas Cardinal as lead architect.



Habitat for Humanity

The AFN has recently renewed discussions with Habitat for Humanity on how they can begin to assist First Nations in overcoming some of the pressing housing problems.

Habitat for Humanity (HH) approached the AFN with the objective of making its program available to on-reserve citizens. HH currently has about 20 projects underway for First Nation citizens off reserve and a few projects in First Nation communities, with the Alderville First Nation in Ontario being the most recent.

The HH has undertaken to establish a National Leadership Council comprised of Canadian executives and Canadians of influence to raise Habitat for Humanity Canada's national profile and generate increased funds to help serve more families in need of affordable housing in Canada and around the world.

The National Chief has been invited to participate on the National Leadership Council to help raise the profile of Habitat for Humanity and this will be considered as part of efforts to advance a possible Statement of Partnership upon review by the National Executive.

In 2007, Habitat for Humanity approached the AFN to establish a relationship based on HH criteria, which clearly stated that families must have incomes that do not enable them to secure conventional financing from a bank or other traditional lending institution, but sufficient for them to make the monthly payments required on the no-profit, no-interest Habitat mortgage. Discussions with HH explored potential changes to the criteria in order to assist First Nation families in the greatest need – those without any reliable source of income. At that time, HH decided not to accommodate the changes.

Habitat for Humanity has since expressed an interest in modifying the criteria, as previously discussed, and a willingness to look at multi-unit buildings in First Nation communities that reflect HH criteria.

World Indigenous Housing Conference

The AFN has been invited to join the 2012 World Indigenous Housing Conference Committee, a select group of knowledgeable, influential Indigenous housing leaders from Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States. The Committee will play a crucial role in developing a world-class program for the conference and will meet primarily by teleconference once a month.

The World Indigenous Housing Conference – *Sharing Our Stories; Sharing Our Successes* – will be held June 11-15, 2012 in Vancouver, B.C. Hosted by the Aboriginal Housing Management Association (AHMA), the conference is expected to attract more than 1,000 Indigenous housing leaders, politicians, policy makers, corporate leaders and researchers. It will be the first event to bring international leaders in Indigenous housing together to learn from best practices around the world, build a global network and examine common themes facing Indigenous housing providers. Visit www.indigenous2012.com for more information.

Access to affordable housing is a crucial factor in securing socio-economic equality for Indigenous people. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2007, recognized housing as a fundamental right for Indigenous people.



The AHMA has defined several key goals for the World Indigenous Housing Conference:

- Showcase best practices from around the world in on-reserve and off-reserve Indigenous housing;
- Profile BC's affordable Indigenous housing as a model others can follow;
- Bring Indigenous housing providers together to teach and learn from each other's successes;
- Share tools and models for addressing challenges; and,
- Build an international network of Indigenous housing providers sustained, in part, by an online network/blog following the conference.

Any input, such as First Nation best practices and stories, can be channeled through the AFN Housing and Infrastructure Secretariat.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Investigate the potential for a Housing and Water Policy Forum that will bring together First Nations and their duly-mandated organizations with federal departments and agencies, industry, professional associations and technical service providers. This policy forum will be a critical ingredient to providing a First Nation viewpoint on the revitalization and renovation of the 1996 On Reserve Housing Policy.
- Continue to build on the AFN web portal to host an integrated Housing and Infrastructure Centre of Excellence.
- Utilize the Holmes Group project to generate a Green and Sustainable Community Planning Tool and define all available tools, models and best practices that will assist a First Nation in implementation of the plan.
- Build on the work of Ontario First Nations Technical Services Corporation in the redevelopment of its *Ontario First Nations Illustrated Housing Code* into a Green and Sustainable Housing Standard. This to be done in conjunction with the AFN/Holmes Group/Atikameksheng pilot project.



