



FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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First Nations Summit Congratulates Newly Elected National Chief Shawn Atleo, Expresses Appreciation for Outgoing National Chief Fontaine's Service

Coast Salish Territory/Vancouver - The First Nations Summit today congratulated Chief Shawn *A-in-chut* Atleo on his election as National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations. Chief Atleo is a Hereditary Chief from the Ahousaht First Nation, and served two terms as the BC Regional Chief of the AFN since 2003.

"We are very pleased for Chief Atleo, and we are especially pleased for First Nations across this country," said Grand Chief Ed John, member of the First Nations Summit Political Executive. "*A-in-chut* understands national issues that impact the lives of our people, and he is committed to advocating for the changes we need to see in our communities."

Chief Atleo's concerns around Canada's recent refusal to support the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples are shared by the First Nations Summit, and we feel that his dedication to the rights of Aboriginal people around the world is an invaluable quality in the leader of the AFN.

"Chief Atleo shares the desire of many First Nations to overcome the imposed divisions that have often kept us from addressing the many challenges we face," said Grand Chief Doug Kelly, Political Executive member

The Summit also feels that Chief Atleo's extensive experience and long-term involvement with First Nations politics in B.C. will be beneficial as we enter into the next phase of our relationship with the provincial government.

"It will help us enormously that he is familiar with the Treaty process and understands the proposed Recognition and Reconciliation legislation," said Dan Smith, Political Executive member. "These are issues that will have long-term impacts on how First Nations interact with the BC government going forward."

The Summit wishes Chief Atleo well during the course of his mandate, and we are confident that he will advance the rights of First Nations during his time as National Chief.

The First Nations Summit would also like to express its deepest appreciation to outgoing National Chief Phil Fontaine for his dedicated service and tireless efforts to bring our community issues to the national and international stage.

“Phil Fontaine is a great leader. His passion and perseverance have been a source of strength for our people. Canada is a more just society because of his service,” said all Political Executive members.

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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