



# FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

## STATEMENT

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***FOR Immediate Release:***  
***April 2, 2015***

### **First Nations Summit Comments on Release of Eyford Report**

**Coast Salish Territory (Vancouver, BC)** – The First Nations Summit (FNS) acknowledges receipt of the report released today by Douglas Eyford, Ministerial Special Representative to the Hon. Bernard Valcourt, Minister of Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC). The report, entitled *A New Direction: Advancing Aboriginal and Treaty Rights*, examines Canada's Comprehensive Claims Policy and also looks at and provides recommendations on the BC treaty negotiations process.

The FNS is encouraged that the report acknowledges the complex history of treaty negotiations in BC, as well as the need for the Principals (First Nations Summit, Canada and BC), to commit to and work together to improve the negotiations process in order to achieve fair, just, equitable and timely treaty agreements. While the current negotiations process in BC has taken much longer than originally anticipated, this report, clearly indicates we have a collective opportunity to work together to find the necessary and appropriate solutions to move forward.

This is consistent with the inclusive and proactive approach of the First Nations Summit to jointly work with all interested parties and the two other Principals to openly review, discuss and implement any recommendations aimed at improving treaty negotiations in BC.

This *New Directions* report is the latest of numerous reports and studies done over the years, many of which have not been implemented and continue to gather dust. While Mr. Eyford's report represents his advice to Canada, it provides a new and important opportunity for the Principals to engage in serious dialogue about improvements to treaty negotiations in BC, including a full review of the 43 recommendations. The FNS Executive will be also be reviewing the report with First Nations' Chief Negotiators in preparation for the June 2015 First Nations Summit Chiefs' Assembly.

It is critical to note that, despite recent media reports and the confusion created by BC's lack of willingness to appoint a new Chief Commissioner to the BC Treaty Commission, the treaty negotiations process remains active and will continue into the future. We are fully committed to working with the Principals to find ways to improve the negotiations process, as well as naming a new Chief Commissioner to the BCTC. Until the Principals agree on a new Chief Commissioner, we have every confidence in the BCTC's ability to carry out their mandate as an independent oversight with the 4 existing Commissioners.

*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](http://www.fns.bc.ca).*

**For further information:**

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