FISHERIES

The Environmental Stewardship Unit (ESU) Fisheries Program has a broad mandate to support First Nations in multiple areas related to fisheries and aquatic resources. The Fisheries Program supports First Nations in creating, maintaining and managing vibrant coastal and in-land fisheries which are central to community socio-economic well-being and traditional cultures. The Fisheries Program is advised by the National Fisheries Committee (NFC) and works closely with First Nation communities and technicians, academic institutions and government partners to implement the AFN National Fisheries Strategy.

The National Fisheries Strategy (NFS) engages on a broad spectrum of legislative, policy and key program sectors within the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) to inform and communicate technical implications to First Nations through joint dialogue. These important dialogue processes also inform government where they must consult with First Nations on matters that can impact Aboriginal and Treaty rights. In addition, the NFS also supports and promotes sustainable First Nation fisheries, aquatic and ocean resource activities that can open doors to explore new innovative economic opportunities.

Over the next year, the Fisheries Program will implement key components of the NFS related to aquaculture, aquatic invasive species, habitat management, labeling and marketing, legislative and policy review, and Species at Risk. The Fisheries Program will continue to support First Nations in maintaining and improving fisheries access, managing aquatic and ocean resources, and cultivating new opportunities to enrich First Nation communities through aquatic-based initiatives.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

Aboriginal Knowledge in Management

Aboriginal Knowledge informs strong fisheries and aquatic resource management decisions. However, due to various legal issues related to intellectual property, Aboriginal Knowledge is not adequately protected from misappropriation, misuse or theft. The Fisheries Program advocates for respectful use of Aboriginal Knowledge in research and decision-making. In 2010-11, the Program undertook several activities to increase dialogue on protocols regarding the use of Aboriginal Knowledge, traditional governance and protection. The Fisheries Program has drafted a pamphlet on Aboriginal Knowledge use in management and will provide ongoing support to First Nations seeking to develop protocols and measures to assert ownership of Aboriginal Knowledge and control of its access and use.

Aquaculture

Aquaculture is an important emerging issue for First Nations throughout the country. First Nations must balance the economic promise of aquaculture with potential detrimental impacts to fisheries habitat and aquatic carrying capacity. The Fisheries Program is working to establish a National Aquaculture Working Group that can facilitate dialogue to support First Nation input on the National Aquaculture Strategic Action Plan (NASAPI) and other national aquaculture-related initiatives. The AFN has drafted Terms of Reference for an Aquaculture Working Group at the yearly NFC meeting in Halifax. The Fisheries Program intends to convene the Working Group in 2011-12.



Aquatic Animal Health Program

The National Aquatic Animal Health Program (NAAHP) responds to the Aquatic Animal Health (AAH) regulations which require anyone in care of fish or other aquatic animals to report suspected disease. Importers, exporters, Food, Social and Ceremonial (FSC) fisheries near aquaculture farms, and those engaged in aquaculture or hatcheries may be impacted by the regulations.

AAH regulations can contribute to the protection of First Nation rights by maintaining healthy fish stocks. However, First Nations have expressed concern regarding compensation for loss of wild stocks due to disease and consultation on AAH regulations.

The AFN works with the Canadian Food and Inspection Agency (CFIA) to provide direction and analysis on the NAAHP in terms of First Nations' awareness of the regulations, perspectives and rights. The AFN produced an analysis paper, delivered presentations and issued a survey in 2010-11.

Aquatic Invasive Species

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) refers to exotic non-native species that disrupt local ecosystems and threaten biodiversity in aquatic systems. The incidence and range of aquatic invasive species has increased as a result of shipping, irrigation, agriculture, and aquaculture practices; climate change; and interconnectedness between global shipping lanes. Prominent examples of invasive species include zebra mussels and sea lampreys in the Great Lakes, Asian Carp in the Mississippi River System and Green Crab in Atlantic Canada and the Scotian Shelf region. The Fisheries Program is preparing an initiative to address AIS with First Nations as part of the multi-year NFS.

