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## FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

### News Release

For Immediate Release  
June 29, 2007

#### First Nations Leadership Council rallies with supporters in Vancouver on National Day of Action to encourage all Canadians to stand together in solidarity for Aboriginal Justice

**Coast Salish Traditional Territory/Vancouver** – Today, on the Assembly of First Nations' National Day of Action, the First Nations Leadership Council, comprised of the executives of the BC Assembly of First Nations, the First Nations Summit and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, will march with supporters from Vanier Park to a 12 Noon rally at the Federal Government Building located at Library Square in downtown Vancouver. The First Nations Leadership Council and supporters will be rallying to call for concerted action to combat First Nations poverty and calling on governments to respect and recognize Aboriginal and treaty rights in B.C. and across Canada.

"The National Day of Action is an opportunity for all Canadians to rally and call out for justice and fairness for First Nations people in this country," said Shawn Atleo, B.C. Regional Chief of the Assembly of First Nations and a member of the First Nations Leadership Council. "First Nations poverty is the greatest social justice issue facing Canada. Today is about calling for an end to First Nations poverty in this country. Closing the socio-economic gaps faced by our people will be a step towards the restoration and revitalization of First Nations communities thereby leading to a stronger Canada".

"Resolving outstanding land claims, securing a viable land base and legislated access to resource revenue-sharing agreements for First Nations is the key to unlocking the full potential and prosperity for First Nations" said Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs and member of the First Nations Leadership Council. "The reconciliation of First Nations title, rights and jurisdictions with the Federal Crown through the recognition and implementation of First Nations' inherent right to self-government is an important and critical step towards building strong and healthy First Nation communities in BC. There is only so far we can go without the active participation of the federal government. Canada must work with us to resolve these and other key fundamental issues facing our people".

"The British Columbia government has shown leadership in working with us to address unacceptable socio-economic gaps that exist for First Nations people in BC as reflected in Premier Campbell's media statements yesterday", said Chief Judith Sayers, a member of the First Nations Summit Political Executive the First Nations Leadership Council. "Canada needs healthy and educated First Nations to ensure a healthy and educated workforce of tomorrow. Improving the lives of First Nations will create jobs and economic opportunities and will make Canada a stronger, healthier and better nation for all Canadians".

“Today is the one-year anniversary of the United Nations Human Rights Council’s adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which sets minimum international standards for the dignity, well-being and survival of the world’s indigenous peoples”, said Grand Chief Edward John, also a member of the First Nations Summit Political Executive and First Nations Leadership Council.

“Canada was one of only two nations who chose to vote against the Declaration and continues to work to undermine adoption by the UN General Assembly. If Canada is truly serious about being a world leader on human rights issues it will reverse its regressive policy on the Declaration and encourage its passage by the UN General Assembly”.

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*The First Nations Leadership Council is comprised of the political executives of the First Nations Summit, Union of BC Indian Chiefs and the BC Assembly of First Nations. The Council works together to politically represent the interests of First Nations in British Columbia and develop strategies and actions to bring about significant and substantive changes to government policy that will benefit all First Nations in British Columbia.*

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