



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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First Nations Develop Strategy to Expand Market Opportunity in China

Coast Salish Territory / Vancouver – August 9, 2011 – The BC First Nations Leadership Council today announced a China strategy aimed at cultivating stronger relations with China and respond to growing commercial interest in British Columbia’s natural resources sector, the respective traditional territories of First Nations. The *First Nations-China: Transforming Relationships* strategy was launched in Vancouver at a press conference hosted jointly with the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada as part of the Foundation’s new initiative called the National Conversation on Asia.

“First Nations in British Columbia are experiencing unprecedented inquiries from Chinese companies to develop projects on their territories. Our respective organizations have passed resolutions pertaining to a proactive China-First Nations strategy to ensure that our land rights and environmental and cultural values are properly protected,” stated Grand Chief Stewart Phillip of the Union of British Columbian Indian Chiefs.

With the goal of creating economic, cultural and educational opportunities for First Nations youth, elders and businesses, the China strategy includes a seven-point action plan to:

- Build the internal capacity of First Nations’ awareness and understanding on China
- Promote reciprocal annual missions between First Nations/Canada and China
- Establish a China Desk to assist First Nations to respond to and develop business opportunities
- Develop best practices to help Chinese investors understand the consultation and collaboration process with First Nations
- Expand market opportunities for First Nations in China
- Urge the creation of a joint First Nations/Provincial and Federal technical working group
- Creating a branding strategy to promote First Nations opportunities in China

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states that First Nations must be allowed to give their “free, prior and informed consent to activities on their traditional territories. “ This principle is central to our strategy and to how First Nations in BC do business. We recognize the importance of informing investors that our communities must be involved in decision making processes,” stated Grand Chief Edward John, political executive of the First Nations Summit.

“The innovative response developed through the First Nations-China strategy is exactly the type of engagement we hope to inspire through our National Conversation on Asia. The strategy represents a significant step forward in developing a broader appreciation for the rise of Asia and its impact on Canada and First Nations communities,” said Mr. Yuen Pau Woo, President and CEO of the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada.

To read the full report, please visit the following link: <http://www.asiapacific.ca/research-report/first-nations-china-transforming-relationships>

-30-

About the First Nations Leadership Council

The First Nations Leadership Council advocates for the interests of First Nations in BC. The council is comprised of the political executives of the BC Assembly of First Nations, the First Nations Summit and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs. The First Nations Energy and Mining Council, established by the First Nations Leadership Council, is a supporting organization of the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada’s *National Conversation on Asia*.

About APF Canada

The Asia Pacific Foundation is an independent resource for Canadians on contemporary Asia and Canada-Asia relations. As a national not-for-profit organization established by an Act of the Federal Parliament in 1984, the Foundation brings together people and knowledge to provide the most current and comprehensive research, analysis and information on Asia and on Canada’s transpacific relations.

About the National Conversation on Asia

The National Conversation on Asia is a Canada-wide initiative to get Canadians thinking, talking and acting on Canada-Asia issues. It includes a public education and policy development focus. This initiative is generously supported in part by our Founding Partners: Teck Resources Ltd., Bombardier Inc., Shell Canada, and Manulife Financial; Founding Sponsor: HSBC Bank Canada and Port Metro Vancouver; and Founding Supporters: Port of Halifax, Fiera Sceptre, Vancouver Airport Authority, Husky Energy and Deloitte. For more information about the National Conversation on Asia, please click [here](#).

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