



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
June 29, 2004

First Nations Summit Seeks Commitment from All Federal Parties to Make Aboriginal Issues a Priority

(North Vancouver, BC) Leaders of the First Nations Summit congratulated Prime Minister Paul Martin and the members of the Liberal minority government following yesterday's federal election.

"We encourage Prime Minister Martin and his minority government to work collectively with the other federal parties to make sure Aboriginal issues are given the top priority they deserve", said Grand Chief Edward John, one of three members of the Summit's Political Executive.

"Our expectation will be for all parties to work together to ensure this minority Liberal government honours its fiduciary obligation to uphold Aboriginal and Treaty Rights in Canada and to make the resolution of fair and equitable treaties in BC a top priority", added Chief John.

"Prime Minister Martin took some steps in the right direction by establishing a Cabinet Committee on Aboriginal Affairs. We sincerely encourage him to continue with these important commitments", stated Summit Political Executive member Dave Porter.

"We will be actively seeking the assistance of all parties to encourage the new Liberal minority government to immediately review the current federal comprehensive claims policy and retract the outdated Inherent Right to Self Government policy", said Porter. "The government must negotiate a new policy that recognizes and implements our inherent right to self government".

"We will work with all political parties that are prepared to energize the BC treaty process and respect our rights. All of the major federal parties have told us they are willing to engage in meaningful talks with First Nations. We are convinced Canadians want to do what's right by aboriginal peoples. It's well past the time to move aboriginal issues to the top of the agenda", said Chief Doug Kelly of the Summit's Political Executive.

The First Nations Summit has sent letters of congratulations to the newly elected government as well as the leadership of the Conservatives, Bloc Quebecois and NDP and has requested an early meeting with each to discuss the federal Aboriginal agenda.

- 30 -

The First Nations Summit speaks on behalf of First Nations involved in the treaty negotiation process in British Columbia. Further background information on the Summit may be found at www.fns.bc.ca.

For further information:
Colin Braker, First Nations Summit
604.990.9939
604.328.4094 (cellular)

Chief Doug Kelly, First Nations Summit
604.317.7379