

First Nations Summit

STATEMENT

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
DECEMBER 7, 2023**

First Nations Summit congratulates Cindy Woodhouse on her election as National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations

(xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam), Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C.) – The First Nations Summit (FNS) Executive congratulates Cindy Woodhouse on her election to the position of National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations. Ms. Woodhouse is only the second woman to be elected to the role of AFN National Chief since the AFN was established in 1982.

First Nations leadership from across Canada participated this week in the hybrid Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Special Chiefs Assembly and the election for National Chief. Ms. Woodhouse was elected to her first term as National Chief after six ballots and subsequent concession by second place candidate, David Pratt. Ms. Woodhouse brings valuable experience to the position of National Chief from her many roles including Regional Chief of Manitoba.

The FNS looks forward to a positive working relationship with National Chief Woodhouse. In particular, we look forward to working with her on the recognition and implementation of First Nations' Title, Rights and Treaty Rights; ongoing treaty negotiations in BC; implementation of the federal *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* Action Plan and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action; obtaining the necessary supports for communities dealing with the confirmation of unmarked burials at former Indian Residential School (IRS) sites; the climate emergency, MMIWG issues; bringing unity to the AFN and improving the overall economic and social conditions in our communities.

The FNS is hopeful that National Chief Woodhouse can bring unity and stability to the AFN and that Indigenous communities across Canada will be united in collective efforts at the local, regional, national, and international levels to ensure our voices are heard as we work to close the disproportionate socio-economic gaps faced by our communities, while also ensuring the preservation of our cultures and languages.

The FNS expresses appreciation to the other five candidates who put their names forward for National Chief: Reginald Bellerose – Muskowekwan First Nation, SK; Craig Makinaw – Ermineskin Cree Nation, AB; Shiela North – Bunibonibee Cree Nation, MB; David Pratt – Muscowpetung First Nation, SK; and Dean Sayers – Batchewana First Nation, ON.

We appreciate their resolve and commitment to running in the election for National Chief and for their significant contributions in their respective leadership roles to improve the lives of First Nations peoples in Canada.

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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 information on the First Nations Summit may be found at www.fns.bc.ca.

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