

First Nations Summit

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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First Nations leaders call for Pope Francis to rescind Doctrine of Discovery

(Xʷməθkʷəy̍əm (Musqueam), Sḵwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səfilwətaʔ/sefilwitulh (Tseil-Waututh)/Vancouver, BC) — The First Nations Summit (FNS) recognizes and appreciates yesterday's historic apology from Pope Francis and calls on the Pope to put substance and positive action to his words and continue to address the wrongs of the Catholic Church by rescinding the Papal Bull on the Doctrine of Discovery and returning the many artifacts that remain in the Church's possession.

In coming to Canada, Pope Francis has clearly heard Indigenous leaders and residential school survivors, and understands the suffering of those who attended residential school and First Nations people who continue to suffer today. The respect he has shown our Elders, survivors and those we remember in yesterday's apology is an important and necessary step forward on the path towards reconciliation.

We are disappointed that the Pope's visit to Canada has not also put words into action by rescinding the Doctrine of Discovery, which has been the basis for much of the justification for taking lands and resources from the First Nations of North America and beyond. This is a necessary step to achieve true reconciliation and fulfill recommendation 49 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Countless survivors, their families and the generations that have followed have demonstrated resilience and determination to preserve our identity, culture and traditions, despite the dark shadow of residential schools. We honour residential school survivors and the many lost children across Canada and remain committed to supporting efforts to right the wrongs of the past.

In turn, the Catholic Church must now rescind the Papal Bull on the Doctrine of Discovery, make reparations and return the First Nations artifacts, human remains and church records that hold important historical and cultural significance.

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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 an 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.

For further information:

Cheryl Casimer, FNS Political Executive
Robert Phillips, FNS Political Executive
Hugh Braker, FNS Political Executive

778-875-2157
778-875-4463
250-720-7998