



MEDIA STATEMENT

For Immediate Release
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25 Years Later – Repatriation of the Canadian Constitution Remains an Important Milestone for Aboriginal People

Coast Salish Traditional Territory (Vancouver, BC) – Today, Tuesday April 17th marks the 25th anniversary of the repatriation of the Canadian Constitution and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, a significant anniversary that will not go unnoticed by Aboriginal people in BC.

While there may not be any special Aboriginal events scheduled to mark the anniversary of the Constitution's repatriation, many Aboriginal leaders will undoubtedly reflect on the significant impact of this moment in our history. The Constitution (1982) and Charter of Rights and Freedoms have proven through the past two and a half decades to be important tools in ensuring the rights of Aboriginal people in Canada are recognized and protected.

Through the Constitution Act (1982), Aboriginal and treaty rights, previously subject to a variety of legislative infringements, were given constitutional recognition and protection through Section 35.

Over the past 25 years Aboriginal people have continuously been forced to go to the courts for an elaboration of the rights affirmed by Section 35 of the Constitution (1982) and a judicial review of federal and provincial government conduct and policies in landmark cases such as *Sparrow* (1990), *Delgamuukw* (1997) *Haida* (2004) and *Taku* (2004).

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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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