

Celebrating Successes and Giving Thanks

Annual General Assembly • Fredericton, New Brunswick • July 23-25, 2019

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

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The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) is the national body representing First Nations governments and approximately one million people living on reserve and in urban and rural areas. The National Chief is elected every three years and receives direction from the Chiefs-in-Assembly. The AFN is dedicated to advancing the priorities and aspirations of First Nations through review, study, response and advocacy on a broad range of issues and policy matters.

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AFN Annual General Assembly artwork:

WOLASUWELTOMUWAKON

(who-la-zoo+w-wel-dum-wah-gun) GIVING THANKS

At the first of the day, it's the time where all things share the new day together. No matter who, what, or where they are. We all share the same beat. The human, flyers, crawlers, swimmers, and so on. We are all one nation on our mother and on the "island" called Turtle Island. The woman represents the Wabanaki peoples of the dawn land, I chose a woman as a central figure because it is the heart beat of our mothers, we hear first. For the Wolastoqiyik, the matriarch would wear the white headdress. The flowers in the piece are wild roses native to the eastern door which are often depicted on beaded clothing. It is easy for people to notice large things in life but if you sit still and pay attention, you'll begin to notice the smaller things and how important they are, bees are a prime example.

The sun represents the new day with a Wabanaki symbol, this actual symbol was carved on a paddle in the 1800's. The butterflies represent renewal and rebirth and the robin represent determination. Both representing an ongoing thing we as the original peoples of these lands know all too well. The woman's clothing is covered in double curve motifs to represent the eastern peoples and, at one time was very important to eastern nations. It was not uncommon for our matriarchs to wear the white headdress and were held in hi regard.

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NATIONAL CHIEF REPORT



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National Chief Perry Bellegarde

Assembly of First Nations

Chiefs, fellow leaders, friends and relatives, welcome to our 39th Annual General Assembly. Kinanāskomitin.

We are honoured to be here on the territory of the Musqueam First Nation, Squamish Nation and Tsleil-Waututh Nation and to be hosted by the British Columbia Assembly of First Nations.

This past year through our concerted advocacy efforts, and with the support and hard work of many Chiefs, Councillors, First Nations leaders and hardworking women and men, we have achieved substantial progress.

We have been successful in maintaining First Nations priorities at the top of the national agenda. Almost \$17 Billion over seven fiscal years has been committed in the last three federal budgets for Indigenous peoples in areas including education, housing, infrastructure, languages and health care and mental wellness services.

Through our work at the Chiefs Committee on Fiscal Relations, First Nations can now carry forward funding from one year to the next and we've unlocked 10-year funding agreements as direct transfers between governments for more than 100 eligible First Nations.

Our Chiefs Committee on Education has made progress towards First Nations control of First Nations education, building on an investment of \$2.6 Billion for on-reserve education in the 2016 Federal Budget with another \$.7 Billion in direct transfers to First Nations to help close the education gap.

Our Assembly of First Nations has worked with partners on the co-development of a federal law to revitalize, reclaim and maintain our First Nations languages. That law will facilitate ongoing funding to support language revitalization efforts and is expected to be introduced this fall.

We also secured widespread support for Bill 262, a law that will support implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as called for by the Chiefsin-Assembly. As I write this, the Bill has passed third reading in the House of Commons and awaits consideration by the Senate.

Progress is being made towards our Indigenous Peoples House at 100 Wellington, a place of prominence opposite Canada's Parliament buildings, which will serve as a centre for Indigenous peoples in Ottawa, the uses and functions of which will be determined by First Nations, in cooperation with Inuit and Métis peoples.

We are working hard to support all First Nations in their exercise of the right to selfdetermination. As First Nations undertake the work necessary to address badly-flawed federal policies – comprehensive claims, specific claims, additions to reserve and the inherent right to self-government – we are all moving beyond the Indian Act and realizing all of our rights affirmed by Treaty, First Nations law, the Constitution and international human rights law.

Things are finally moving, but still the socio-economic gap in quality of life remains for First Nations. We have much more work to do.

A \$1.4 Billion federal commitment to child welfare is finally reaching First Nations where it can help to end discrimination in the delivery of services for our children in care. But a jointly designed model is still needed to fix the system as First Nations exercise jurisdiction and move to prevention, not apprehension of our children. Nine thousand homes recently built on First Nations must be augmented by funding for at least 80,000 more, and the number of drinking water advisories must become zero.

