



FOR RELEASE

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## **Premier collaborates with national Aboriginal leaders on shared priorities**

ST. JOHN'S—Yukon Premier Darrell Pasloski engaged in productive talks with his counterparts and national Aboriginal organization leaders today in Newfoundland and Labrador.

"We are working together on topics of great importance to us all, including discussing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report and preventing violence against Aboriginal women and girls," Pasloski said. "We also reviewed the progress of the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group, which includes work on reducing the number of Aboriginal children in care."

At the meeting, Truth and Reconciliation Commissioners Marie Wilson and Wilton Littlechild delivered a presentation about the Commission's report, called *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*. This was followed by an overview of what jurisdictions are doing in response to the report's recommendations.

"Prior to the release of the report, Yukon had already made significant progress on a number of issues raised by the commission," Pasloski added. "For example, we have reduced the number of children in care, including First Nations children. This change is due largely to the cooperative efforts of the Yukon and First Nation governments, enabled by legislative and policy changes such as the Yukon's *Child and Family Services Act*. It was proclaimed in 2010 and mandates First Nation involvement in planning, decision-making, policy and program development in child welfare. We are also working with First Nations to develop a school curriculum that includes the history and impacts of residential schools as well as other First Nation themes."

Another recommendation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is the negotiation of treaties, land claims and other agreements. Approximately a quarter of people living in Yukon are First Nation and 11 of the 14 Yukon First Nations have land claims and self-government agreements. Yukon is also in bi-lateral reconciliation agreement negotiations with those three First Nations without modern treaties.

"With almost half of the self-governing First Nations in Canada, Yukon is a showcase of just how much can be achieved through a strong commitment to reconciliation," Pasloski said.

Last month, Pasloski tasked his deputy ministers to review the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report and prepare a plan for further steps towards reconciliation. Deputy ministers will report back to the premier in the fall.

Premiers met with national Aboriginal organization leaders in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador, prior to their annual summer meeting which takes place in St. John's on July 16 and 17.

The 2016 annual meeting of premiers and national Aboriginal leaders will be hosted in Yukon.

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