

FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
APRIL 9, 2015**

First Nations Summit congratulates the First Nations of the Te'mexw Treaty Association

Coast Salish Territory/Vancouver, BC – The First Nations Summit (FNS) congratulates the Songhees First Nation, Malahat First Nation, Beecher Bay Indian Band, T'Sou-ke First Nation and Snaw-naw-as First Nation leaders, negotiators and community members on today's signing of the Te'mexw Agreement in Principle (AIP) with the governments of British Columbia and Canada.

"Following more than twenty years of hard fought negotiations, the member First Nations of the Te'mexw Treaty Association should be commended for their hard work, determination and persistence to reach an AIP they believe is appropriate for their respective communities and one that will ultimately lead to a final agreement", said Cheryl Casimer of the FNS political executive. "Today marks an important step as the Te'mexw First Nations move to Stage 5 of negotiations and continue their efforts to reach a final agreement and become self-governing nations."

"The Te'mexw AIP is significant not only for the member First Nations but also all of the other First Nations who remain committed to reaching agreements through the current BC treaty negotiations process", added Robert Phillips, also of the FNS political executive. "Despite recent concerns voiced following the release of the recent Eyford report entitled *A New Direction: Advancing Aboriginal and Treaty Rights*, and BC's unilateral lack of willingness to appoint a Chief Commissioner to the BC Treaty Commission, this AIP is a clear signal to all other First Nations sitting at negotiating tables, that progress through good faith negotiations is possible.

The FNS maintains there is an important opportunity to engage with BC and Canada in a serious dialogue about how to collaborate to improve treaty negotiations in BC, including undertaking a full review of the 43 recommendations of the Eyford report which are consistent with the inclusive and proactive approach of the FNS to jointly work with all interested parties and the two other Principals to openly review, discuss and implement any and all recommendations aimed at improving treaty negotiations in BC.

"We continue to encourage the federal and provincial governments to maintain efforts to work with other First Nations engaged in negotiations to find fair, just and equitable treaty agreements", concluded Phillips.

-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.

For further information:
Colin Braker, Communications Director, FNS, Phone: 604-328-4094