Co-Management

The concept of co-management has been identified as an important component to the relationship between First Nations and DFO and to the success of aquatic resources management. However, First Nations and the Government of Canada struggle to find a common definition for co-management and have been unable to reach agreement on best practices for implementation. In 2010-11, the Fisheries Program worked with First Nations and Canada towards a mutually-acceptable definition, which included the identification of numerous responsibilities and duties related to fisheries management. Although the NFC and DFO were unable to reach consensus on a co-management definition, these activities have created an opportunity for the Fisheries Program to offer "steps forward" to DFO to respectfully negotiate co-management terms.

Habitat Management

The Fisheries Program offers ongoing habitat policy advice to DFO and engages directly in inland habitat issues through the Aboriginal Inland Habitat Program (AIHP). Through the AIHP program, the Fisheries Program offers high level analysis of emerging habitat issues and coordinates a National Habitat Working Group (NHWG) to address issues of habitat protection and conservation.

First Nations are interested in looking at other partnerships and habitat project source funding that will assist groups to develop innovative resource habitat management tools. This could include direct involvement with the Major Projects Management Office, conservation and protection organizations, provincial partners, academic institutions, and the establishment of Environmental Habitat Monitoring



Program related to fish habitat. The Fisheries Program will assess possibilities for new partnerships and facilitate new relationships where appropriate.

Labeling and Marketing

In the modern green economy, market structures are evolving to give preference to sustainable and responsible products. Certain products certified as sustainable and equitable have been highly successful; however, current high-profile certified labels for sustainable wild-capture and farmed fish are ill-fitted to First Nation products due to various economic and social factors.

The Fisheries Program advances the idea of a labeling consortium to help First Nations create national criteria to establish regional and local Aboriginal environmentally-sustainable labeling. The proposed consortium will be made of local and regional labels and logos already established or newly established by First Nations and will set a process to verify products as Aboriginal in nature, character or origin. Furthermore, the proposed consortium will provide a forum for First Nations to share best practices, business advice, marketing skills, and to coordinate marketing plans to increase First Nation market share while promoting First Nation products.

The Fisheries Program has drafted a basic governance model for the proposed consortium. The draft governance plan seeks to allow First Nation member organizations to build consensus and adopt non-binding decisions to advance First Nation fisheries products while simultaneously promoting the independence and unique character of each regional fishery. The Fisheries Program proposes to be active in creating and launching the consortium. The ESU is prepared to serve as the Secretariat of the Consortium to facilitate its establishment. The ESU will step down from this role following the incorporation and full launch of the Consortium; however, the AFN proposes to remain a part of the Consortium and participate in ad hoc working groups and permanent committees as appropriate.

Legislative and Policy Review

The Fisheries Program conducts regular legislative and policy analyses and reviews on matters directly related to or potentially affecting fisheries. In 2010-11, the Fisheries Program conducted policy reviews and suggested enhancements on issues related to major projects approvals, environmental assessments, and the Metal Mining Effluent Regulations. Fisheries staff regularly monitor Parliamentary activity to inform First Nations of emerging legislation and is preparing for possible revisions to the *Fisheries Act*.

Marine Protected Areas

A Marine Protected Area (MPA) is a designated aquatic conservation zone in which human activities are limited to some degree. Currently, MPAs comprise 1% of Canada's aquatic jurisdiction. However, the Government of Canada has internationally committed to designating 10% of Canadian aquatic spaces as MPAs by 2012. DFO will begin identifying potential sites for MPAs in 2011-12.

First Nations have expressed concern that MPAs may prevent traditional fishing activities and encompass traditional fisheries. The Fisheries Program will advocate for mutually-beneficial dialogue between DFO and First Nations to encourage the establishment of MPAs that complement First Nation rights and interests. The Fisheries Program has created informational materials for First Nations that may be engaged in, affected by, or concerned about MPA designations, which will be distributed by the end of 2011.



