



FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

NEWS RELEASE

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Governments must address disproportionate poverty rates of First Nations children in BC

Coast Salish Territory (Vancouver, BC) – First Nations Summit leaders are once again calling on governments to address the disproportionate child poverty rates suffered by on and off-reserve First Nations children in BC following this week's release of the *2013 Child Poverty Report Card* by First Call; the BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition.

"Several independent organizations including, *First Call; the BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition, the BC Representative for Children and Youth and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives*, have released reports over the past year which conclude that First Nations children, both on and off-reserve suffer from a disproportionately high rate of poverty in comparison to the non-aboriginal public. It is time for governments to step up to the plate and work cooperatively with First Nations to address this issue", said Cheryl Casimer of the First Nations Summit political executive.

"Canada is known as having one of the highest standards of living in the world, which makes it incredibly difficult to comprehend how one in five children overall and one out of every two status First Nations children in BC live in poverty. It is high time for the federal and provincial governments to immediately work with First Nations to implement an Aboriginal child poverty reduction strategy to ensure no more children fall between the cracks or continue to go without the essentials afforded to all others. The mere thought of children going to bed hungry is totally unacceptable", concluded Ms. Casimer.

The First Nations Summit supports recommendation #7 of the First Call *2013 Child Poverty Report Card* which states;

Recommendation #7 - Increase funding for child welfare, education and community health services for Aboriginal peoples on and off reserves, and develop a long-term poverty eradication strategy in coordination with First Nations, urban Aboriginal communities and provincial governments.

The First Nations Summit leaders will be requesting meetings with provincial and federal government officials to discuss a strategy to reduce Aboriginal Child poverty rates.

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The First Nations Summit speaks on behalf of First Nations involved in treaty negotiations in British Columbia. The Summit is also a NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Further background information on the Summit may be found at www.fns.bc.ca.

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