Chronic underfunding of First Nations police services has started to be addressed with a commitment of \$290 million over five years this January. But we continue to press for recognition of First Nations policing as an essential service.

First Nations continue to pursue paths to selfdetermination which enable us to create our own laws, assert our jurisdiction and move beyond the control of the Indian Act. This work must be done right. It cannot be rushed.

Our work to establish a new fiscal relationship with the Crown needs to ensure that First Nations fully benefit from our sharing of land and resource wealth.

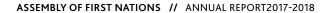
Our Assembly of First Nations is once again driving changes that benefit all First Nations peoples. We are laser-focused on Closing the Gap, and on championing First Nations rights. Opening doors and working together with First Nations, our commitment remains on being responsive, relevant and respectful.

As we gather for this Annual General Assembly I am reminded of the strength we as First Nations peoples have gathered from our Elders' teachings, from our Youth's tenacity, and from the steady guiding hands of our mothers and fathers. This strength can be focussed to the benefit of all. The unity of our voice will carry this good work forward.

Kinanāskomitin, National Chief Perry Bellegarde



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REGIONAL CHIEFS' REPORTS



Regional Chief Kluane Adamek Yukon

Dännch'e,

On behalf of the AFN Yukon Region, I offer a warm greeting to all the Elders, Veterans, Chiefs, Leaders, Youth, and delegates attending the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) 39th Annual General Assembly. Thank you to the Musqueam First Nation, Squamish Nation and Tsleil-Waututh Nations for welcoming us on their traditional territory, and to the BC AFN Region for hosting us this year.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my respect and appreciation to former Regional Chief Mike Smith and the outstanding work he did before his untimely passing. We deeply acknowledge his incredible dedication to advancing Yukon First Nation priorities. He was a trailblazer and his legacy lives on through his family and his contributions to our people.

Regional Update

I am currently responsible for the following Assembly of First Nations portfolios:

- Co-chair, Advisory Committee on Climate Action and the Environment;
- · First Nation Northern Strategies and Issues;
- · Citizenship and Membership; and
- Modern Treaties and Self-Determination. Key Activities and Accomplishments

In January 2018, I began serving as Interim Regional Chief after being appointed by Yukon First Nations leadership to the role. I am humbled to have recently been acclaimed as Regional Chief and sworn-in to a three-year term on June 28, 2018. I look forward to supporting the advancement of Yukon First Nation interests on a national level.

Over the last six months, Yukon First Nations leadership has engaged in a number of strategic

planning sessions. These sessions have been focused on establishing and solidifying a modernized structure for the AFN Yukon regional office to continue serving the needs of Yukon First Nations.

Yukon First Nation leaders came together to formalize a process for dialogue and setting the strategic direction for the AFN Yukon Region through quarterly AFN Yukon First Nation Chiefs' Summits and an AFN Yukon First Nations Annual Summit. At the first AFN Yukon First Nations Annual Summit held on June 28, 2018, leadership formalized a number of governance documents for the AFN Yukon regional office, including the AFN Yukon Region Terms of Reference. Together, we have also been working on strengthening our approach with AFN national councils and committees to ensure our region continues to be well represented and important information from these councils and committees is shared with Yukon First Nations.

To help complement these ongoing efforts and ensure Yukon First Nations receive timely information on federal legislative issues that impact them, the regional office has worked on modernizing communications outreach activities. A new AFN Yukon Region website, regular information bulletins and an enhanced social media presence are helping facilitate greater awareness and access to information.

This year, we celebrate 20 years since the signing of the first four Yukon First Nation land claims and self-government agreements. Guided by the incredible leadership of those that helped realize these agreements, we continue to press for their full implementation.

During the April 29, 2018 AFN National Executive meeting, I tabled a motion to reaffirm the creation of a Modern Treaty Implementation Working Group. The group will assist in raising the profile of modern treaty implementation and other matters, at the direction of modern treaty nations. In these and other national forums, our regional office will continue to listen to Yukon First Nations and advocate for priority matters of education, health, justice, child welfare, and housing as key components of self-government in Yukon.