National Engagement Groups and Meetings

The Fisheries Program facilitates various national Aboriginal/DFO Working Groups associated with the Aboriginal Inland Habitat Program (AIHP) and the Aboriginal Aquatic Resource and Oceans Management Program (AAROM). These working groups provide a forum for dialogue exchange and for AFN to solicit feedback and direction from First Nation communities. Specifically, the AFN coordinates five groups: the National Policy Analysis Group (NPAG) Aboriginal Inland Habitat Program (AIHP); NPAG Aboriginal Aquatic Resource and Oceans Management (AAROM); the National Habitat Working Group (NHWG); the National Fisheries Committee (NFC); and the National Fisheries Task Force (NFTF). Additionally, the Fisheries Program co-hosted the National Aboriginal Fisheries Forum on “Best Practices for Sustainability and Economic Success.”

The AAROM and AIHP NPAGs are technical policy forums for First Nation technicians to discuss, analyze and suggest enhancements for national fisheries policy and legislation. Specifically, the AAROM NPAG considers marine matters and the AIHP NPAG considers in-land habitat issues. Each NPAG meets once a year along with DFO representatives in order to foster a constructive dialogue directly with policy makers. In 2010-11, the AAROM NPAG met in Vancouver to discuss issues related to Aboriginal Knowledge protection, co-management, economic opportunities, aquaculture, and SARA review. The AIHP NPAG met in Wendake, Quebec to discuss issues related to environmental assessments, Metal Mining Effluent Regulations, Aboriginal Knowledge protection, and habitat protection guidelines.

The NHWG is a technical group that focuses specifically on in-land fisheries habitat issues. The NHWG meets once a year with DFO representatives in order to discuss policy enhancements and changes that will serve to better protect fisheries habitat while complementing First Nation rights. In 2010-11, the NHWG met in Edmonton to discuss issues related to compliance and enforcement, aquatic animal health, engagement and consultation strategies, environmental health, and the DFO *1986 Habitat Policy*.

The NFC is comprised of Chiefs and technicians that advise on the direction of the Fisheries Program. The NFC meets once a year to identify priorities to AFN and DFO. The NFC meeting serves to promote dialogue on subjects discussed at the NPAG meeting and to ensure progress on key priorities. In 2010-11, the NFC met in Halifax and identified aquaculture, invasive species, joint-management, marketing, legislative and policy review, and species at risk as priorities for the upcoming year.

Under the direction of the two co-chairs of the NFC, Regional Chiefs Roger Augustine and Eric Morris, the Fisheries Program also coordinates a National Fisheries Task Force (NFTF) that is committed to developing proactive plans to address issues impacting First Nation fishing rights and activities and responding in emergency situations. The NFTF is a sub-committee of the NFC and meets to discuss issues during the yearly NFC meeting.

On March 29-31 2011, the AFN, Aboriginal Aquaculture Association, Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nation Chiefs, and the BC First Nations Fisheries Council co-hosted the National Aboriginal Fisheries Forum (NAFF) in Dartmouth, NS. The conference provided an opportunity for First Nations to come together to examine and discuss the current status of Aboriginal commercial fisheries across Canada, including trends, success stories, best practices and challenges. Participants at the NAFF identified emerging economic development issues and advanced ideas to improve economic outcomes in the First Nation commercial fisheries sector. The NAFF fostered coast-to-coast discussion and promotes partnerships and collaborations between First Nation communities, government departments and industry. The next NAFF will be held in Vancouver in 2011-12.



Species at Risk

In order to engage effectively, First Nations require capacity that will enable them to develop and assess the socio-economic costs and benefits with the listing and recovering strategies proposed under the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA). First Nations must balance the potential impacts from the loss of species such as Lake Sturgeon and the American Eel with the possible abrogation, derogation, and/or infringement of Aboriginal and Treaty rights. The Fisheries Program is requesting to assist First Nations by working cooperatively with DFO in reviewing the “DFO Guidance on Considering Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge in SARA Implementation” document. Furthermore, the Fisheries Program has been advocating for new venues for First Nations to express concerns about the SARA process, such as the Ministers Roundtable on SARA.

