



# FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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### **First Nations Summit questions government's resolve to finalize treaties in BC**

#### ***Treaty Negotiation Office budget cut by 37 percent***

Victoria, BC – Leaders of the First Nations Summit are angered by the provincial government's lack of commitment to treaty negotiations in the 2004-05 budget delivered today. The treaty negotiation office is facing a thirty-seven percent decrease in funding over the next two years, which the First Nations Summit says demonstrates no real commitment to finalizing treaties in BC.

"The finance minister's budget cuts to the treaty negotiation office are just one more example of the provincial government's lack of commitment to resolve treaties," said Grand Chief Edward John, Executive member of the First Nations Summit. "The government has stated their priority is to expand efforts to achieve reconciliation with First Nations, but that is not reflected in today's budget."

"Rather than negotiating comprehensive agreements, the government is focusing on short-term "take it or leave it" economic measures, providing little opportunity for negotiation and no long-term economic stability for First Nation's communities," said Lydia Hwitsum, also an executive member of the First Nations Summit.

"The government's strong desire to access resources that are currently encumbered by Aboriginal title cannot be dealt with in isolation. The government needs to take a comprehensive approach to good-faith negotiations to finalize treaties," added Hwitsum.

Despite the provincial government's cuts, First Nations remain committed to good faith negotiations with the provincial and federal governments.

In addition to cuts in treaty negotiations, the cuts in Children and Family Development and other key Ministries working with aboriginal organizations across the province will result in a disproportionate negative impact on aboriginal people.

"Cuts in the Ministry of Children and Family Development will delay the child protection strategies for First Nations children already at risk," added Hwitsum.

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The First Nations Summit speaks on behalf of First Nations involved in the treaty negotiation process in British Columbia. [www.fns.bc.ca](http://www.fns.bc.ca)

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