Early in my interim period, we began to advocate for loan repayment and forgiveness for the 11 First Nations who have land claims and self-government agreements in the Yukon. The federal government committed to loan repayments through Budget 2018, and we look forward to having this process formalized. We remain committed to supporting all modern treaty holders in ensuring loan forgiveness and repayment rolls out in a fair and timely manner.

As Co-Chair of the Advisory Committee on Climate Action and the Environment (ACE), I will continue to be guided by the AFN Elders Council as we work in advancing Indigenous Knowledge Systems. Supported by the AFN Environment Sector, ACE is committed to enhancing First Nation self-determination and jurisdiction within the context of the natural environment.

In May 2018, we had the pleasure of hosting ACE members for their regular meeting and to attend Vadzaih Choo Drin – Caribou Days on Vuntut Gwitchin territory in Old Crow, Yukon. While in Old Crow, ACE met with the Vuntut Gwitchin Government on supporting their efforts to protect the Porcupine Caribou Herd calving grounds from resource development. The United States government is moving towards allowing oil and gas exploration in the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, where the calving grounds are located. As part of our advocacy efforts, the AFN National Chief and I co-drafted an open letter to the U.S. government on this issue and continue to press for protection of these sacred lands and the caribou for future generations.

On April 17, 2018, as Co-Chair of ACE, I presented AFN's amendments to Bill C-69, a proposed federal legislation affecting the Impact Assessment Act, Canadian Energy Regulator Act, and the Canadian Navigable Waters Act.

The amendments focused on the following themes and elements:

- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- Protecting First Nations' inherent and constitutionally-protected rights
- Legislating joint decision-making
- · Reducing excessive ministerial discretion
- Strengthening the protection of Indigenous Knowledge Systems

The Indigenous Languages Act remains a top priority for our region. Our regional office received direction to assist and support Yukon First Nations in the coordination of preparatory work as we look ahead to the upcoming federal engagement sessions.

Over the next few months, Yukon First Nation representatives will continue assisting with the work of the AFN Chiefs Committee on Languages regarding this federal legislation. While this is being done, the AFN Yukon Region will work together with all parties to ensure we create space for nations to participate in federal engagement and pre-engagement activities in our region.

Women play a significant role in our communities and it's important to ensure we show leadership on issues of equity and gender balance. We need to always strive towards ending all forms of violence. I am pleased that our National Executive Committee is taking action on this. On April 29th, we passed my motion on "Ending Sexual and



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COUNCIL REPORTS



AFN Council of Elders

Since the inception of the National Indian Brotherhood and transition to the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), there has always been a place of honour and distinction for Elders that is evident within the Charter of the Assembly of First Nations. The AFN Council of Elders (Council) provided both spiritual and political guidance in the formation of the organization, its structures and its Charter. The Council helped to shape AFN policies and the relationship with the federal government and other national and international organizations. During the past 36 years, the AFN's leadership has relied upon the historical and cultural knowledge of the Council, especially in matters relating to Treaty rights and First Nations governance.

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

Key Activities and Accomplishments

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

The Council is essential to our lives and our day-to-day business; they are the keepers of our traditions, values, languages and history. They are guides to our leadership and future leaders. They speak with honour and with a great deal of pride. The Council will always encourage First Nation leaders and champions to continue to enlighten and inform forums such as the Chiefs Assemblies on their experiences, issues, successes and challenges. It is all of our responsibility to ensure prosperity and the safety of the little ones, just as our ancestors did for us. The Council has made efforts to engage with other elders in their regions, to share information, and to communicate national messages to the grassroots. The Council has participated in the National Gathering of Elders that was held in Edmonton Alberta, September 2017. Members of the Council actively participated on several discussion panels throughout the three-day gathering, which included reconciliation, climate change, education and treaties. In regions across Canada, First Nations are revitalizing traditions and ceremonies through gatherings; the Council continues to advocate that First Nations traditions, languages, and ceremonies are shared and kept alive as it is the foundation to building stronger Nations.

AFN Elders Council Guidelines and Protocols

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

Next Steps – Moving Forward

- The AFN will continue to seek additional funding for the Council from federal and alternative sources. The additional funding is to ensure First Nations cultures and perspectives are reflected in the work conducted regionally and nationally, and to fully integrate the input and participation of the Council into all work. AFN staff will continue to provide administrative support.
- The Council will continue to provide guidance to the AFN Executive Committee, staff and support the activities of the Tri-Council.
- The Council will continue to provide guidance and vision to AFN Tri-Council meetings with the Women's and Youth

Councils. The Council will continue their collaboration with the Tri-Council with a focus on finalizing and advancing their collective strategic plan.

