



ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS
SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY REPORT

DECEMBER 14-16, 2010

BUILDING ON OUR SUCCESSES: MOVING FROM ENDORSEMENT TO ACTION

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NATIONAL CHIEF SHAWN A-IN-CHUT ATLEO



Greetings!

I would like to welcome everyone to the Special Chiefs Assembly for 2010. Our Assemblies are always a critical time for us to come together as Nations, to share our ideas, to discuss and to confirm our strategies for collective action and support. And it is a time for me and the National Executive to report to you the leadership of the First Nations.

Since our Annual General Assembly (AGA) in July, we have taken forward your mandate in direct meetings with all Premiers through the Council of the Federation and we've taken this mandate to Parliament Hill. As outlined in this report, you will see the action and activity we have engaged in.

Most importantly, I have taken your message to the Ministers and to the Prime Minister. Specifically, I continued our firm advocacy on the endorsement of the United Nations Declaration, on education, Treaty implementation, comprehensive claims policy reform and a range of other matters such as health, environmental protection, energy and resource development. These direct meetings and conversations do not in and of themselves create the results needed on the ground. They do however facilitate a new openness and some growing understanding of the need to work together to produce change.

I am convinced more than ever that now is the time we have to get to work. We know the challenges and we will not take anything for granted. We have hard work to do and I know we are up for the challenge. Now more than ever, we have to come forward and affirm our rights, build our systems and tell Canada exactly what we mean and expect. I am confident that all of Parliament, including the Prime Minister, agrees that the status quo is not workable and that we must work together to achieve lasting change. This change must be driven by our people and we must reach out broadly to all of Canada if we are to succeed in walking through any doors that are beginning to open.

The National Executive confirmed a special theme for this Special Chiefs Assembly *“Building on Our Success: moving from endorsement to action”* to bring focus and attention to the important work before us as Nations consistent with the UN Declaration. The ‘success’ is happening on the ground in First Nations right across the country.

This is the success that was profiled at the recent AFN Planning and Dialogue Forum held in Montreal on November 8-9, 2010. First Nation leaders brought forward their plans and strategies on a full range of matters including accountability, justice, elections and land. This meeting was a first of its kind and we will be planning more in the near future based on the overwhelmingly positive feedback that we received

from participants. Nations gathering to share their success, their challenges and lessons learned is a powerful approach to supporting and enabling our governments.

This is also the success of our Nations standing firm and standing for our people. Right across the country, our people have growing pride and conviction. The AFN coordinated a National Week of Action on First Nation Education, September 19-24, with events and activities in Ottawa and across the country. The week was initiated by the Chiefs Committee on Education and the leadership of Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg. The activities sparked a great deal of media and public interest not only in Canada but around the world. This event highlighted the need for action and fairness in education.

I was honoured to personally attend many events, including the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg Awareness Walk on Sunday, September 19, First Nation Advocacy Day on Parliament Hill on September 21, which involved First Nation leaders from across the country meeting directly with Parliamentarians throughout the day, the Rally for Post-Secondary Education at the First Nations University of Canada on September 22 and the Rally and Cultural Celebration on Parliament Hill on September 23.

The Rally on the Hill was a fitting conclusion to the Week of Action – it was energizing and inspiring. A crowd of upwards of 1,000 people gathered on Parliament Hill to hear from First Nation youth, Elders and leaders from across the country. Parliamentarians also attended the rally and all parties made remarks including the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs. The Rally concluded with the “largest pow-wow ever” on Parliament Hill – an impressive display of four drums and 25 First Nation dancers representing our diverse and proud heritage. It was a celebration of our people and our cultures for all Canadians to see.

In the five months since the AGA, we, as a National Executive, have worked hard to take forward the overall strategic plan affirmed last year at this time and all of the resolutions. As you will see in this report and in the presentations to the Special Chiefs Assembly, we are making progress and we are advancing First Nation priorities on First Nation terms. Our work is certainly never easy and the challenges can not be overstated. The AFN’s clear role in facilitating national dialogue and ‘opening doors’ for the First Nation leadership means that our work continues regardless of the challenges.

I am honoured to spend much of my time with all of you in your home territories. This, I believe, is central to the AFN’s work and my work on your behalf. Real change has to come from the ground up – it must start with our people. By meeting with Chiefs, Elders, youth and communities directly – we can find the common threads and build the consensus on how we can support one another and support the vision of our people for a better life affirming all of our rights, languages and our cultures.

I would like to briefly share some of the highlights of travels in First Nation territories in addition to the time in Ottawa and elsewhere advancing issues to support your work:

August:

- Meetings at Shoal Lake #39, in Ontario, Samson Cree First Nation, in Alberta and time spent in my home territories at Ahousaht in British Columbia

September:

- National Conference on Modern Agreements – Building on Successes in Whitehorse, Yukon
- Ta'an Kwaxhan First Nation in the Yukon
- Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg in Quebec
- Fort Chipewyan in Alberta

October:

- Kainai First Nation, Tsuu T'ina First Nation and Suncild First Nation in Alberta
- Nakota Chiefs at Morley, Alberta, the Maskwacis Leaders at Hobbema, AB and the Treaty 8 Chiefs
- First Nations in British Columbia devastated by flooding
- Treaties 1-11 Gathering in Regina, Saskatchewan
- Kawacatoose First Nation, Saskatchewan
- Tsartlip First Nation - the Gathering of Wsanec Nations
- Tsilhqot'in territories -Tsilhqot'in National Government, Williams Lake
- Indigenous Approaches Gathering
- Indian Residential School Survivors Society gathering at Squamish First Nation
- Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) Assembly in Saskatoon

November:

- Conseil des Montagnais du Lac St. Jean, Atikamekw d'Opitciwan, and meetings at Wendake, Quebec
- Pukatawagon First Nation, Manitoba
- Manto Sipi First Nation, Manitoba
- Garden River First Nation in Ontario - Anishinabek Nation Assembly, Union of Ontario Indians
- Waycobah First Nation, in the Atlantic region
- Assembly of Treaty Chiefs (AOTC) Meeting in Edmonton
- Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke – hosting the AFN National Executive meeting
- All Ontario Chiefs Assembly in Toronto

This report brings us to December where I will be participating in leadership Assemblies throughout the country in the lead-up to the Special Chiefs Assembly. This is just a snapshot of the last few months and I will continue to emphasize the importance of time spent in First Nation communities. As we look forward, we will ensure that my schedule enables me to attend events in regions as much as is possible. I thank all of those who have been such wonderful hosts. I also want to thank all of those who have extended invitations that I have not been able to accept to this point. Last year, I travelled to every region and we will ensure a national presence throughout the coming period.

Through all of these meetings, the priorities of our people for the future are clear. The challenges are many but we share very much in common. We share a collective drive and insistence to move forward to create a better life for our children and to stand firmly on our rights, languages, cultures and identities of Indigenous peoples in Canada.

We have discussed our long-standing goal to re-build our governments, to exercise our rights and to move away from the *Indian Act*. This is not about a one-size-fits-all approach but rather about achieving a clear process and commitment and a path forward. This is a path that will affirm opportunity and options for First Nations who are mandated by their people to move forward affirming their jurisdiction and capacity.

But above all else this is about honouring our rights and our original relationships, like that set out in the Treaties, where First Nations and settler governments agreed to respect one another and work in partnership.

One significant step in that direction was the Government of Canada's endorsement of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in November. I have been asked what does this mean for me, for my First Nation?

It means Canada has agreed to work with our peoples to support First Nation governments, to advance our rights and responsibilities and to give life to Treaties. But it also means, now we have to get to work. We have to shape the work with Canada and we have to be firm on the requirements.

The UN Declaration is not the culmination or the end of our work. It presents an opportunity to hit the "reset" button on the relationship between our peoples and the rest of Canada. I will continue to press the Prime Minister and the Minister of Indian Affairs to work with First Nations to develop a plan and approach that affirms our rights and begins the essential work of enabling our governments and improving the conditions for all of our peoples.

All of this work is about building a better future for our young people. In this spirit, First Nation leaders across the country have confirmed education as a key priority. There is a great deal of activity on this front. We will be providing a full update on the work on education at the Special Chiefs Assembly along with all other issues.

I am also pleased to inform you of advancements made in strengthening communications and improving the support provided by the Assembly of First Nations. A new website will be launched along with new social media to directly communicate with and be informed by AFN. This is essential as a national advocacy organization and we will continue to improve our Assemblies, and to enhance information and support to you the First Nations of Canada.

I look forward to our deliberations together and I wish you a safe and happy holiday season with your families, friends and communities.

Kleco, Kleco!

Shawn A-in-chut Atleo
National Chief

REGIONAL CHIEF RICK SIMON NOVA SCOTIA AND NEWFOUNDLAND

Welcome Elders, Chiefs, Youth and delegates to this Special Chiefs Assembly here in Ottawa.

It seems as if we just finished our business in Winnipeg this summer, and already it's December and the Christmas holidays are upon us.

Lots has been going on since earlier this year when we had the opportunity to see our Manitoba hosts roll out the red carpet in hosting our Annual General Assembly (AGA) in July. Many thanks to the organizers and leadership in Manitoba for a job well done. I look forward to helping my colleague, Regional Chief Roger Augustine, organize for the 2011 AGA in Moncton, New Brunswick.

I want to thank the National Chief and my Executive colleagues for the unrelenting work and pressure on the federal government to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), as well as the Conservative government for listening to our National Chief in the many meetings behind the scenes leading to the adoption on November 12, 2010.

On September 13, 2007, I was in New York at the UN General Assembly with Regional Chief Ghislain Picard, former Regional Chief Willie Littlechild and former National Chief Phil Fontaine when the UNDRIP was adopted.

Canada, along with the United States, Australia and New Zealand voted against the Declaration at that time. Since then, we've continued to place pressure and advocate until Canada chose to support and work with us toward a better future.

The AFN, your national organization, concluded a two-day policy session in Montreal in mid-November that focused on planning and dialogue around Nation Building and Rebuilding. Five presentations from the Atlantic region were shared with our colleagues across the country, including an overview of the Mi'kmaq House of Assembly, presented by Chiefs Morley Googoo and Gerard Julian, which is being developed by the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs.

In addition, an overview of work on Election Reform and the *Indian Act* was presented by John Paul of the Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs (APC) in conjunction with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. Todd Hoskins from the Ulnooweg Development Group (UDG) also outlined how 10 Atlantic First Nation communities are pooling their resources to create better access to capital for major infrastructure financing.



On the theme of First Nation communities demonstrating accountability, the Membertou First Nation community shared their economic success and strategies and how the ISO 900Z certification opened many doors for them.

In the area of education, the Mi'kmaw Kinamatnewey (MK) shared their experiences and outlined how the agreement on jurisdiction over education in the province of Nova Scotia has been working over the past 10 years.

Overall, the Planning and Dialogue Forum was well attended and many presentations from across the country shared valuable information.

The work toward a Mi'kmaw House of Assembly continues to develop in the province of Nova Scotia, with the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Chiefs directing the process. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the federal and provincial governments on consultation was signed with the new Minister of Indian Affairs, John Duncan, and Nova Scotia Premier Darrell Dexter at the end of August that committed both governments to consult with the Mi'kmaw government on issues that involve Aboriginal title and Treaty rights.

This MOU was tested voluntarily over the last three years and now has been fine-tuned to move forward under the Mi'kmaq-Canada-Nova Scotia Tripartite Forum. I continue to be the Executive Chair of this unique forum, and continue the work required to connect the negotiation process and the Province with the seven working committees tasked with advancing our socio-economic interests.

A meeting in mid-September brought together all the Mi'kmaw appointed representatives to understand the Mi'kmaw House of Assembly concept. There was great feedback from both the leadership in the province as well as the Mi'kmaw technicians in sharing the information and vision on our next steps towards governance, and a focus was on the Tripartite Forum's seven working committees and how their work plans can be better aligned. The next step will be to bring all of the tripartite forum appointees, including the federal and provincial governments to engage in a similar dialogue toward better coordination.

As the chair of the Board of the Mi'kmaq Employment Training Secretariat (METS), we have successfully transitioned from the old Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreement (AHRDA) program to the new Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) program. The new program is more about developing relationships in going forward but the leadership in this province is not happy with the lack of investing new monies into the program. Less authority and more rules and regulations around accountability seem to be the key themes of the new program.

On a lighter note, UDG, which is our Aboriginal capital corporation, celebrated 25 years in business this fall. This was celebrated along with our annual Atlantic Business Awards show in September in the First Nation community of St. Mary's, which is located within the city of Fredericton, New Brunswick. As mentioned earlier, they have developed an owners group of 10 First Nation communities who have

invested their money into a pool that will hopefully give access to capital for major infrastructure financing.

Treaty Day festivities were held on October 1st in Halifax, with Indian Affairs Minister John Duncan in attendance, along with many leaders and dignitaries from throughout the Atlantic and across Canada. This has been an annual event since 1986, when the late Grand Chief Donald Marshall Sr. declared October 1st as Treaty Day, following the Supreme Court decision in 1985 known as the Simon Case. Interest and involvement from the federal and provincial governments with Treaty Day helps build awareness around the significance of our unbroken chain of peace and friendship treaties here in the Atlantic.

The revival of the Mi'kmaw Indian Summer Games took place this summer as well, with Chief Morley Googoo taking the lead and organizing the event. This took place in the community of Membertou in late August, with well in excess of 1200 athletes taking part.

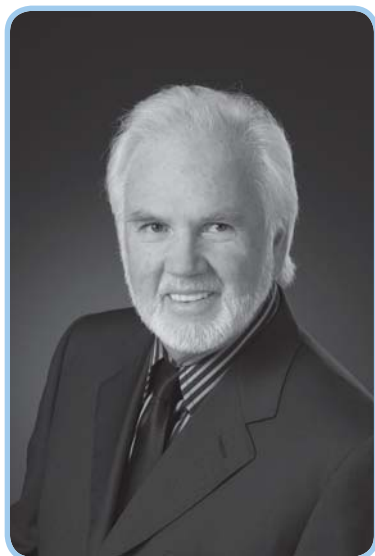
Big congratulations go out to Chief Googoo who took the lead, the community of Membertou who stepped up as the host and, most importantly, the athletes who had an opportunity to partake in such an important event that had fallen to the wayside.

These are just some of the issues that I continue to be involved in here in the region. Nationally, I continue to chair the Management Committee and will give a full report to the Special Chiefs Assembly.

We'lalin,

Regional Chief Rick Simon
Nova Scotia/Newfoundland Region

REGIONAL CHIEF ROGER AUGUSTINE NEW BRUNSWICK AND PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND



Pjila'si. It is my honour to welcome the Elders, Chiefs and delegates from across Canada to the 2010 Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Special Chiefs Assembly.

At the AFN, each Regional Chief holds a number of portfolios at the national level. I currently hold portfolios in Environmental Stewardship, Housing and Infrastructure, Fisheries, Economic Partnerships and the Management Committee.

I have outlined some key activities and provided updates in relation to the National Housing Policy, the Holmes Project, Water and Wastewater issues, and recent developments with economic partnerships on Mining and Forestry.

UPDATE ON HOUSING POLICY EVALUATION

The AFN continued participation on the Housing Policy Evaluation process carried out by the Performance Measurement and Review Branch at Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC).

The AFN provided valuable comments on the process. Once the AFN receives the draft evaluation report, it will be forwarded to the housing technicians and Chiefs Committee on Housing and Infrastructure (CCoHI) and a conference call will be scheduled to review the report. Comments for INAC will be due within two weeks of the report's release.

The AFN and The Holmes Group have formed a partnership to seek out and work with a First Nation community in Ontario to construct a housing and community subdivision. This pilot project endeavours to consist of multi-levels, incorporating the retro-fit of existing housing units, construction of new houses, construction of community buildings (water and wastewater systems, schools and administrative offices) and incorporation of green technology and clean energy sources. The pilot project will lead to the development of a First Nation Community Planning Tool for the Assembly of First Nations. A copy of the Statement of Partnership can be found on the AFN Housing website at: <http://www.afn.ca/misc/SOP-Holmes.pdf>.

AFN'S WATER AND WASTEWATER BILL S-11

Bill S-11, Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act, was tabled in Parliament on May 26, 2010. The bill addresses health and safety issues on reserve lands and certain other lands by providing for regulations to govern drinking water and wastewater treatment in First Nation communities. If enacted, it will have sweeping implications for First Nations' ability to govern water on reserve lands and on other First Nation owned lands.

ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIPS

Taxation continues to be an important consideration for revenue generation. The AFN Chiefs Committee on Economic Development has discussed exploring necessary leaders-level and technical interventions to support taxation and fiscal resources being owned by First Nations. This discussion, coincidentally, is in line with the June 29-30, 2009 working group meeting on taxation where a recommendation was made on establishing better fiscal systems, relationships and arrangements.

Through speaking engagements, the National Chief has promoted green energy as a means of economic self-sufficiency. In this light, an Inter-Nation Trade and Energy Summit is being explored for the spring of 2011. The National Chief has presented the concept for a summit to the Province of Ontario and has been informed of interest in participation as a co-host.

MINING

The AFN Secretariat has been invited to participate in an Advisory Committee to focus on the Mining Sector. The Advisory Committee's first meeting was held in November 2009. The committee brings together federal officials for Natural Resources Canada (NRCAN) with mining industry, national organizations, the AFN, Mining Watch Canada, and the forest industry to define key issues.

Although focus areas continue to be discussed, key consideration is being given to four broad research themes. As such, it has been recommended that NRCAN start seeking evidence of past improvements and opportunities for future improvement on optimizing socio-economic impacts; reducing the ecological footprint of mining; transparency and accountability (including reporting, monitoring and compliance enforcement); and community engagement and involvement (including approaches to land-use planning and consultations).

FORESTRY

NRCAN's forest sector has indicated it would consider sponsoring the AFN's next economic summit, should there be sufficient linkage to forest sector issues. NRCAN's forest sector has assisted in funding of AFN youth and forestry workshops.

Working relationships with the Forest Sector and Mining Sector have been established. Each relationship is for a two-year period supported by a two-year joint work plan; results are reported to the AFN Chiefs Committee on Economic Development.

The AFN will monitor the Forest Products Association of Canada's (FPAC) agreement with the environmental non-government organizations to reduce activity in certain regions of the boreal forest.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- Planning for the Trade and Energy Summit;
- Continue to explore, research and provide information to First Nations on resource revenue options;
- Monitor resource development, impacts on domestic economy, industry agreements, issues, and new revenue sharing/impact benefit sharing tools;
- Promote public education and First Nations' unique relationship with the Crown and the federal government.

Yours in the spirit of collaboration and partnership – *We'lalin and Woliwon!*

Regional Chief Roger J. Augustine

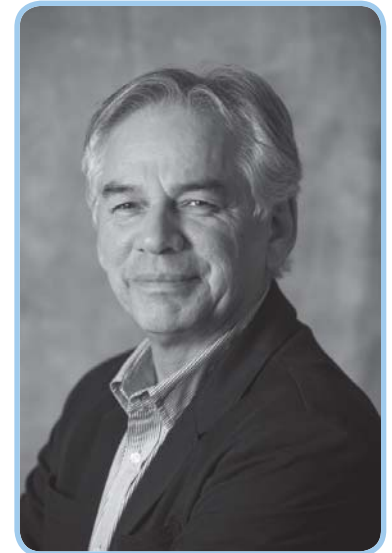
REGIONAL CHIEF GHISLAIN PICARD QUEBEC AND LABRADOR

Since our Annual General Assembly in Winnipeg last July, we have all, individually in our territories and collectively with the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), made great efforts to obtain justice for First Nations' children and their right to quality education. For many of us, the fight for our children's education has become a lifelong struggle. Teachers with unfailing devotion have dedicated their careers to meeting the needs of our young people as best they can, often in very difficult and unfair conditions, and are still fighting every day to that end. Every day, without giving up, they take up the task. I would like to take this opportunity to honour them. Our Chiefs, our technicians working in our First Nation governments and organizations are also doing all they can to support them, and I would like to honour them today also.

We have prepared and submitted reports describing from every angle an educational system that is deficient; we participated in parliamentary committees, met minister after minister, undertook enough awareness and protest marches to wear out our shoes, distributed pamphlets, and what else? We have done a lot, and now we have the right to ask ourselves what the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) has done in response. As I see it, nothing, or too little.

While writing this report, I learned that Canada has finally decided to do what is right, and sign the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. If we read carefully articles 11 through 15, among others, we have the right to expect that Canada's negative attitude towards First Nations' education will become a thing of the past. As Regional Chief of the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador (AFNQL), I am ready to believe it and to continue pursuing my efforts. However, because of the respect that I have for our young people and for those who have devoted their lives to them, I am committed to doing more than talking: I will maintain pressure on the Canadian government, that in my view is abandoning its responsibility; I will remind the government that spending on education is first and foremost an investment, a sign of confidence in our young people and therefore, in our nations.

The AFNQL is also constantly confronted with a provincial government that intends to develop the northern portion of our territories as it sees fit, imposing its views and its way of doing things. Other territories across the country are also confronted with provincial governments that pretend to ignore First Nations, their entitlements and their rights. I always like to share our experiences with other First Nations and learn from their experiences. I believe that we should increasingly work together, from one territory to another, and that we should act to compel provincial governments to understand that they are not absolute monarchs; indeed, the territory is not even theirs. Too often, the Quebec provincial government weighs our rights against development, suggesting that the two are incompatible. The challenge facing the AFNQL is to prove the opposite, to state loud and clear that First Nations are open to development when it respects our rights and that what compromises development, not only of First Nations but also of all



inhabitants of the territory, are the near-sighted views and the unyielding determination of the Canadian and Quebec governments that insist on the most primitive form of colonialism in their territorial relations with us.

EDUCATION

The mission of the First Nations Education Council (FNEC) is to support its member communities as they strive to exercise their right to full jurisdiction in education. The FNEC also has a mandate to promote lifelong quality education.

Given the present context, the FNEC has pursued its awareness campaign on the underfunding of First Nations education at all levels. In short, whether it be at the regional, national or international level, the FNEC remains vigilant and very active as it makes known the real situation regarding funding for First Nation education.

Among the main activities undertaken over the past year to end the underfunding of education, the FNEC:

- Participated in the drafting of a bill on the funding of education to be submitted by the Bloc Québécois.
- Met federal MPs from all parties, the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, the Office of the Auditor General, and the Office of the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation.
- Played an active role in the National Education Week organized by the AFN from September 19-24, 2010.
- Met personnel at the DIAND Headquarters and Regional Office to restate the importance of considering its work and that of the other First Nations across Canada on the funding of education, and to insist on the necessity and urgency of establishing real co-operation with First Nations.
- Collaborated on the drafting of a letter from the Chief of the AFNQL to Mr. James Anaya, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- Collaborated on the drafting of a letter to the new Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to obtain details on specific questions regarding funding of First Nation education.
- Organized some lobbying events, including an awareness day on the situation of First Nations at Radio-Canada for journalists and researchers; also organized a peaceful demonstration at the Governor General's home to hand over documents on the underfunding of First Nation education.
- Officially received its advisory status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

Furthermore, with a mandate to support communities in order to improve the quality of education, the FNEC offers continuing services and support on an ongoing basis to its communities. The following are a few examples of this:

- The FNEC manages the First Nation Student Success Program (FNSSP) that promotes the development and implementation of educational success plans, student assessment methods and a student information system (CANO). Over the past year, 26 educational success plans were developed and implemented. Furthermore, two language assessment committees were created and did research on common assessment methods for student learning. CANO, the student information system, was established in the 26 schools, all of which received administrative training on the use of the database. Four gatherings were held to help school principals, community leaders and those responsible for students' success to implement the FNSSP.
- The FNEC is in the process of negotiating a tripartite agreement as part of the Education Partnerships Program, with the mandate that such an agreement benefits member communities without undermining their efforts towards the exercise of full autonomy in education.
- The FNEC drafted a business plan for the installation of fibre optics, including six upgrades for an external connection to broadband services, in 13 of its member communities that did not have access to the resource. In 2010, as a follow-up to the plan, the FNEC completed the installation of fibre optics in 10 of the 13 communities and was guaranteed funding for over 50% of the installation costs, including the six upgrades for the external connection to broadband services in three other communities.
- The FNEC manages the First Nations program on SchoolNet. The program helps communities with schools to pay Internet connection costs. A broadband regional service network now serves 17 communities. The communities can therefore extend services at the local level and develop services requiring advanced connectivity (from video conferencing to IP telephony).
- The FNEC offers its member communities post-secondary education in specialized fields. Thus, it is particularly proud of its Short Audiovisual Training Program for First Nations that it undertook in partnership with the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi (UQAC). At the end of the Short Program in December 2009, 12 First Nation students graduated.
- On November 16, 2010, the FNEC officially announced the establishment of its new First Nations Post-Secondary Institution (FNPSI). This is the result of many years of hard work. The FNPSI will open its doors in September 2011, and will be located in the Abenaki community of Odanak.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

The First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission (FNQLHSSC) is already in the third year of implementation of its 2008-2011 strategic plan.

Efforts are continuing to strengthen the multisectoral approach both within the team and for interventions with communities, organizations and its many partners. It is important that such an approach be maintained to take advantage of concerted action and thus avoid duplication.

During the Annual General Assembly last September, the delegates approved several very important priorities, having to do with the following themes: governance, research and development, information and data management, special events, as well as activities linked to prevention, promotion and intervention. The document can be downloaded from the home page of the following Web site: www.cssspnql.com.

Partnerships are ongoing with both levels of government in order to ensure progress on important issues, including among other things, the establishment of a governance structure for infrastructure, the development of a regional mental health framework, universal implementation of first-line prevention services within communities (assistance to children and families), access to health services, application of the *Youth Protection Act*, negotiation of an agreement with the provincial government regarding the delegation of authority over daycare services, and a feasibility study on the issue of the public curator (federal/provincial/First Nation).

The 2011-2014 strategic plan will be completed in December 2010 and will guide all future activities of the organization based on needs identified by communities and organizations.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The Commission on Human Resources Development for the First Nations of Quebec (CHRDFNQ) – working in employment and training for 29 First Nation communities and the Quebec urban Aboriginal population as a whole – is presently involved in implementing the new five-year agreement that the AFNQL signed on October 1, 2010, with Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC). Like the 80-or-so other holders of agreements in the country, the CHRDFNQ has been working for three years on the preparation, planning and negotiation of the agreement as part of the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS), an agreement focused mainly on workforce demand.

But such an objective – that is a better linking of workforce offers and demand – can only be reached if certain steps have been taken beforehand. The organization has therefore set an immediate objective to strengthen the partnership, essential skills, labour market information (LMI) and communications.

- The partnership with other labour market players (businesses, training institutions, unions, etc.) will broaden the scope of the service structure and help with the success of client employment applications and training. A consultation with community directors general led us to note that relations with the

province occur more often but that those with Aboriginal and federal partners are considered more important and that there are more partnerships formed with public than with private organizations. It is this last point that the CHRDFNQ will have to examine over the upcoming months if it hopes to significantly increase the number of clients to be referred to potential employers.

- Essential skills are presently being addressed by the Aboriginal Skills and Training Strategic Investment Fund (ASTSIF) projects and represent an important aspect of the efforts of the CHRDFNQ to reduce the unemployment rate in communities. Those within our populations who do not intend to take general or vocational training must also be encouraged to work and be offered the opportunity to obtain at least the skills providing access to jobs that need no specific training. The CHRDFNQ will therefore continue to develop solutions for attaining such skills.
- There are a great number of tools and resources dealing with provincial LMI but very few on local LMI. It is important to know our labour market (and not only our clientele) if we hope to focus our interventions on present and future job opportunities. An ASTSIF project is presently under way and another project linked to LMI was submitted as part of the new Skills and Partnership Fund (SPF).
- With respect to communications, the work to be done will serve to promote the emergence of partnerships, since a lack of knowledge – regarding who we are, what we do – on the part of potential partners remains a major obstacle to cooperation. We should note here that, for the 10 anglophone member communities, the language barrier makes dealings with other labour market players – who are mainly francophones – much more difficult, and that effective communication would certainly benefit understanding. The strengthening of communications would also allow us to reach and raise awareness of clients regarding the importance of employment and training.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Sustainable Development Institute offers First Nations support for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy, in particular by developing effective tools for communities, by supporting First Nations in the sustainable management of their resources, as well as by advising Chiefs and communities as needed.

This year, the FNQLSDI continued its work along the lines of the 2010-2014 action plan, besides working actively for the development of a new research protocol and the third version of the First Nations Sustainable Development Strategy. It also organized a number of training workshops and events to help with networking and information exchange among communities.

Thanks to its new action plan and its new team, the FNQLSDI has undertaken to develop new partnerships that will help to promote First Nation positions on the crucial issues of economic development, traditional knowledge and territorial management. We should note, among other things, the co-operation of Environment Canada on a study of traditional knowledge and the woodland caribou.

This year, the FNQLSDI is celebrating the 10th anniversary of its establishment and of strategic watch in the field of sustainable development. A focal event in January 2011 will underscore the 10th anniversary of the Institute.

Iame!

Regional Chief Ghislain Picard

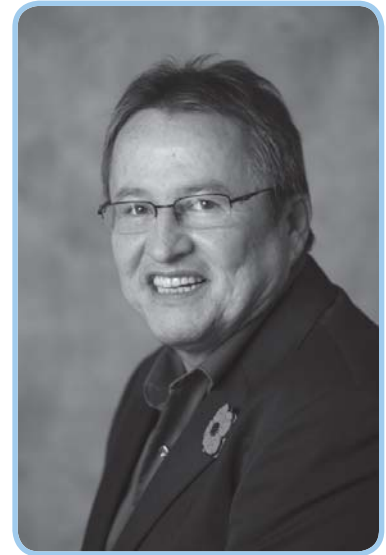
REGIONAL CHIEF ANGUS TOULOUSE ONTARIO

INTRODUCTION

Ahnee! Greetings! My name is Angus Toulouse and I am the Regional Chief for Ontario. I am honoured to be serving my second term as Regional Chief for the 133 First Nations in Ontario. Prior to becoming Regional Chief in 2005, I proudly served for 11 years as Chief in my home community of Sagamok Anishinawbek.

The key issues that I have focused on include Treaty rights and the protection and promotion of First Nation jurisdiction. I view these issues as the foundational elements that form the very core of what we are responsible for as leaders. Our Treaty rights are the basis of our relationships with governments and we must never allow them to forget it. Our Treaties are not simply relics from a distant past with no relevance today they are in fact more relevant today than they have ever been!

I am also committed to working to improve the infrastructure situation in First Nation communities. Our people deserve to live in safe communities and to have their basic needs met. This is an ongoing challenge facing our communities especially in light of the fact that the capital budgets of Indian and Northern Affairs regions are completely inadequate and will not see any new funding for the foreseeable future. In Ontario we are focused on developing an accurate inventory of infrastructure needs which will strengthen our position when approaching government to address the significant inequities that we know exist in our communities.



KEY ISSUES AND/OR ACTIVITIES

EDUCATION

First Nation education remains at the forefront of the efforts of the Chiefs in Ontario. Many of our First Nation leaders and citizens participated in the September 23, 2010, education rally on Parliament Hill. This rally was held to raise awareness of the chronic underfunding of First Nation education and to serve the federal government notice that we are serious about realizing progress on this issue. The fact of the matter is that the education of First Nation children continues to be underfunded in comparison to their non-First Nation counterparts by thousands of dollars per child. This issue will remain a priority for the First Nation leadership in Ontario until the inequity and funding discrimination that exists is eradicated.

TAXATION

For over 30 years, the First Nations in Ontario have been exempt from the provincial sales tax at the point of sale. When the federal and provincial governments announced in March 2009 that they would harmonize the provincial 8% tax with the federal 5% GST in a 13% harmonized sales tax (HST) they

failed to consider the existing First Nation exemption. Neither the provincial nor federal government consulted with First Nations prior to the announcement of this decision.

The First Nations in Ontario believe that we have a right to tax immunity and that this right was never signed away by Treaty or otherwise, nor do we believe that section 87 of the *Indian Act* is the basis of our exemption rights. The First Nations fought the imposition of the HST on our citizens and we were successful when in June 2010, the provincial and federal governments announced that they had reached an agreement to continue the exempting First Nation citizens in Ontario from the provincial portion of the HST. The First Nations in Ontario consider this success only a partial victory as our people still pay various taxes, including the GST. We simply maintained an exemption that we have – we didn't gain new ground on the taxation issue.

For this reason, the First Nation leadership in Ontario intends to pursue a broader taxation strategy to address the many issues relating to the taxation of our people. We will be focused on identifying the issues that exist within our region while tying into the national effort that was mandated at the July 2010 Assembly of First Nations Annual General Assembly through resolution 14/2010 (Support for Taxation Rights of First Nations People).

RESOURCE REVENUE SHARING

Resource revenue sharing is another key area of focus for the First Nations in Ontario and we have been engaged in exploratory discussions with the Ontario government on a possible resource revenue sharing arrangement. The First Nations in our region are very diverse with strong Treaty affiliations which must be taken into account when developing a draft framework for what a possible revenue sharing arrangement would look like. As this work continues our hope is that it will lead to an arrangement that all parties support, which will be of direct benefit to our communities and citizens. We all recognize that government and industry have extracted billions from First Nations' traditional territories over the years and that we must act to ensure that this changes and that First Nations also benefit from the revenues generated across the province. At our Chiefs Assembly in November 2010, the Chiefs provided a mandate to continue discussions with the Ontario government toward the development of a resource sharing framework to be finalized for consideration by our next Chiefs of Ontario Assembly, likely in February or March 2011.

TREATY COMMISSION OF ONTARIO

The Final Report of the Ipperwash Inquiry was published in May 2007, and since that time the First Nations in Ontario have been engaged with the Ontario government in moving forward on some of the key recommendations. One of those key recommendations includes the establishment of a Treaty Commission in Ontario (TCO). This remains a priority as we lack a formal mechanism for mediating disputes as they arise in Ontario with respect to outstanding claims and other such disputes. A TCO could also provide education and public awareness functions that do not currently exist.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE

The epidemic of prescription drug abuse in First Nation communities is of significant concern to the First Nations in our region. The leadership has taken steps to address this issue by mandating the Chiefs of Ontario to coordinate the development of a prescription drug abuse strategy that identifies actions that can be taken to begin to tackle this challenge. A strategy has been drafted and now the focus becomes the development of an advocacy strategy to take to the federal and provincial governments to obtain the supports and services necessary to eliminate the problem of prescription drug abuse in First Nation communities.

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES

The First Nations in Ontario are strongly opposed to the current legislative bills before Parliament which include Bill S-4 (with respect to Matrimonial Real Property), Bill C-3 (McIvor amendments) and Bill S-11 (Safe Drinking Water). All of these bills fail to recognize and respect First Nations' inherent jurisdiction. Furthermore, the federal government failed to consult with the First Nations in Ontario in a meaningful way with respect to these issues. It seems that the federal government has created a template for handling these situations – they organize one or two “engagement sessions” in our region and then they claim to have consulted us as rights holders. This is not adequate. It is simply the government going through the motions but not truly consulting or accommodating the First Nations and the rights that will be negatively impacted. The First Nations in Ontario have made their views known and will continue to monitor and advocate as things evolve.

UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (UNDRIP)

As you are all aware, the federal government finally endorsed the UNDRIP on November 12, 2010. The First Nations in Ontario now intend to focus on using the Declaration and its principles in our advocacy efforts and work going forward. We will not wait for the government to define on their terms what the Declaration means. The First Nations in Ontario embrace it for what it is – a Declaration of our rights and the rights of Indigenous peoples across the world.

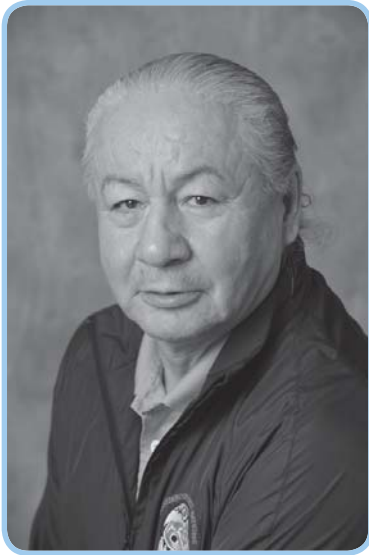
CONCLUSION

This report touches on a few key areas of focus for the First Nations in Ontario and I look forward to reading about, and hearing from, our brothers and sisters across Canada with respect to their challenges and achievements during the AFN Special Chiefs Assembly.

Meegwetch!

Regional Chief Angus Toulouse

REGIONAL CHIEF BILL TRAVERSE MANITOBA



I would like to welcome you to the 2010 Special Chiefs Assembly.

During the last two months, I have been in transition from the Management Portfolio to the Health Portfolio. I am honoured to co-chair the Chiefs Committee on Health with my colleague Ontario Regional Chief Angus Toulouse. I look forward to my new responsibilities on this file within the Assembly of First Nations (AFN).

As the end of the year is upon us, I have realized that 2010 has been a difficult year for First Nations. Cutbacks from the Conservative government have been imminent. Policies, laws and bills being introduced in the House of Commons are being forced on our people with limited or no consultation. The time for us to stick together and work as a team is more important today than ever before. We have to realize our potential in fighting for our Treaty and inherent rights. As I look back on 2010, I am enlightened that the Norway House First Nation fishermen won their court case on the Treaty and inherent right to fish. In my home province of Manitoba, July was also a success as we co-hosted the AFN's 31st Annual General Assembly, which had record-breaking attendance.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

- National Chief Shawn Atleo and I toured the Manto Sipi and Pukatawagon First Nations in October 2010, where local issues were discussed.
- On the issue of third-party management, I am working with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) on how to change the current system into a more productive one that will assist First Nations.
- Attended the Treaty 3 Gathering to discuss our Treaty and inherent rights as a collective.
- Attended the Annual General Assemblies of the Southern Chiefs Organization, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC).
- Attended the AMC Fisheries Conference in November 2010. Norway House fishermen won their court case on taxation in Manitoba. The judge ruled that due to their Treaty and inherent rights, they are exempt from paying taxes.
- Attended the meeting of First Ministers (the Council of the Federation) in Churchill with National Chief Atleo.
- National Chief Atleo, Grand Chief David Harper and I toured three Island Lake communities. We met with Chiefs Jerry Knott, David McDougall and Dino Flett. The remoteness of these communities was brought to our attention. An airstrip is needed in the Wasagamack First Nation. A helicopter is needed during the spring and fall, thus creating more financial hardships for transportation in and out of the community. Housing, access to running water, and all-weather roads were also issues in all three communities. We must continue to support these communities in securing the basic necessities that other Canadians take for granted.

- The National Treaty Roundtable is currently being pushed at the national level to ensure our Treaty rights are implemented. Various strategies have been noted. I attended the Treaties 1 to 11 Gathering, which was hosted by the Ochapowace First Nation in Regina, Saskatchewan. Our Elders provided clear direction on moving forward.
- Chief Orville Smoke from Dakota Plains and Chief Frank Brown from Canupawakpa extended an invitation to visit Dakota Territory. We discussed the Dakotas's rights and their current legal fight with the Government of Canada.
- Participated in the annual event organized by Chief Derek Nepinak and other Chiefs in Manitoba to collectively practice our inherent and Treaty rights by fishing together.
- Grand Chief David Harper and I co-chaired the social and cultural activities of the AFN's 2010 Annual General Assembly.
- Numerous other activities and advocacy for individual First Nations.

In closing, I am humbled that the Manitoba Chiefs have given me the opportunity to work for Manitoba First Nations at the national level. There are key issues that need to be addressed including: the protection of our Treaty rights, the duty to consult with First Nations, major education gaps between First Nations and other Canadians, citizenship and landless bands, lack of economic development due to economic sanctions, housing and infrastructure, and First Nations health. I look forward to working with all First Nations in advancing progress on land issues and our Treaty and inherent rights.

Yours in Unity,

Manitoba Regional Chief Bill Traverse

REGIONAL CHIEF GUY LONECHILD SASKATCHEWAN



INTRODUCTION

Elders, Chiefs and First Nations:

I am pleased to have this opportunity to provide an overview of activities since our last Assembly. My responsibilities as the national portfolio lead, along with Regional Chief Ghislain Picard, under the Exercising and Implementing our Inherent, Aboriginal and Treaty Rights are as follows:

- Honouring Treaties;
- Implementing self-government agreements;
- Implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; and,
- Resource revenue sharing / National Resources Transfer Agreement.

We have developed a multi-pronged strategy to exercise and implement these rights, which focuses on supporting First Nation governments across Canada in their political coordination and advocacy on Treaty implementation. This is our national strategy on Treaties, which is called *Sacred Treaties ~ Sacred Trust: Working Together for Treaty Implementation and Advancing our Sovereignty as Nations*. The Chiefs-in-Assembly endorsed this strategy with a resolution passed at the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Annual General Assembly held July 20-22, 2010, in Winnipeg.

I am pleased to report on our key activities to date.

KEY ACTIVITIES

HONOURING TREATIES

The Chiefs-in-Assembly have directed the AFN to support the efforts of First Nation Treaty Holders to secure Treaty implementation.

Treaty Nations across Turtle Island continue to demonstrate unified action on honouring the spirit and intent of the Treaties. A number of regions held gatherings to exchange information and promote the Treaties.

NATIONAL TREATIES 1-11 GATHERING

The National Treaty Gathering was hosted by the Ochapowace First Nation in Saskatchewan, October 12-15, 2010. There were 500 registered delegates at the Gathering on October 13 from all of the numbered Treaties, including Treaty 11. The Gathering was viewed by some delegates as a grassroots socio-political movement designed to implement the inherent right to self-determination as the means of implementing the Treaty relationship.

Much discussion centered on ways and means of resisting the imposition of federal and provincial laws on First Nation jurisdiction. There were some powerful presentations from our own leadership, as well as delegates from the Maori Party of New Zealand, the International Treaty Council, the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Onion Lake Cree Nation, and a number of other legal and political activists.

The overarching message was that we must develop our own legal framework to occupy the field of First Nation jurisdiction that has been taken over by the *Indian Act* and reclaim what is ours by Treaty; specifically, a share of the resource riches of our lands.

We are part of a national and international movement of Indigenous peoples that are influencing the way that we are treated by the Nation States. We are asserting our right to self-determination and the protection of our culture, our language and our territory. As Regional Chief and a member of Treaty 4, it was my honour to support the Ochapowace First Nation as part of the pre-planning and during the Gathering.

The 2011 Treaty 1-11 Gathering will be hosted by the Siksika Nation in Treaty 7 territory. Ochapowace will meet with Siksika Chief and Council during the next several months to offer support.

SOVEREIGNTY-TREATY RELATIONS CONFERENCE

The Sovereignty-Treaty Relations Conference was held at the Treaty Four Governance Centre in Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan. FSIN Senator Sol Sanderson provided a presentation on Sovereignty-Treaty Relations. He referenced his "Canada-First Nations Relations" document which illustrates Sovereignty-Treaty Relations between Canada and First Nations, and outlines the process for implementing First Nation jurisdiction and laws. He spoke about the 1830's de-tribalization policy, which still continues today within the welfare system, the education system and colonial institutions that have been established.

The Gathering was preceded by an Elder's Forum on October 12, 2010. Two hundred Elders from nine Treaty regions were present, providing feedback and recommendations on critical areas such as the controversial First Nation Property initiative currently being proposed by the First Nations Tax Commission. Treaty 1-11 Elders were adamant that First Nation land is not for sale. First Nation youth delegates in attendance pointed out the importance of ensuring that youth have the right to a livelihood and must be included in planning and implementation of any Treaty strategy.

DAKOTA NATION WIDE CONFERENCE 2010

I had the pleasure of presenting at the *Dakota Iyuhenna Wanji*, Dakota Nation Wide Conference 2010, on the exercise and implementation of Treaty rights. The conference brought together a global community interested in working toward documenting the historical truth about First Nations, with honour and dignity for all peoples.

TREATY GOVERNANCE

As Regional Chief of Saskatchewan, I am pleased to report that the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) takes an active role in the area of Treaty advocacy and education and is aligning this work with the Office of the Treaty Commissioner. In addition, the Treaty Governance Office is currently undertaking an internal review with the intent of renewing its mandate and revitalizing the Treaty governance process. A full report will be made to the FSIN Legislative Assembly in February, 2011.

IMPLEMENTING THE UN DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

On November 12, 2010, Canada endorsed the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). This is a milestone for First Nation leadership across Canada; it represents the culmination of a concerted lobbying effort by the AFN. However, now the focus will be on supporting First Nations in the implementation of the UNDRIP, as well as supporting First Nation advocacy regarding Treaties and Treaty rights in all international forums. In addition, the AFN will continue to advocate for the continuation of the United Nations' study focused on Treaty to ensure its completion. In addition, key priorities going forward are working with First Nations, through a series of roundtables, to establish an appropriate process for Treaty implementation and working to establish the appropriate process framework for implementation of Treaties and other international standards, including UNDRIP.

Canada now has a moral obligation to be informed and guided by the Declaration. Article 33 of the Declaration acknowledges First Nations' inherent right to determine our own identity and membership.

Such right, which is an inherent gift bestowed by the Creator, is integral to our sovereignty. The FSIN will continue to press the federal government to create longer-term solutions that are fair and just including a long-term sustainable solution that transitions away from the status provisions of the *Indian Act* to one that is based on Treaty. The FSIN has developed a Citizenship Framework that is a viable longer-term alternative to the *Indian Act* status provisions.

RESOURCE REVENUE SHARING / NATIONAL RESOURCES TRANSFER AGREEMENT

Nationally, we continue to support First Nations in working together to advance their shared interests in relation to the implementation of Treaties. A key focus of Treaty implementation is in the area of resource revenue sharing. Canada continues to fail to appropriately consult, accommodate and compensate First Nations for the extraction of natural resources from Indigenous territories and lands. The AFN continues to work towards developing a resource revenue sharing framework that can be used as the basis for implementing Treaties. The standard for shared decision-making on lands and resources must be the international legal standard of free, prior and informed consent to use lands and resources, and not the domestic standard of consultation and accommodation. In addition, the AFN continues to support efforts to address the ongoing violation of Treaties with the impacts of the Natural Resources Transfer Agreement (NRTA) in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and other pieces of legislation that circumscribe or eliminate the ability of Treaty nations to benefit from their lands.

Regional Chief Guy Lonechild
FSIN

REGIONAL CHIEF GEORGE STANLEY ALBERTA

With a tremendous amount of activity this year in Parliament, the Regional Office of Alberta has been extremely busy keeping the Chiefs of Alberta informed as well as assisting with the analogies and probabilities of outcomes if bills become legislation (i.e., Bill S-11 and Bill C-24). News that the Government of Canada has finally committed to the endorsement of the United Nations Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples brings a huge sigh of relief from across the country. There is finally a bright light where our Treaty rights are concerned; the implementation and fortification of them has finally arrived. We can only move forward and embark upon issues facing First Nations with assertion, collectively and with persistence, especially where the concerns of threats against our Treaty rights. Eventually, there will be a reward or favourable outcome due to diligence.



It has been 15 months since my election as the Regional Chief of Alberta and so much has been accomplished. Discussions with the Grand Chiefs of Treaties 6, 7 & 8 regarding the responsibility and accountability of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to First Nations ended successfully with the signing of a Letter of Support for the Core Funding Proposal for “Legislation/Governance/Policy Transition”, which allows the Regional office to provide assistance and support to First Nations of Alberta with any transitional requirements and applications of new legislation and policy. Our Regional office anticipates mixed reactions to any new legislation and policy. The Regional Office also provides assistance to leadership at the local, regional and provincial levels.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

JUSTICE

Just over a year since arriving in this office and indubitably, we have come a long way. With the Justice file being added to my list of priorities as part of my portfolio, a huge responsibility comes with it. The issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women is a massive and imperative quandary that comes along with this file.

During a recent visit to the “Highway of Tears” in British Columbia, I met with the families of murdered and missing women, which brought to life the pain and frustration that First Nation families are facing with regards to our current justice system and how it’s failing to protect our women. The Alberta Regional office intends to insist that there are proper inquiries into investigations involving First Nation women, and to ensure the justice system works for all First Nation and Canadian citizens. A revisit of the *Criminal Code of Canada* will ensure that the law isn’t above our people, but rather working for and protecting our people.

BILL S-11

Introduced in the Senate on May 26, 2010, Bill S-11 (Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act), went to a second reading on November 17, 2010. Its inconsistency with section 35 of the *Constitution Act* displaces First Nation jurisdiction. The bill creates regulations regarding First Nation drinking water but does not give First Nations the capacity to comply. The AFN continues to advocate with Senate committee members and Members of Parliament, and monitor the bill's progress. Resolutions 42/2010 (2011 National Indigenous Water Conference) and 43/2010 (Impact Analysis of Proposed Federal Legislation Bill S-11) were passed at the Annual General Assembly in Winnipeg this summer, giving our office the mandate to advocate for the inherent right to safe drinking water for all First Nations.

GOVERNANCE - ELECTIONS

First Nation governments often face difficulty moving forward on initiatives or key projects both at the community level and as groups, due to the short two-year terms of office under the Indian Act election system and the fact that, at any given moment, a First Nation election can be held and Chief and Councils can change.

A resolution (11-05-2007/#005R) passed at the Assembly of Treaty Chiefs (6, 7 & 8) on November 5, 2007, called for the development of a region-wide election appeals system. A mandate to the three Grand Chiefs of Treaties 6, 7 & 8 was given with a timeframe to present a draft document at the next sitting of the Alberta Chiefs. The Treaty organizations were asked to consult with First Nation communities, Elders and youth for research in the development of the Election Appeals Process, and to seek funding to cover the cost of developing an Election Appeals Process System. The final report, *Election Appeals Process Report for Alberta Treaties #6, 7 & 8 (April 2009-June 2010)*, was prepared by Marvin Yellowhorn. The Elections Appeal Process is still under review. There is no current timeline for this initiative.

CITIZENSHIP

Bill C-3, the Gender Equality in Indian Registration Act, was introduced to respond to the McIvor decision, however, its narrow scope does not fully address gender discrimination. Proposed amendments following witness testimony to expand the scope of the Bill, among others, were for the most part ruled out of order. The Bill passed 3rd reading in the House of Commons on November 22, 2010 and is proceeding quickly through the Senate. The AFN presented to the Senate Committee on Human Rights on C-3 on December 6, 2010. The deadline for Canada to respond to the McIvor decision is January 31, 2011.

BILL S-4 – MATRIMONIAL REAL PROPERTY ACT

Introduced into the House of Commons on September 22, 2010 after passing all stages in the Senate, S-4 will be the agenda for study by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development likely in the new year. The Bill subjects First Nation law-making in this area to ratification by an external appointed verification officer. This infringes on First Nations' inherent jurisdiction. The Bill also relies on provincial courts for remedy, but does not provide access to justice due to financial barriers or remoteness. Furthermore, Bill S-4 does not include legislative supports for essentials such as housing and domestic violence prevention.

SPECIFIC CLAIMS

An accurate forecast of the magnitude of the work facing the Specific Claims Tribunal cannot be made until after operations commence. We anticipate that the registry will open for the formal filing of claims and case management by the end of the current fiscal year. The AFN has received funding for work on Specific Claims and Additions to Reserve (ATR). Significant work is expected to take place as part of the AFN's engagement on ATR. Canada has very narrowly defined the role of mediation in the resolution of specific claims. However, the Tribunal has defined a significant role for mediation once a claim is filed.

The AFN is examining the linkages in this regard, but Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) remains unwilling to do so to date. Talks are ongoing and updates will be provided.

The House Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs has identified the need to study claims over \$150 million. It is expected that such a study would help to advance discussion about these large claims.

OTHER ACTIVITIES SINCE THE 2010 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Attended the Samson Cree Nation Powwow "Honouring the AFN National Chief" in July.
- Media release from James Cameron visit to the Tar sands with Mikisew Cree First Nation and the Beaver Lake Cree Nation.
- Attended the AFN Planning and Dialogue Forum in November.
- Visited the Blueberry River First Nations and the "Highway of Tears" latest murdered and missing woman victim.
- Attended the Treaties 1-11 Gathering in Winnipeg.
- Presented to the Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs in October on the implications for First Nations of the mandatory sentences proposed in Bill S-10.
- Participated in community visits as well as First Nations' powwows and events.

CONCLUSION

With the Christmas season upon us and a new year ahead of us, it is with hope and prayers that you and your family and friends have a great Christmas season. To all my colleagues on the Executive Committee, I bid you a very joyous and safe holiday season. To all First Nations across the country, have a Happy New Year and see you in 2011.

Hiy! Hiy!

Regional Chief George Stanley

REGIONAL CHIEF JODY WILSON-RAYBOULD BRITISH COLUMBIA

Elders, Chiefs, delegates and guests, on behalf of the BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN), I bring you Season's Greetings at this Special Chiefs Assembly. 2010 was a very busy year kicking off with the Winter Olympics and concluding with Canada endorsing the **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)**. BC First Nations have enjoyed success in exercising their Aboriginal rights and title over resource developments within their territories ranging from entering into groundbreaking revenue sharing agreements to halting major mine developments. Nationally, as the portfolio holder for First Nations' Governance, our offices were very active in ensuring our collective interests with respect to Nation building and rebuilding were heard as Canada continued to move forward with its own legislative agenda on a number of governance related fronts.



In BC, over the course of this year a **First Nations' Task Force (FNTF)** consisting of a group of our Chiefs, Chief Negotiators and other leaders met regularly to consider ways for our Nations to work more closely and to better coordinate our political efforts and organizations. The FNTF has completed its work. At an **All Chiefs' Gathering** held on November 30 and December 1, 2010, Terms of Reference and an Accountability Framework for the First Nations' Leadership Council (FNLC) were approved by consensus. The FNLC consists of the Regional Chief of the BCAFN, the three elected First Nation Summit Task Group Members and the three elected executives of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs. Through All Chiefs' gatherings our Chiefs and leadership are able to discuss the key issues that face all First Nations in BC notwithstanding political affiliations.

Along with our collective work, the primary focus at the BCAFN remains implementing our **Building on OUR Success Action Plan**. The Plan, which has four pillars, is moving forward to empower, connect and support our Nations as our Nations strategize and work together to achieve our goals of self-determination. With respect to the first pillar, **strong and appropriate governance**, the BCAFN is developing a **Governance Self-Assessment and Community Engagement Tool**. The tool is being developed in response to the many leaders in our Region that have indicated that while there is no question that we need to govern outside of the *Indian Act*, this is still a daunting task and there is much work to be done; not least of which is ensuring the community support for change. The tool will be available to all our Nations as they implement their inherent right to self-government and move away from governance under the *Indian Act*. The tool will be rolled out in the first half of 2011 and will be refined through piloting it in a number of communities. Ongoing **Regional Dialogue Sessions** will also provide an opportunity to introduce and refine the tool as well as other aspects of the **Building on OUR Success Action Plan**. I look forward to working with our Chiefs and communities to support this important work that must be undertaken if we are to fully realize our opportunities and benefit from the advancements we have made in recognition of our rights and title.

On this note, we continue to advance title and rights, including Treaty rights, in BC on a number of fronts; in the courts, through negotiations and by action. I can report that the Xení Gwet'in as part of the **Tsilhqot'in Nation** were back in court in November to begin the appeal in their title and rights case seeking a declaration of Aboriginal title to their territory; both to the lands where the trial judge had ruled they had proven their Aboriginal title and to lands beyond. Recently and very well publicized in the media, the Tsilhqot'in Nation and the Northern Secwepemc were also instrumental in influencing a federal environmental review panel and consequently Cabinet's decision to reject the Taesko Prosperity Mine proposal. The mine would have created a tailings pond out of Teztan Biny (Fish Lake) with significant and irreparable harm to the Tsilhqot'in way of life. This was a significant achievement and underlies the importance of taking seriously the obligations of the Crown to consult with us where development activities may have a direct and significant impact on our rights and title. It also highlights the responsibility we have as First Nations to engage in appropriate consultation.

Government and industry are aware that they will not be able to undertake major development projects that could affect our Nations' rights and title unless our Nations' interests and concerns have first been addressed. If not then compensation will be required. Given this reality, we are, not surprisingly, seeing more and more opportunities for agreements to be negotiated between our Nations and the Crown and industry. The numbers and examples of agreements our Nations in BC have entered into are growing from **Reconciliation Protocols, Economic Benefit Agreements, Strategic Engagement Agreements** and **Accommodation Agreements** to the most recent **Revenue Sharing Agreements** over mining. Others are expected.

There are, however, still many major development projects proposed in BC including Enbridge's Northern Gateway Pipeline and the Site C Dam on the Peace River that will impact our Nations' title and rights. We will watch with interest how these projects 'progress' and continue to advocate where requested and where necessary in support of the affected Nations' rights, interests and concerns. Also, while some Nations have seen success others have yet to benefit from the implementation of their rights and title. Therefore, as part of the second pillar of our *Building on OUR Success Action Plan*, **fair land and resource settlements**, we will continue to petition the government of BC and where appropriate, Canada, to ensure that all our Nations have the opportunity to address their rights and title issues directly with the Crown and where appropriate enter into fair agreements when they are ready to do so.

Some of our Nations continue to pursue their rights and title through modern Treaty making and as part of the BC Treaty making process with a number advancing their issues collectively at a '**Common Table**'.

One of the challenges to accomplishing broad success in implementing rights and title and reaching fair land and resource settlements, whether through modern Treaty or not, is addressing the question of '**proper title holder**'. That is, which Nation (or Nations) is the proper title holder and can therefore enter into agreements with the Crown and third parties? In the past the legal question was more about whether there was Aboriginal title. Today given we have established there is Aboriginal title, the practical question is "who is the proper Aboriginal title holder?" In BC we are continuing to explore ways to support our Nations in resolving proper title holder issues and conflicts among ourselves.

With regards to the third pillar of our *Building on OUR Success* Action Plan, **improved education** to ensure our citizens are able to make informed decisions about change and participate in our growing economies and our governments, we continue to support the work of the BC First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) among others. Education is a national priority of the AFN and we are working with the National Chief in his efforts to promote the education agenda across Canada. Efforts are continuing to advance our Nations' jurisdiction over education and to secure the necessary financial resources to make the necessary investments required to meet our goals to improve the level of education of our children and citizens.

With respect to **individual health**, the fourth pillar, BCAFN has strongly endorsed the work of **IndigenACTION** and other efforts underway in our region to bring awareness to the importance of individual health. Our work builds on the efforts of the provincial government to advance community-driven healthy living projects under the **ActNOW** initiative.

In addition to continuing to implement our *Building on OUR Success* Action Plan, I look forward to continuing my work nationally as the chair of the **First Nations' Governance portfolio**. In 2010, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) continued with a legislative agenda (as distinct from legislation as proposed by our Nations) to deal with aspects of governance on reserve and what it considers are some of the most egregious deficiencies of the *Indian Act*. This work is separate and apart from our Nation building agenda. These Acts touch upon fundamental aspects of our governance and should in no way limit the ability of our Nations to build or re-build, or restrict the ability of our governments to move out from under the *Indian Act* and to implement the inherent right to self-government. We will continue to advance our arguments as various bills make their way through Parliament or are proposed. We will look to have the bills amended or defeated as the situation requires and as directed by our Chiefs.

At the AFN **National Planning and Dialogue Forum** held in Montreal in November, we were able to have a productive discussion among our Nations on many of the governance related issues that need to be considered as part of Nation building or rebuilding. I would like to acknowledge our Chiefs and community leaders who participated in this forum and shared their experiences and their knowledge. There are many different ways our Nations are re-building their institutions of governance and assuming jurisdiction over a wide range of subject areas. Sharing our experiences makes the journey easier for those that follow and allows those that have gone before to reflect on their journey. By working together and building on our success, great progress can be made. This is most important during this period of *Indian Act* transition. We need to strengthen our efforts to ensure Canada does not usurp our Nation Building agenda by enacting ill-conceived legislation that in some cases may be unworkable and contrary to our long-term interests and, I would argue, ironically, Canada's as well.

In closing, and despite our ongoing issues with Canada, one of the highlights of the year must be Canada endorsing the UNDRIP. The Declaration will assist in interpreting and defining our section 35 rights and sets minimum international standards to uphold. However, recognition in itself has never been the end objective. The UNDRIP is a tool, along with other tools, for us to use to advance our ultimate objective – making the lives of our people better. The challenge now is translating rights into benefits on the ground so as to improve the lives of our people and to have practising and thriving cultures.

I look forward to working with the Chiefs of BC and my colleagues on the national Executive in the coming year as we collectively look to strengthen the positions of our Nations and First Nations people within Canada. While there are many challenges before us, so too are there many opportunities for us to seize. *Building on OUR Success* allows us to recognize our opportunities and to realize the even greater strength of our peoples.

Best wishes to you and your families over the holiday season and let's get ready to roll-up our sleeves in 2011. May the New Year bring you good health and good fortune.

Gilakas'la,

Regional Chief Jody Wilson-Raybould

REGIONAL CHIEF BILL ERASMUS NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

INTRODUCTION

Over the past year, the Northwest Territories Region has played an active role. We have listened to our Elders and northern members of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) about issues relating to health, environment, traditions, Treaties and economics as we work to improve their daily lives.

The Denendeh National Office has been guided by the input of regional leaders, members, youth, women and Elders who have offered timely, important advice on social and economic matters relating to the NWT. We have and will continue to convey these issues to territorial, provincial and federal government leaders.

Many activities have occurred in our communities and respected regions. Since the 40th Dene National Assembly in Fort Good Hope, we have been very busy. With devolution discussions, water rights issues and concerns over the Barrenland Caribou and the new proposed NWT Wildlife Act topped the agenda.



KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The 40th Dene National Assembly was held in Fort Good Hope, Denendeh. The theme of the assembly was “Celebrating 40 Years, Honouring Our People”. This was a historic event and showed the people of Denendeh and the world how close we all are as a nation. We will continue to work together with our regions and effectively demonstrate our strength to the federal government.

On behalf of Dene Nation, we would like to congratulate Chief Danny Greenland of the Aklavik Indian Band and Chief William Koe of the Tetlit Gwich'in Council of Fort McPherson on their elections. Gameti Elder Alphonse Apples has been appointed Acting Grand Chief of the Tlicho Government until a formal election is called.

NWT Premier Floyd Roland pitched a draft devolution deal to First Nation leaders. The Premier scheduled a meeting with regional leaders in Edmonton last month to talk about the devolution agreement-in-principle (AIP) that was recently reached between federal and territorial negotiators. The AIP sets out the terms for negotiating the transfer of authority over lands and resources in the NWT. Under this AIP, Ottawa would hand over control of all federal lands and resources in the territory, including water and minerals, to the territorial government. It also proposes dollar amounts for transitional and ongoing federal funding, as well as a formula for resource revenue sharing. Negotiators are asking the NWT's First Nation governments to sign-off on the AIP and join in on the subsequent discussions; however, the agreement also recommends that devolution talks proceed with or without approval from the First Nations.

Many of our leaders have been highly critical of the AIP, in large part because they were excluded from the initial negotiations. Dene leaders state that we were mere spectators in the devolution talks, which is a huge setback because the Dene regions fought for the right to be recognized as equals to the territorial government. The fear is that once the AIP has been signed by the NWT and federal governments, there will be no opportunity for Dene leaders to come back and add additional items to it. The Premier, who has been promoting the agreement since it was made public in October, responded to our leaders' concerns that the AIP is a roadmap for future negotiations and was never meant to be the final deal. Dene leaders believe that most of the details worked out in negotiations are done during the AIP stage. Dehcho, Akaitcho, Gwich'in, Sahtu and Tlicho leaders are united in opposing the AIP. They argue that it is not a good deal for First Nation governments financially and will give the territorial government more authority than it should have. The Premier stated that the devolution agreement would have no effect on land claims or land claim negotiations.

A plan to manage the declining Bathurst caribou herd in the Northwest Territories is coming into effect. The Wek'eezhii Renewable Resources Board has agreed with a proposal by the Government of the NWT and Tlicho Dene governments to establish an Aboriginal harvest target of 300 Bathurst caribou each year, starting this hunting season and running until 2012-13. The Wek'eezhii Board is involved in managing the Bathurst caribou herd and other wildlife species in the NWT's Tlicho Government Territory.

The governments' joint plan was developed after surveys found the herd's population had dropped from about 128,000 in 2006 to 32,000 last year. The barren-ground caribou herd had up to 350,000 caribou in 1996. The reported decline prompted the NWT government to impose an emergency ban on hunting caribou from the Bathurst herd's winter grounds, in a large area north of Great Slave Lake, until a management plan was in place. The ban began Jan. 1, 2010, under strong resistance by our Dene people due to Treaty right to hunt and speculation on caribou populations. The Board accepted the governments' joint proposal to set a harvest target over an absolute hunting quota, also known as a total allowable harvest. Both governments proposed that because the herd size is an estimate and not an exact number, it is not beneficial to have an exact number set for harvest. As well, the report noted the governments' argument that Tlicho hunters would more likely support and take ownership of a harvest target rather than a strict quota. The Board also recommended that both the NWT and Tlicho governments provide an annual report on how well the harvest target approach is doing in meeting the objectives of effective collaborative management and long-term recovery of the Bathurst caribou herd.

While the harvest target applies to Aboriginal hunters, the Wek'eezhii Board has recommended not allowing the commercial harvest of the Bathurst caribou herd, as well as big-game sport hunts that are arranged by hunting outfitters. In its report, the Board stated that while it recognizes the economic hardship caribou hunting outfitters have faced, it must give priority to the Aboriginal harvesting of caribou. According to the report, 225 of the 300 harvest target agreed to by the Board would be allotted to the Tlicho Dene people and the remaining 75 would go to other Aboriginal groups. However, the Board acknowledged that it has not taken into account the interim agreement signed between the Government of the NWT and the Yellowknives Dene First Nation, allowing that First Nation hunters

to harvest 150 Bathurst caribou per year over the next two years. While the Board has recommended limiting the Bathurst caribou hunt, it is proposing an Aboriginal harvest target of 2,800 caribou from another herd, the Bluenose East herd, each year until 2012-13. However, the Board said the harvest target for the Bluenose East herd should be worked out between the wildlife co-management boards and Aboriginal governments in the NWT's Tlicho, Sahtu and Dehcho regions. The Board noted a bit of growth in the Bluenose East herd, from 66,700 in 2006 to a preliminary estimate of 80,000 this year.

The Dehcho First Nations are set to sue the federal government in a bid to protect an ecologically sensitive area in the heart of their territory. The Horn Plateau, known as Edehzhie in Dene, had been protected from mining and exploration since 2002, until the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs recently decided to cancel the subsurface protection. Dehcho First Nations Grand Chief Sam Gargan stated the minister's decision is illegal and will not be tolerated. Dehcho First Nations have been working to get the traditional region, rich in valuable minerals and hydrocarbons, designated as a National Wildlife Area under the Protected Areas Strategy. The former chair of the Edehzhie Working Group stated that Canada has made a mockery of their whole Protected Areas Strategy proposal and insists any development could destroy the area. The Dehcho First Nations filed an Application for Judicial Review in Federal Court on Nov. 30, 2010.

CONCLUSION

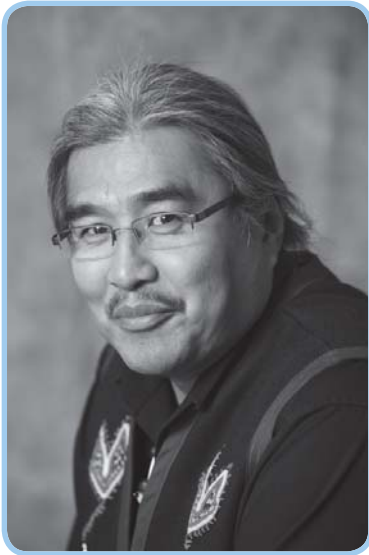
We would like to thank the AFN staff for working so diligently at the national level for our regions. Also, Chiefs at all levels must continue to work with their membership to ensure their people attain their goals. We are not able to function without these hard working people. We wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a very prosperous New Year!

Mahsi Cho.

Regional Chief Bill Erasmus

REGIONAL CHIEF ERIC MORRIS

YUKON



INTRODUCTION

My name is Guchnauw, meaning Dead Wolf “One Who Disciplines,” and I am from the Dahkleweidi – Eagle Clan of the Inland Tlingit of Teslin, Yukon.

I was elected as Regional Chief for Yukon in July of 2009 and was appointed by the National Chief to the Environment and Economy Portfolio in September 2009. This portfolio includes climate change, fostering a green economy, skills development and training, housing and infrastructure, the Northern Strategy, and fisheries.

I also sit on the Management Committee which includes the Finance Committee, sustainability audit, consideration of electoral procedures and future structural change, special projects and initiatives, and veterans.

I have been selected as a member of the Towards Sustainable Mining (TSM) Community of Interest Advisory Panel which includes representatives from Aboriginal organizations and communities, non-governmental organizations, mining communities, labour, and the investment community. Its mandate is to help the Mining Association of Canada (MAC) members and communities of interest improve the industry’s sustainability performance, to advise MAC on the design and implementation of its TSM initiative, to raise sustainability issues of concern to the mining industry and its communities of interest, and to foster dialogue between the industry and these interests.

I have been appointed as a member of the National Aboriginal Council on Species at Risk (NACOSAR) by the Minister of the Environment. NACOSAR was created pursuant to the *Species at Risk Act* to advise the Minister of the Environment on the administration of the Act and provide advice and recommendations to the Canadian Endangered Species Conservation Council. In November, NACOSAR held an orientation meeting in Halifax for the new Council members and I was appointed as the chairperson.

The Yukon Department of Health and Social Services recently created the Task Force on Acutely Intoxicated Persons at Risk and has requested my assistance. The mandate of the Task Force is to “... advise the Minister of Health and Social Services on options, and suggested priority areas for action, for appropriate and effective ways to deal with acutely intoxicated persons at risk of harming themselves or others.”

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

2010 SELF-CONFERENCE: BUILDING ON SUCCESS

In September, the Yukon Assembly of First Nations hosted a **National Conversation on First Nations Self-Government** as a step forward in the continuing dialogue on what has made self-government successful and what the Parties to these agreements must do to ensure its ongoing success. First Nation delegates from across Canada participated in the conference and I have been informed by some of these delegates that it was considered a great success.

National Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo opened the conference with the keynote address “Ensuring Future Success” and closed the conference. Over 300 delegates attended the plenary sessions on Making Day One a Success, Building Institutions of Government, Building Fiscal Capacity, The Importance of the Success of Self-Government to the North, International Perspectives and Improving Intergovernmental Relationships.

There were 13 workshops held throughout the conference, including Transferring Knowledge, Building New Relationships, Managing the Transition to Self-Government and Aboriginal Public Government.

You can view some of the presentations on www.buildingonsuccess.ca and the final conference report will soon be posted.

ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

I attended the **Inter-regional Negotiating Group of the Ad hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing** this year in Montreal and Japan. The intent of the parties is to conclude a final draft of the Access and Benefit-Sharing Protocol to be submitted for adoption to the Conference of the Parties (COP 10) for approval. The Protocol aims to provide a legal framework to ensure that biodiversity rich developing countries get a fair and equitable share of benefits arising out of the use of genetic resources from their territories – and that biodiversity poor developed nations can readily access those resources with the agreement of the host country. The Protocol will include measures to ensure that the utilization of Traditional Knowledge associated with genetic resources is subject to the prior informed consent of, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits with, the Indigenous and local communities which are holders of that knowledge. The Protocol will prevent the unauthorized use of genetic resources and associated Traditional Knowledge, often referred as bio-piracy.

I also attended the COP 10 in Japan and Mexico. The official groups recognized are the UN Regional Groups – Africa, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC) and Western European and Other Groups (WEOG). Other active groups involved in the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) processes are the Group of 77 and China (G-77), European Union, Association of Small Island States (AOSIS), the Group of Likeminded Mega-diverse Countries (LMMC) and the Group of 17 biodiversity-rich countries.

COP 10 will work toward the adoption of important decisions arising out of the preparatory and negotiation processes that have taken place since COP 9. Issues that will be addressed by COP 10 include: access and benefit sharing; progress toward the 2010 Biodiversity Target and the Global Biodiversity Outlook; strategic plan for the Convention on Biological Diversity; operations of the Convention; strategy for resource mobilization and the financial mechanism; scientific and technical cooperation and the clearing-house mechanism; technology transfer and cooperation; communication, education and public awareness; and the International Year of Biodiversity.

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and all the best in 2011.

Gunalcheesh,

Regional Chief Eric Morris

AFN ELDERS COUNCIL

Since the inception of the National Indian Brotherhood/Assembly of First Nations (AFN), there has always been a place of honour and distinction for the Elders. Elders provided both spiritual and political guidance in the formation of the organization, its structures and its Charter. The Elders helped to shape AFN policies and the relationship with the federal government, as well as with other national and international organizations. During the past 31 years, the AFN's leadership has relied upon the historical and cultural knowledge of its Elders, especially in matters relating to Treaty rights and First Nations governance. This role continues today.

The Elders Council continues to play an important role in all facets of the AFN and its daily operations. They are the keepers of First Nations traditions, values, languages and history. The Elders are the guides to the future and leaders in the community; they speak with honor and with a great deal of pride. The Elders are teachers and they will always encourage First Nations leaders and champions to continue to enlighten and inform forums, such as the Special Chiefs Assemblies, on their experiences, issues, successes and challenges.

The AFN Elders Council includes representatives from each of the AFN's 10 regions, as well as two Resident Elders appointed by the National Chief. The AFN continues its work to acquire funds to carry out next steps, including the input and participation of the Elders Council.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The AFN Elders Council continues to meet bi-annually at Annual General Assemblies and Special Chiefs Assemblies to discuss issues and challenges facing the Council and to bring together new ideas. Resident Elders Joseph Taa-eee-sim-chilth Williams of Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation and Bertha Commanda of Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation continue to support and provide guidance and knowledge at meetings and gatherings throughout the year.

AFN COUNCIL OF ELDERS GUIDELINES AND PROTOCOLS

The AFN Elders Council met as a group to discuss guidelines, protocol and continuing issues. The working group meeting was intended to update and revise the existing document entitled "Assembly of First Nations Elders and Elders Council Guidelines and Protocols – