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# FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

## News Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
June 6, 2008

### Ottawa Must Listen to Residential School Survivors

**Coast Salish Territory/Vancouver** – The First Nations Leadership Council fully supports the Residential School Survivors in BC and across Canada in their important efforts to have their voices, their words and their expectations reflected in the Government of Canada’s apology to residential school survivors.

Such efforts included the BC Indian Residential School Survivors Society who spoke with 1000 survivors about what would make an apology meaningful to them and forwarded their recommendations to the Prime Minister. As well the National Residential School Survivors Society articulated their expectations in a letter to the Prime Minister on May 30, 2008.

“We welcome the announcement of the long-awaited apology and we strongly urge Canada to recognize, as a fundamental tenet of the apology, what was done was wrong and that Canada accepts full responsibility for the the devastating effects of residential schools,” said Shawn Atleo, Regional Chief for the BC Assembly of First Nations. “The survivors of these schools, many of whom have spent decades struggling to cope with their ordeal, are to be commended for their courage and perseverance.”

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs stated “For all concerned, we too expect the apology to be a sincere expression of remorse that acknowledges the horrific experiences of the survivors who endured physical, emotional and sexual abuse as well as being ripped away from their families and their culture.”

“Canada must begin to reconcile with survivors by asking for forgiveness and to publicly state that Canada will never allow such horrific institutions will never occur again. Doing so, as part of the apology, will greatly assist the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.,” concluded Chief Judith Sayers of the First Nations Summit political executive.

The FNLC recognizes that each individual survivor will determine whether the apology from the Prime Minister is acceptable or not. No group has the right to accept the apology on behalf of the whole.

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*The First Nations Leadership Council is comprised of the political executives of the BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit, and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs.*

*The Council works together to politically represent the interests of First Nations in British Columbia and develop strategies and actions to bring about significant and substantive changes to government policy that will benefit all First Nations in British Columbia.*

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