University Partnerships

The AFN has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Dalhousie University to jointly work on fisheries research over the next several years. In the fall of 2010, the AFN and Dalhousie jointly submitted a letter of intent for a Social Science and Humanities Research Council grant with academic partners from Vancouver Island University, University of Guelph, and various First Nation technicians and researchers. The Letter of Intent was accepted and will develop a multi-year proposal with partner groups for an in-depth research program aimed at informing better knowledge use in aquatic resource governance structures. The AFN and Dalhousie University will assess jointly pursuing other fisheries projects in the near future.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Ongoing work to implement sections of the National Fisheries Strategy (NFS) related to aquaculture, aquatic invasive species, marketing and labeling, species at risk, and emerging legislative and policy review.
- Establish and convene a National Aquaculture Working Group.
- Publish and distribute guides on Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge considerations in habitat management and Marine Protected Areas.
- Develop a proposal and implementation plan for the national labeling initiative.
- Gather input on species at risk decision-making materials.
- Co-host the National Aboriginal Fisheries Forum in Vancouver.
- Host yearly meetings of the Aquatic Resources and Oceans Management (AAROM) National Policy Analysis Group (NPAG), Aboriginal Inland Habitat Program AIHP NPAG, National Habitat Working Group and National Fisheries Committee.
- Engage in ongoing discussions regarding habitat policy enhancement.
- Meet with the new Minister of Fisheries to establish a working relationship.



WATER

MANDATE

Resolution 23/2008 and 24/2008 direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to advocate for meaningful consultation on matters affecting First Nation rights with respect to water and wastewater. Resolutions 49/2008, 51/2008, 52/2008, 12/2009, 42/2009 and 44/2009 also provide similar direction on water rights and the duty to consult. These resolutions call on the Government of Canada to begin meaningful consultations with First Nations prior to developing any legislation or regulations regarding First Nations' water resources. Resolution 50/2008 directs the AFN to start the process for the development of the framework for a Commission on Water. Resolution 12/2009 directs the National Chief to seek a meeting with the Ministers of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) and Health Canada with respect to Canada's failure to engage First Nations appropriately.

Resolution 43/2010 mandated the AFN to advocate for resources to conduct impact analysis of proposed regulations in Bill S-11 (*Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act*) and to urge Canada to suspend further discussion until the full economic impact of the bill is identified. Resolution 58/2010 identified concerns with Bill S-11, including the need for appropriate funding prior to implementation of the regulations, support for First Nation communities and organizations to develop their own water management systems, establishing a collaborative approach to addressing water issues with INAC, and respect of Treaty and Aboriginal rights, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the *Report of the Expert Panel on Safe Drinking Water for First Nations*.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

Development of a Regulatory Regime for Drinking Water and Wastewater in First Nation Communities

In February and March 2009, INAC undertook an engagement process to lead to the development of a legislative framework for drinking water and wastewater in First Nation communities. This consisted of engagement sessions held with First Nations, regional First Nation organizations and provincial/territorial officials. In the summer and fall of 2009, INAC Legislative Directorate staff met with regional political leadership to discuss their concerns about the water legislation consultation process. They shared a hard copy of their presentation "Proposed Elements of First Nations Safe Drinking Water Act". INAC explained that this would essentially be the basis of the enabling legislation to be tabled in Parliament.

On May 26, 2010, the government introduced in the Senate Bill S-11, *An Act respecting the safety of drinking water on first nation lands*. The summary of the bill states "*this enactment addresses health and safety on reserve lands and certain other lands by providing regulations to govern drinking water and waste water treatment in first nations communities. Regulations could be made on a province-by-province basis to mirror existing provincial regulatory regimes, with adaptations to address the circumstances of first nations living on those lands.*"

The bill was referred to the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Peoples on December 14, 2010 and hearings began on February 2, 2011 and continued through to March 9, 2011. Nine sessions were convened culminating in a second request for the National Chief to appear before the committee on March 9, 2011.



Presentations were made by several First Nation communities, organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Major concerns about the Bill included the lack of consultation, uncertainty of laws by incorporation by reference, the systematic chipping away of section 35 Aboriginal and Treaty rights, and the lack of provision of resources.

