

First Nations Summit

STATEMENT

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First Nations Summit statement on the restructuring of the former Ministry of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada

Coast Salish Territory, Vancouver, British Columbia – Leaders of the First Nations Summit (FNS) are applauding today's announcement by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau that Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada will be split into two portfolios; "*Indigenous Services*" and "*Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs*". Prime Minister Trudeau announced that the Hon. Jane Philpott will be the new Minister of Indigenous Services and the Hon. Carolyn Bennett will be Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs.

The FNS has long held the position that the responsibility for Crown-First Nations relations and negotiations should be separate from social issues and program delivery.

Today's announcement is an indication the federal government is serious about improving the relationship with Indigenous peoples across Canada and making substantive and necessary changes that will help to close the socio-economic gaps faced by our communities. We welcome Minister Philpott's appointment as Minister of Indigenous Services and look forward to meeting with her soon.

Today's changes, and the creation of the Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs portfolio, also place a long-needed priority on the recognition of Indigenous Title and Rights and self-government, the recognition and implementation of historic treaties and the ongoing negotiation of Treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements. The FNS looks forward to early discussions with Minister Bennett on much needed changes to federal negotiating policies and mandates, as well as the old and tired colonial approach historically promoted within the federal bureaucracy.

The FNS will be seeking an early meeting of the Principals to the BC Treaty Negotiations Process, with Minister Bennett and Scott Fraser, provincial Minister of Indigenous Relations and reconciliation, as soon as possible.

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The First Nations Summit speaks on behalf of First Nations involved in treaty negotiations in British Columbia. The Summit is also a NGO in Special Consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Further background information on the Summit may be found at www.fns.bc.ca.

For further information: Colin Braker, Communications Director, FNS
Phone: 604-926-9903