



News Release

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Cooperation Vital for Implementing Child Review Recommendations

(Coast Salish Territory/Vancouver) – The BC First Nations Leadership Council has reviewed and embraced the report presented by Ted Hughes recognizing the opportunities it creates for ensuring the health and well-being of all children. The review provides 62 recommendations for improving the child welfare system, and it endorses a cooperative approach for bringing these recommendations into action.

“We need to move forward in a focused manner to put Hughes’ recommendations into action,” expressed BC Regional Chief Shawn Atleo. “First Nations need to work in cooperation with all parties, the Ministry, the Opposition, and the federal government. We have met with Minister Hagen, expressed our support for the report, and discussed plans for fulfilling the recommendations in the spirit of the *New Relationship*. ”

“The report is about our children, about their safety and their future, which is something that our people feel very strongly about,” said Grand Chief Edward John, a member of the First Nations Summit political executive. “We need to work together as leaders, as governments, as communities, to ensure that our children receive the highest level of care with a system that is in keeping with our cultures. The report underscores that our communities’ need adequate support and capacity for developing community-based childcare services with key involvement of the federal government.”

“We have reached significant and hard-fought agreements such as the Kelowna Accord and the Transformative Change Accord, any implementation plan must be in keeping with the intent and commitments of these historic agreements,” said Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs. “We need to be full partners in this childcare plan with our communities’ priorities at the forefront.”

Hughes’ report clearly notes that commitments and agreements reached in Kelowna at the First Ministers’ meeting need to be upheld and that recognition and reconciliation of historic and systemic barriers that have contributed to the high number of Aboriginal children in care can be achieved through these agreements.

“Our children make up more than half of the children in care in BC, and opportunities for real dialogue and partnerships are integral for a responsible and responsive system,” expressed Atleo. “We support the vision and look forward to continuing this work.”

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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