

# First Nations Summit

## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **Indigenous Issues must be at the forefront of any minority government**

**Coast Salish Traditional Territory (Vancouver)** – Leaders of the First Nations Summit (FNS) congratulate Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the members of the Liberal government following yesterday's federal election which saw the Liberal party win the highest number of seats in Parliament.

"We encourage Prime Minister Trudeau and his caucus to take the necessary steps to ensure a stable government for Canada over the next four years, with Indigenous issues being at the centre", said Cheryl Casimer of the First Nations Summit Political Executive.

"The new minority government must take proactive steps to improving the lives of indigenous peoples across Canada, beginning with the introduction of federal legislation to implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which sets out the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of Indigenous peoples and ensures that our basic human rights are respected and upheld", added Casimer.

"The Canadian electorate has indicated they are not confident enough to give any party a majority. Instead the election result represents a challenge for the minority government to work with other parties to gain confidence and to effect real tangible change that benefits Canadians, especially Indigenous peoples", said Robert Phillips, also of the First Nations Summit Political Executive.

"The election result points to the possibility of a Liberal government needing the support of other parties, including the NDP, to maintain their governing status. Given the current environment, this would seem to be in the best interest of Indigenous people across Canada. The Liberals and NDP clearly provided the most detailed platforms on Indigenous issues and also provided the most detailed responses to key questions posed by the First Nations Leadership Council during the campaign. We expect the role of any party supporting a minority government to include oversight on Indigenous issues to ensure election commitments do not ring hollow", added Phillips.

The Liberals, NDP and Green Parties all had significant Indigenous commitments in their respective platforms and the First Nations Summit expects them to work not only together but with Indigenous leaders and communities across Canada to implement those commitments in an effort to close the socio-economic gaps faced by our communities and citizens.

Key Liberal commitments that FNS leaders expect the new Trudeau government to act on as soon as possible include;

- a. *Introduction of co-developed legislation to implement the Declaration as government legislation by the end of 2020. In this work, we will ensure that this legislation fully respects the intent of the Declaration, and establishes Bill C-262 as the floor, rather than the ceiling, when it comes to drafting this new legislation.*

- b. *Fully implement the new recognition-based framework for Treaty negotiations in BC to advance innovations in treaty-making with BC First Nations.*
- c. *Implementation of a co-developed, First Nations process for the ongoing review, maintenance, and enforcement of Canada's treaty obligations between the Crown and First Nations communities supported by a new National Treaty Commissioner's Office which will be designed and established with First Nations partners.*
- d. *Ensure that the 'Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis Children, Youth and Families' is fully implemented, with long-term, predictable, and sufficient funding to support the full implementation of the Act.*
- e. *Fully implement the 'Indigenous Languages Act' to preserve, promote, and revitalize Indigenous languages in Canada with the provision of long-term, predictable, and sufficient funding to support the full implementation of the Act.*

First Nations Summit leadership will also be requesting the new minority government to immediately reverse their decision to seek a judicial review of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal decision in *First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada and Assembly of First Nations et al. v. Attorney General of Canada (for the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada)*, (2019 CHRT 39). This appeal is of a critical ruling on compensating First Nations victims of discrimination in the child welfare system due to their suffering willful and reckless discrimination as a result of an underfunded and poorly coordinated child welfare system. The appeal filed by Canada on October 6, 2019, which seeks to quash the order of the CHRT, is clear step backwards for reconciliation.

A full list of commitments made by the Liberals, NDP and Green Party can be found in their respective letters to the First Nations Summit, Union of BC Indian Chiefs and BC Assembly of First Nations at: [www.fns.bc.ca](http://www.fns.bc.ca).

The FNS looks forward to Prime Minister Trudeau naming his Cabinet in the coming weeks and will be requesting early meetings with him and his Cabinet to discuss the new federal Indigenous agenda.

The FNS also sends congratulations to Puglaas, Jody Wilson Raybould for her successful campaign as an Independent in the riding of Vancouver-Granville. The FNS looks forward to working with her in her new capacity as an Independent member of Parliament. The FNS also commends and holds our hands up to all of the Indigenous people across the country who put their name forward for election during the 2019 campaign, especially those in BC ridings.

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

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