



# FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

## NEWS RELEASE

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*For Immediate Release*  
July 13, 2007

### **First Nations Summit offended by Parliamentary Secretary's statements regarding Kelowna Agreements**

*Coast Salish Traditional Territory (West Vancouver, BC)* – The leadership of the First Nations Summit is highly offended by statements attributed to Parliamentary Secretary and Winnipeg South MP Rod Bruinooge as reported in the media yesterday. Mr. Bruinooge is reported to have dismissed the November 2005 First Ministers discussions in Kelowna as nothing more than an “expensive press release”.

“Mr. Bruinooge’s statements are dismissive of First Nations leaders from across this country who put forth a significant effort at the November 2005 First Ministers meeting to reach agreements that would improve the lives of our people”, said Grand Chief Edward John, a member of the First Nations Summit Political executive.

“To characterize the First Ministers meeting as nothing more than an “expensive press release” is particularly offensive to BC First Nations leaders as we did reach a historic *BC Transformative Change Accord (attached)* that was **signed** by BC First Nations leaders and the governments of Canada and British Columbia as represented by Prime Minister Paul Martin and Premier Gordon Campbell. It is the responsibility of the current federal government to continue to work with us to implement the signed *Transformative Change Accord* in our efforts to close the serious social and economic gaps faced by First Nations in BC”, added Chief John.

“Mr. Bruinooge’s comments have clearly brought into question this government’s willingness to uphold its obligation to implement signed agreements and to seriously engage with First Nations in our continuing efforts to address the unacceptable levels of poverty and despair faced by our people”, concluded Chief John. “We will be seeking clarification from the Minister of Indian Affairs, Jim Prentice on this matter”.

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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](http://www.fns.bc.ca).

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Transformative Change Accord  
-between-

**Government of British Columbia**  
-and-  
**Government of Canada**  
-and-  
**The Leadership Council**  
**Representing the First Nations of British Columbia**

The Government of British Columbia, First Nations and the Government of Canada agree that new approaches for addressing the rights and title interests of First Nations are required if First Nations are to be full partners in the success and opportunity of the province.

At the First Ministers' Meeting on Aboriginal issues on November 24<sup>th</sup>/25<sup>th</sup>, 2005, First Ministers and Aboriginal Leaders committed to strengthening relationships on a government-to-government basis, and on focussing efforts to close the gap in the areas of education, health, housing and economic opportunities.

This accord respects the agreement reached on November 25<sup>th</sup> and sets out how the parties intend to implement it in British Columbia.

Two important documents preceded the First Ministers' Meeting:

- *First Nations - Federal Crown Political Accord* – on the Recognition and Implementation of First Nations Governments signed in May 2005
- *The New Relationship* – A vision document setting out an initial work plan to move toward reconciliation of Aboriginal and Crown Titles and Jurisdictions within British Columbia

The goals in each document continue to be pursued and the understandings reached in both serve as the foundation for this tripartite accord.

The purpose of this Accord is to bring together the Government of British Columbia, First Nations and the Government of Canada to achieve the goals of closing the social and economic gap between First Nations and other British Columbians over the next 10 years, of reconciling aboriginal rights and title with those of the Crown, and of establishing a new relationship based upon mutual respect and recognition.

The Accord acknowledges and respects established and evolving jurisdictional and fiduciary relationships and responsibilities, and will be implemented in a manner that seeks to remove impediments to progress by establishing effective working relationships.

The actions and processes set out herein are guided by the following principles.

- Recognition that aboriginal and treaty rights exist in British Columbia.
- Belief that negotiations are the chosen means for reconciling rights.
- Requirement that consultation and accommodation obligations are met and fulfilled.
- Ensure that First Nations engage in consultation and accommodation, and provide consent when required, freely and with full information.
- Acknowledgement and celebration of the diverse histories and traditions of First Nations.
- Understanding that a new relationship must be based on mutual respect and responsibility.
- Recognition that this agreement is intended to support social and economic well-being of First Nations.
- Recognition that accountability for results is critical.
- Respect for existing bilateral and tripartite agreements.

The parties to this Accord acknowledge the importance of First Nations' governance in supporting healthy communities. Actions set out in this Accord and in subsequent action plans will reflect this reality.

The parties understand that new resources will be required to close the gaps and federal and provincial investments on and off reserve will be made available pursuant to the decisions taken at the November 2005 First Ministers' Meeting. The parties also recognize the need to examine how existing resources are expended with the view that transformative change will require different funding approaches.

The Province of British Columbia, the Government of Canada and the First Nations of British Columbia agree to establish a 10 year plan to bridge the differences in socio-economic standards between First Nation citizens and other British Columbians. It is understood that a 10 ten year plan must by necessity evolve over time, and that concrete actions are required at its outset to build the relationships and momentum to achieve the desired outcome.

Accordingly, the parties to this Accord agree to undertake immediate actions in the following areas:

- To improve relationships by:
  - Supporting a tripartite negotiation forum to address issues having to do with the reconciliation of Aboriginal rights and title;
  - Engaging in the review and renewal of claims, treaty implementation and self-government policies;
  - Holding an annual meeting of political leaders intended to jointly discuss issues of mutual concern, report on progress and plan ongoing action; and,
  - Developing and implementing a communications plan to increase public awareness of the diversity and value of First Nations cultures, including support for the 2008 North American Indigenous Games

***Possible Indicators include:***

- Concluded Treaties and other agreements
- Increased awareness by the public of diversity and value of First Nation cultures

- To close the gap in education by:
  - Concluding a tripartite agreement on First Nation jurisdiction over K-12 education;
  - Supporting First Nation learners;
  - Focusing resources on early childhood learning and post-secondary training, including skills, training and apprenticeships; and,
  - Creating a high quality learning environment for First Nation students through curriculum development, teacher certification and the early detection of, and response to, learning disabilities.

***Possible Indicators include:***

- First Nations children exhibiting readiness for Kindergarten.
- Aboriginal students meeting expectations in reading, writing and numeracy (Foundation Skills Assessment).
- K-12 (or Dogwood equivalent) completion rates .
- Aboriginal students enrolled in post-secondary education (alternatively “highest level of education attained”).
- Number of First Nation teachers.
- K – 12 curriculum modules.

- To close the gap in housing and infrastructure by:
  - Building on-reserve housing units.
  - Developing a partnering agreement to address off-reserve housing.
  - Exploring the devolution and development of Aboriginal off-reserve housing units to an aboriginal housing authority.
  - Supporting capacity development in the area of housing, including building maintenance and standards, and training and employment having to do with housing construction;
  - Undertaking measures to ensure the safety of water supply;
  - Improving other basic infrastructure such as wastewater systems, roads and fire protection;
  - Undertaking comprehensive community planning; and,
  - Providing broadband connectivity to First Nation communities.

***Possible Indicators include:***

- First Nation households in core housing.
- First Nations people trained in construction and maintenance of housing and related infrastructure.
- Number of Aboriginal subsidized housing units .
- Number of on-reserve and off-reserve housing units built.
- On-reserve boil water advisories.
- First Nation communities with broadband access.

- To close the gap in health by<sup>1</sup>:
  - Establishing mental health programs to address substance abuse and youth suicide;
  - Integrating the ActNow strategy with First Nations health programs to reduce incidence of preventable diseases like diabetes;
  - Establishing tripartite pilot programs in the Northern Health Authority and the Lytton Health Centre to improve acute care and community health services utilizing an integrated approach to health and community programs as directed by the needs of First Nations; and,
  - Increasing the number of trained First Nation health care professionals.

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<sup>1</sup> BC First Nations will be supported in the health actions by the direction and contribution from the Assembly of First Nations.

**Possible Indicators include:**

- Increased life expectancy.
- Age standardized mortality rates.
- Youth suicides.
- Infant (up to one year) and neonatal (up to 28 days) mortality rates.
- Level of incidence of diabetes.
- Level of childhood obesity.
- Practising, certified First Nation health care professionals.

- To close the gap in economic opportunities by:
  - Providing increased access to lands and resources through interim measures;
  - Considering the implementation of revenue sharing arrangements;
  - Holding a provincial summit on economic development; and,
  - Supporting First Nations business and entrepreneurial development by increasing access to business training, and skills development and considering ways to facilitate greater access to capital funding sources.

**Possible Indicators include:**

- Employment rates.
- Average weekly and hourly wage levels (LFS data).
- Business start ups.
- Number of entrepreneurs in BC.
- First Nation registered apprentices.

The Parties agree that by December, 2006 a detailed tripartite implementation strategy will be developed laying out specific actions and building upon a shared commitment to undertake as many initiatives as possible in year one of the 10 year plan (2006 – 2016). The Parties understand the collective responsibility for reporting on the progress of closing the socio-economic gaps that exist between First Nations people and other British Columbians. Accordingly, resources will be focussed towards developing the data and information necessary to appropriately monitor and report on agreed upon action plans. Canada, British Columbia and the First Nations of British Columbia agree that regular public reports are necessary. Data collection will respect the privacy of individuals.

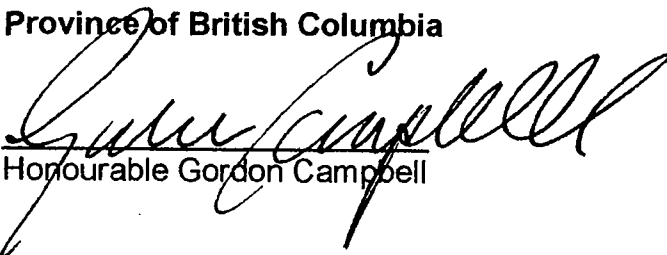
For greater certainty, nothing in this agreement shall be construed so as to abrogate or derogate from the protection of any existing or future Aboriginal or treaty rights of the First Nations peoples of British Columbia.

Signed this 25<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2005.

**Canada**

  
Rt. Honourable Paul Martin

**Province of British Columbia**

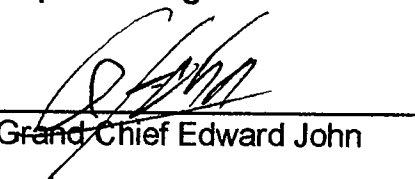
  
Honourable Gordon Campbell

**First Nations Leadership Council**


**Representing the BC Assembly of First Nations:**

  
Regional Chief Shawn Atleo

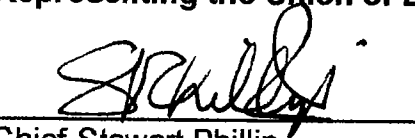
**Representing the First Nations Summit:**

  
Grand Chief Edward John

  
Grand Chief Doug Kelly

  
Dave Porter

**Representing the Union of BC Indian Chiefs:**

  
Chief Stewart Phillip

  
Chief Robert Shintah

  
Chief Mike Retasket