 The Elders Council continues to move forward on efforts regarding the establishment of a traditional knowledge policy. The federal government has flagged the much needed incorporation of traditional knowledge and its new environmental legislation and this policy will serve as a framework to guide these efforts for governments and others.







Chief Executive Officer

She:kon, Greetings!

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the 39th Annual General Assembly (AGA) of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) being held at the Vancouver Convention Centre in Vancouver, British Columbia. This being an election year for the National Chief of the AFN, there is an air of excitement and plans are in place to accommodate higher numbers of Chiefs, proxies, councillors, and delegates in attendance at the AGA. The election will take place on July 25, 2018 and be overseen by the Chief Electoral Officer, Ms. Loretta J. Pete Lambert from Little Pine First Nation in Saskatchewan.

It is hard to believe that I have been in the position of Chief Executive Officer for the AFN for over a year now. I can say without a doubt that 2017-2018 has been a year of unprecedented change with a focus on reconciliation with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) 94 Calls to Action and a focus on a rights-based approach with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. For the first time the Federal Government is functioning in a collaborative manner across units within departments and across departments taking a "whole of government approach" at all levels at a very fast pace. The Federal Government is also changing how they work together with Indigenous Peoples and in a distinction-based approach with First Nations, Inuit and Métis. Co-development (working jointly with the Federal Government) is a new evolving way of changing policy, legislation, regulations, programs and funding across federal departments and systems of parliament.

The Chiefs-in-Assembly and the AFN Executive Committee are the decision-making bodies for the AFN. The National Chief and 10 Regional

Chiefs make up the Executive Committee and the Tri-Council Chairs (Elders, Women, and Youth) participate on the Executive Committee in an advisory capacity. The AFN Secretariat has evolved and now consists of 12 sectors. Reporting to the National Chief and the Executive Committee, the AFN Secretariat consists of the CEO Office and 12 Sectors including: Finance, IT/Records; Communications; Legal and Justice; Policy and Research; Economic; Education; Environment; Health; Housing, Infrastructure and Emergency Services; Languages; Social Development; and Lands, Territories and Resources. Each Sector is led by a Director and Sector staff work with related Chiefs Committees and Technical groups from each of AFN's 10 regions.

Having participated in eight AFN Executive Committee meetings this fiscal period, the National Chief and Regional Chiefs have actively engaged in meaningful discussions and provided positive leadership in moving national initiatives forward that are supported by resolutions from the AFN Chiefs-in-Assembly. A special meeting was conducted on March 1, 2018 whereby the National Chief and Executive Committee approved the Draft Workplan and Budget for the 2018-2019 fiscal period. AFN Secretariat staff have undertaken the work to advance these initiatives which include but are not limited to: Indigenous Languages; United Nations Declaration on the **Rights of Indigenous Peoples; Child Welfare** and Jordan's Principle; Fiscal Relations; Federal Laws and Policies; Closing the Socio-economic Gap; TRC 94 Calls to Action; AFN-Canada Memorandum of Understanding on Joint Priorities; First Nations Policing and Public Safety; Specific Claims; Additions to Reserve; Health and Wellness; Housing; Safe Water; **Emergency Services; First Nations Labour** Market; Environment and Climate Change; Early Learning and Child Care; Cannabis;

Gaming; Justice; AFN Charter Renewal; Modern Treaties; and Nation Building. I am pleased to report that the AFN was able to completely pay off the existing deficit this fiscal period.

Progress in moving these initiatives forward has been made: the sector reports in this Annual Report highlight the many key accomplishments for the 2017-2018 fiscal period. You also are invited to visit the AFN website at www.afn.ca for more information about AFN. But we are not there yet. As First Nations begin to voice their views; begin to share their stories; begin to heal the brokenness caused by residential schools, the Indian Act, and colonialism; deep rooted change toward health and wellness will become the norm. It is an exciting time for all First Nations as genuine discussions begin on what First Nations want to become and how that may look.