At the final session, the Committee inquired about the AFN's interest in working with the Minister over the next few weeks to develop further amendments that would be satisfactory both to the government and First Nations. It was the National Chief's position that the AFN is prepared to work with the federal government to re-draft a Bill that would satisfy regulations while upholding respect for Aboriginal and Treaty rights. This spirit of partnership was previously demonstrated with the *Specific Claims Tribunal Act*, which was drafted jointly, and can only serve to strengthen the relationship between First Nations and the Crown.

All draft legislation from the 40th Parliament is no longer active, however, the June 3, 2011 Speech from the Throne signaled the government would "promote access to clean water", which may mean introducing new legislation.

Depending on approach, and the government's willingness to pursue this new legislation in partnership, it could enable First Nations to develop regulations in a meaningful way. The AFN understands that regulations are needed to ensure that funding leads to real results on the ground and that there must be a commitment to adequate resourcing to ensure these standards can be achieved.

First Nation experts must be empowered and supported to develop the regulations, as this presents the best chance for success at delivering clean drinking water to our communities. Resources are required to support this work.

A new approach to legislation is supported by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which states that any new policies and laws must be developed with First Nations in a spirit of partnership and mutual respect.

First Nations/Indigenous Water Commission (FNWC)

Resolution 50/2008 directed the AFN to initiate the development of the framework for a Commission on Water and report on the status at the 2009 Annual General Assembly (AGA). The Housing and Infrastructure Directorate secured grant funding from the Canadian Water Network to convene an experts meeting to discuss how this FNWC might function. A project coordinator was assigned to work with the Directorate.

From 2007 to 2009, the AFN completed earlier work and analysis on the possible functions and structure for a First Nations Water Commission. The conceptual framework was presented at the AFN's Housing and Water Policy Forum in February 2007. Resolution 15/2007 directed the AFN to continue to investigate and seek avenues of support and funding for those First Nations that will require assistance in complying with a regulatory framework for water. If effectively conceptualized and established, a FNWC could help to move authority over water management-related decisions into First Nations' hands.

The next identified step required to establish a FNWC is to work closely at a regional level to set up a pilot technically-oriented FNWC that can demonstrate First Nations-led management of drinking and wastewater treatment systems on-reserve. A FNWC will provide practical assistance to First Nations in



managing their water systems, whether or not a regulatory framework has been created. A web portal will be developed to provide a central forum for best practices, lessons learned and full integration of a holistic approach to a community-wide approach to sustainable community practices.

It will be essential to collaborate with INAC, Environment Canada and Health Canada to ensure that the Commission's work is relevant to existing functions. Any collaboration with INAC in the near future on this project should be pursued with caution to ensure that the FNWC remains a truly First Nation-governed entity.

Resolution 50/2008 directed the AFN to seek non-federal funding sources to start the process for the development of the framework for a Commission on Water. The funding provided by the Canadian Water Network (CWN) from April 2009 to April 2010 allowed the AFN to host two Experts Meetings to discuss and identify what work needs to be done to realize the FNWC.

To keep furthering dialogue on this important topic, a panel discussion on water that profiled the need for the FNWC was held at the November 2010 Planning and Dialogue Forum in Montreal.

Additional funds and other support from external sources will be required to move this forward.

National Indigenous Water Conference

Resolution 42/2010 directs the AFN to host a National Water Conference in Alberta in 2011 to discuss water issues and develop a strategic action plan aimed at the recognition of First Nation jurisdiction over water and ensuring access to safe, adequate freshwater as a Treaty and Aboriginal right for the preservation of health, economic and spiritual activities – now and for future generations.

The Housing and Infrastructure, Environmental Stewardship and Economic Partnerships Secretariats will support the Alberta Regional Chief in planning the conference.

Environment Canada Consultation on the draft Canada-wide Strategy for the Management of Municipal Wastewater Effluent and Environment Canada's Proposed Regulatory Framework for Wastewater Effluent

The *Canada-wide Strategy for the Management of Municipal Wastewater Effluent* was endorsed by the Council of Ministers on February 17, 2009. On March 20, 2010 Environment Canada posted the draft wastewater regulations on Canada Gazette 1 with a 60-day comment period ending May 20, 2010. Letters to First Nations followed along with a copy of the Wastewater Systems Effluent Regulations and the Regulatory Impact Assessment Statement.

As a follow-up to the Independent Evaluator's recommendation that Environment Canada work with regional and national First Nation organizations, the department engaged the AFN in the development of a Consolidated Comments Report as a resource tool for use by First Nations when providing comments to EC. A two-day workshop was hosted by AFN on April 20-21, 2010, with the First Nations Technical Water Advisory Group to gather input and comments. The final report was distributed to First Nation communities and organizations starting May 14, 2010.

Some concerns were raised. Along with an understanding of the ability of First Nations wastewater systems to effectively control deleterious substances, there is also a need to understand the legal and economic



impacts of the proposed regulations before they are implemented. Many concerns addressed the need for resources to manage, monitor, test, and report on the systems. Since the regulations are new, many First Nations will not have the trained human resources available to carry out the required tasks under the regulations. Funding and time to train and employ these human resources will be required.

It was expected that the regulations would be posted on Canada Gazette 2 in December, 2010, and would come into force on January 1, 2011. However, due to concerns raised by municipalities regarding economic impacts there may be amendments to the draft regulations and the posting on Gazette 2 has been delayed.

National Assessment of Water and Wastewater Infrastructure in First Nation Communities

This is a project to conduct an engineering assessment of private and public water and wastewater systems, and associated operation and maintenance practices, in First Nation communities, including an evaluation of risk to health and overall serviceability analysis (i.e., communal systems as well as private individual systems such as wells, septic systems, cisterns, etc.) for each community. On May 25, 2009, INAC awarded the contract to Neegan-Burnside, an Aboriginal engineering consultant based in Ontario. The draft reports for the first round were mailed to First Nations for their information and fact-checking. It was reported that the draft reports did not reach some First Nations and consequently they were not able to verify the base information contained in the draft reports. It was expected that the project would be completed in December, 2010. On January 29, 2011, all of the reports were submitted to INAC by Neegan-Burnside. INAC indicated that the national and regional reports, along with the individual First Nation site reports, would be made available in the spring, 2011.

The 2010 Federal Budget announced the extension of the First Nation Water and Wastewater Action Plan (FNWWAP) for 2010-11 and 2011-12. The two-year extension of the First Nations Water Management Strategy allows time to complete the assessment and identify the results. The results are expected to inform a Treasury Board submission requesting funding for another five-year First Nation Water Management Strategy renewal. INAC has indicated that it is working on a business plan on how to address the needs identified in the reports.

INAC Headquarters established regional coordinators to work on this project. As one of the coordinators, the Acting Director of Housing and Infrastructure has participated in weekly teleconferences during the study period and provided updates to the regional water technicians.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES BY THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Continue to work with the government on ensuring clean water for First Nation communities, including the development of possible water and wastewater legislation to:
 - o Establish a proper consultation process and a collaborative approach on water and wastewater legislation;
 - o Support and assist regional First Nation organizations towards establishing their framework for the management of their water resources, wastewater, watersheds and source water protection.
 - o Inform the Government of Canada that the infrastructure resource gap needs to be addressed prior to implementing a water and wastewater regulatory regime.
 - o Advocate for respect for the provision of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to free, prior and informed consent;



- o Advocate for the recognition of the United Nations (UN) Resolution on the Human Right to Water and the affirmation that the right to water and sanitation is contained in existing human rights treaties and is therefore legally binding.
- Follow-up on the results of the National Engineering Assessment to ensure that the government addresses the capital infrastructure needs identified by the study and a business plan is provided that will address the demand in a timely manner.
- Continue to develop a conceptual framework on how a First Nation/Indigenous Water Commission might function.
- Host the National Indigenous Water Conference.
- Ongoing work to establish a web portal to host an integrated Housing and Infrastructure Centre of Excellence.

