

FOR RELEASE
June 10, 2016

First meeting of ministers and leaders at new Federal, Provincial, Territorial and Indigenous Forum

OTTAWA— Today, federal, provincial and territorial Ministers responsible for Aboriginal Affairs and the leaders of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), Métis National Council (MNC), Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), Indigenous Peoples' Assembly of Canada (IPAC) and Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) met together and confirmed a new approach in support of improving outcomes for Indigenous peoples and promoting reconciliation in Canada.

The meeting was co-chaired by Northwest Territories Premier Bob McLeod and Aboriginal Affairs Working Group (AAWG) chair and Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Carolyn Bennett.

Ministers and leaders agreed to establish the framework for a new Federal, Provincial, Territorial and Indigenous Forum (FPTIF), which will replace the AAWG, and to a strong partnership to address the issues that are important to Indigenous peoples in Canada.

With a new federal partner comes the opportunity to advance the vital work of reconciliation with all Canadians.

Ministers and leaders discussed a number of important issues such as:

- the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action;
- the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- the socio-economic gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians;
- the socio-economic action plan for Aboriginal women;
- youth engagement; and,
- child and family services and Jordan's Principle.

Additionally, there was agreement to move forward on a number of areas for collaboration including:

- cooperation in the process of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls;
- action to prevent and address violence against Indigenous women and girls; and
- sharing best practices that have led to measurable results.

The FPTIF will provide national leadership to ensure a strong future for Indigenous peoples across the country.

Ministers and leaders agreed to meet annually to discuss progress on these activities. Ontario Minister of Aboriginal Affairs David Zimmer and Minister Carolyn Bennett agreed to co-chair the next meeting of the FPTIF.

Quotes

"We all have a part to play in the vital work of reconciliation, today marks another step forward. Together with my provincial and territorial counterparts and Indigenous leaders we are making a strong commitment to work in partnership which will lead to progress on issues most important to Indigenous communities and for Canada."

*Carolyn Bennett, M.D., P.C., M.P.,
Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs*

"Working in partnership with Aboriginal governments has long been a priority for the Government of the Northwest Territories and is essential to the success of our territory and its people. I have been pleased to bring that experience to my role chairing the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group, and now co-chairing the Federal/Provincial/Territorial/Indigenous Forum. It has been an opportunity for our territory to strengthen our relationships with valuable partners that I believe all share an interest in improving the lives of Indigenous Canadians and moving towards reconciliation."

*Bob McLeod,
Premier of the Northwest Territories*

"Ontario is pleased to join the Federal government as the co-chair of the newly formed Federal-Provincial-Territorial and Indigenous Forum. This new forum provides us a space to build on the momentum of the former Aboriginal Affairs Working Group, and work together, in the spirit of reconciliation, on issues important to Indigenous people in Canada."

*David Zimmer, M.P.P.,
Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, Ontario*

"The Native Women's Association of Canada is pleased that the newly formed Federal Provincial Territorial Indigenous Forum (FPTIF) will advance and address the multitude of issues and challenges that Indigenous Women and Girls face in Canada. NWAC also believes the FPTIF partnership will provide a link to address in a timely fashion the emerging and

existing inequities and violations that will surface from the testimony in a National Inquiry. I am very optimistic we are on a path to reconciliation and that Indigenous Women and Girls voices will be heard and respected as we move forward together."

*Dr. Dawn Lavell-Harvard,
Native Women's Association of Canada president*

"I remain committed to working with jurisdictions to advance Inuit issues. Together with the federal government, we are renewing the Inuit-to-Crown relationship in Canada. But Inuit also collaborate closely with the provinces and territories in which Inuit live. I am pleased to be able to work in partnership with these governments as well, to strengthen our ties and also build a common understanding of the particular needs of Inuit in a provincial and territorial context."

*Natan Obed,
Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami president*

"AFN's aim is to revitalize these meetings to ensure tangible, measurable results for our people that close the gap in the quality of life between First Nations and Canada. We want to use this new forum to achieve positive change on key priorities."

*National Chief Perry Bellegarde,
Assembly of First Nations*

"The AAWG has worked diligently to improve the socio-economic outcomes of Indigenous Peoples across Canada. Moving forward together with our agenda, as Indigenous organizations, provincial and territorial governments, we now welcome the federal government's participation. It is imperative that we continue moving forward advancing reconciliation and renewing the relationship with all Indigenous Peoples, regardless of their status or whether they are living in urban, rural, or remote areas."

*National Chief Dwight Dorey,
Indigenous Peoples' Assembly of Canada*

"I am hoping that the Forum will serve as a means of realigning all jurisdictions toward building nation-to-nation relationships with First Nations, the Métis Nation and the Inuit on the road to reconciliation."

*Clément Chartier
Métis National Council president*

-30-

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News Release #16-229



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