



FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
January 27, 2009

Economic stimulus funds must flow to First Nations communities as soon as possible

Coast Salish Territory/Vancouver – Although today's federal budget falls well short in committing the investments needed close the wide social and economic gaps faced by First Nations communities, there are clear and positive signs that the federal government recognizes that investing in First Nations infrastructure makes economic sense for everyone. It is imperative that the funds identified flow to communities on an **urgent** basis.

"With the \$1.4B in Aboriginal-specific infrastructure investment and \$305M in spending in First Nations and Inuit Health programs, the federal government has made part of what is a significant and hopefully on-going investment to improve the living conditions in our communities and health of our people", said Grand Chief Edward John of the First Nations Summit political executive. "We are confident that these investments will prove that investing in our communities can help to turn around the national economic crisis faced by all Canadians."

"While Aboriginal-specific infrastructure investments, including \$200M for First Nations schools, are a positive sign, we are disappointed the federal government did not announce significant investments in operational education expenses such as teachers salaries, computer equipment, special education funding, and other related expenses", said Grand Chief Doug Kelly of the First Nations Summit political executive. "The First Nations youth of today will be a significant percentage of the Canadian workforce of tomorrow. Therefore, we must ensure that Aboriginal learners not only have the schools to learn in but are also provided with the instruction, technology and tools necessary for success".

"Here in BC, First Nations have developed action plans and strategies in a number of sectors, including health, housing and infrastructure. We are organized, and prepared to allocate these investments immediately towards priorities that will benefit our communities and stimulate the economy for First Nations as well as all British Columbians", added Dan Smith of the First Nations Summit political executive.

– 30 –

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.

For further information:
Colin Braker, Communications Director
First Nations Summit
Tel: 604-926-9903 or 604-328-4094