

FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 2, 2016

SUNNY WAYS, NOT GLOBAL WARMING

Coast Salish Traditional Territory (Vancouver) – Last December in Paris, France, Prime Minister Trudeau stated these encouraging words:

“Indigenous peoples have known for thousands of years how to care for our planet. The rest of us have a lot to learn. And no time to waste.”

With warming coastal and inland waters and dramatically shifting weather patterns in BC, causing valuable glaciers to melt at an alarming rate, traditional foods security is emerging as a critical issue for First Nations. Wild salmon, moose and other sources of food are in a serious decline. In the summer our smokehouses, traditional learning centres, remain mostly empty. The mountain pine beetle decimated huge swaths of northern and interior forests, leaving millions of hectares of dead trees. Many of our working-age people can't find work or can't access available opportunities.

This is why first Nations fight hard to prevent environmental damage and degradation. We have been witness to and victims of environmental degradation and of climate change impacts. We strongly support Coastal First Nations on the Great Bear Rainforest Initiative and the many First Nations involved in run of the river projects.

Prime Minister Trudeau stressed his relationship and that of Canada, with Indigenous Peoples was most important.

Today, the Assembly of First Nations National Chief and the leaders from Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and Metis National Council meet with First Ministers. We suggest the following:

1. Canada stated its intention to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It is a common framework for engagement, reconciliation, redress, justice and healing. Use it.
2. In the September 2014 World Conference on Indigenous Peoples Outcome Document, Canada, in cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, committed to “develop and implement national action plans... to achieve the ends of the Declaration.” Develop a plan.
3. As part of this plan, a ‘Canada Indigenous climate change action plan’ should be prepared, committing to:
 - Minimize, and where possible, eliminate harmful sources of carbon and other such contaminants into the atmosphere;



- In consultation with First Nations, consider the formation of a Boreal Forest Carbon Initiative. The boreal forest, one of the four great lungs of the world, stores as much carbon as the Amazon rainforest. It can be a key mitigative measure for carbon emissions;
- Support, as in the United States Environmental Protection Agency's initiatives with Tribal governments, every First Nations community to develop climate change mitigation and adaptation plans;
- Establish an Indigenous Peoples Green Climate Fund in Canada, similar to the Green Climate Fund for developing states outlined in the Paris Agreement. Canada has committed close to \$3 Billion to this Green Climate Fund, which expects to generate \$100 Billion per year for developing states. Conditions in First Nations communities are similar to those in developing states;
- Establish a high level Cabinet committee to guide and oversee the development of Canada's New Relationship with Indigenous Peoples, including climate change strategies;
- Support ongoing international monitoring of this important new approach and development as an example of emerging best practices of state-Indigenous Peoples relations and reconciliation.

-30-

The First Nations Summit speaks on behalf of First Nations involved in treaty negotiations in British Columbia. The Summit is also a NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Further background information on the Summit may be found at www.fns.bc.ca.

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