It has been an honour to serve the Chiefs and First Nations of Canada. With the strong and committed leadership provided by the National Chief, Executive Committee, and Chiefs-in-Assembly, I have no doubt that we are on the right path to succeed. Working with such knowledgeable and dedicated staff, the AFN will continue to make a difference. Working Together: Our Rights, Our Way, Our Future is the theme for the AGA this year.

Enjoy your time at the AGA! Visit the trade show and network with others! I hope to see you there!

Nia:wen

Dr. Paulette Tremblay, Ph.D., ICD.D., CAPA







Communications Sector

The AFN Communications Sector is mandated to ensure that all First Nations receive timely and relevant information on the AFN and international, national, provincial, regional and local issues, priorities, policies and decisions that can impact First Nations. The Sector is responsible for a number of organizational communications functions, including strategic communications planning, media and public relations, social media, public awareness, and producing and coordinating publications, videos and translation. The Sector provides communications support to all policy areas within the AFN and assists the National Chief's Office.

The Communications Sector distributes information in a wide variety of formats and delivery services including print, broadcast fax, video and audio messages, e-mail blasts, webbased content, Indigenous and non-Indigenous media and social media. The AFN also works with the IT Sector to ensure materials are provided to the AFN website and webmaster.

Key Activities and Accomplishments

Media and Public Relations

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

Press releases, media advisories and statements which are prepared and distributed nationally (in English and French) to Indigenous and nonIndigenous media, with regional distribution as applicable and international media where relevant. More than 100 press releases, statements and media advisories were prepared and distributed during the 2017-18 fiscal year. Communications also prepares media lines and talking points, backgrounders, op-eds, letters to the editor and editorials on current and priority issues.

The Sector assists in preparing speaking notes for the National Chief and AFN spokespeople for a variety of events for wide-ranging audiences, including First Nation governments, groups and organizations, professional associations, national and international organizations, and federal and provincial governments.

Communications seeks to raise and maintain the profile of First Nation peoples and priorities through a variety of media, including print, broadcast, social media and web-based media. The Communications Sector is active in media outreach and media relations and has set up background briefings, interviews and editorial boards to further understanding and awareness of the AFN's activities and First Nations issues.

The Communications Sector oversees daily media monitoring to track, assess and evaluate coverage of First Nations and Indigenous issues. Over the past year, there have been several developments that have resulted in widespread national and international media coverage for the AFN, including forging new relationships with governments, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, First Nations child health and welfare (including the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal decision and Jordan's Principle), Indigenous languages, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, education, advocacy for a Papal apology for residential schools and renouncing the Doctrines of Discovery and Terra Nullius, a

new approach to fiscal relations, health, housing and infrastructure, and resource development, among many others.

Public Awareness

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

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

Since the last annual report, the AFN webmaster position was moved to the IT Sector where the IT Manager oversees website management and updates. Communications provides support for the AFN website (www.afn.ca) through regular updates to provide current information on AFN activities and priorities.

The AFN continues to provide live webcasting by in-house personnel of all Assemblies and key gatherings, some of which are interactive and accessible to the online audience. Webcasts over the past year include the Annual General Assembly (July 2017), Empowering First Nations and First Nation Persons with Disabilities (September 2017 and February 2018), National Chief remarks at the Families of Sisters in Spirit Vigil (October 2017), Implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (November 2017), and Special Chiefs Assemblies (December 2017 and May 2018).

The AFN hired a Communications Coordinator to focus on social media in spring 2018, and continues to expand its social media outreach including Twitter (AFN_Updates) with more than 42,400 followers and the AFN Facebook page (Assembly of First Nations/Assemblée des Premières Nations), which has more than 48,000 followers as of the end of June 2018. Videos are posted on social media, including the Assembly of First Nations YouTube channel which has more than 640 subscribers. The National Chief has his own Facebook page and Twitter account that are managed separately from the AFN accounts and are administered by the National Chief's Office.

Public information is also distributed to more than 1,750 subscribers through the AFN e-mail subscription service (listserv). Users can sign up on the AFN website.

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

Communications Strategies

The Communications Sector develops and implements global AFN communications strategies as well as targeted strategies and communications plans for specific events, issues and initiatives. The Sector provides advice, recommendations and communications support to the AFN Secretariat inclusive of all policy areas and to the National Chief's Office. Communications advice and recommendations are also provided to First Nations upon request whenever possible.



FINANCIAL STATEMENTS



Financial Statements

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