



For Immediate Release
April 4, 2006

First Nations Summit Disappointed with Federal Throne Speech

Coast Salish Territory/Vancouver – The First Nations Summit notes the weak signal that the federal throne speech released today sends to Aboriginal peoples. The speech makes two references to the Aboriginal peoples of Canada: one noting the success of young Aboriginal entrepreneurs; and the other a general indication that the new government will seek to “improve opportunity for all Canadians, including Aboriginal peoples and new immigrants.”

“No substantive commitments to address socio-economic circumstances of Aboriginal peoples in Canada as a matter of government priority were addressed in the Speech. This in itself is very disappointing for Aboriginal peoples who have worked so hard to convince government officials that these issues merit a high priority focus by the Government of Canada,” said Grand Chief Edward John of the First Nations Summit political executive.

The First Nations Summit has been working closely with other First Nations organizations to convince government officials to work collaboratively on matters of concern to BC First Nations. The Transformative Change Accord between the Government of Canada, the Province of British Columbia, and the First Nations Leadership Council (First Nations Summit, Union of BC Indian Chiefs, BC Assembly of First Nations), signed in November 2005, commits the parties to a ten-year agenda to improve relationships and economic opportunities, and to close the socio-economic gap in areas such as education, health, and housing and infrastructure. The new government has yet to signal a willingness to fulfill its obligations under the Accord, and the First Nations Summit hopes that this Throne Speech is not an indication of the federal government’s commitment to the agreement.

The First Nations Summit will await commitments to First Nations issues in the upcoming federal budget and will continue to advocate for ongoing and sincere government commitments to address the desperate socio-economic circumstances of their peoples.

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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.

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