

FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 13, 2015

***BCTC role vital in supporting negotiations as a viable path
towards reconciliation through treaty agreements in BC***

Coast Salish Territory/Vancouver – First Nations Summit (FNS) leaders were in Vancouver today for the release of the 2015 BC Treaty Commission (BCTC) Annual Report.

“The BCTC Annual report clearly articulates the important contributions the Commission has and continues to make as an independent facilitator of the negotiations process despite being hampered by the lack of a Chief Commissioner since March 2015”, said Cheryl Casimer of the First Nations Summit Political Executive.

“While the Principals are currently undertaking a multilateral engagement initiative to identify and consider options to improve and expedite treaty negotiations, the First Nations Summit remains of the view that a Chief Commissioner should be appointed as soon as possible to ensure the BCTC has the ability to properly fulfill its mandate. We will continue to reiterate and emphasize this point following the conclusion of the upcoming federal election”, added Casimer.

The BCTC report once again identifies the resolution of overlaps and shared territories between First Nations as one of the largest issues to resolve for First Nations seeking treaty agreements.

“The FNS supports the work of the BCTC in their direct and indirect efforts in assisting First Nations to achieve resolution on overlap and shared territory issues. This important work will remain a critical focal point and is key to achieving further negotiated agreements”, said Robert Phillips of the FNS Political Executive.

The FNS feels it is important to reiterate that, despite BC’s lack of willingness to appoint a new BCTC Chief Commissioner, the treaty negotiations process remains active. The FNS remains fully committed to continuing its work with the Principals, especially following next week’s federal election, to improve the negotiations process, as well as naming a new Chief Commissioner. Until the Principals reach agreement on this issue, the FNS has every confidence in the BCTC’s ability to carry out their mandate as an independent facilitator with the four existing Commissioners.

-30-

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

For Further Information contact:
Colin Braker, Communications Director, FNS, 604-926-9903

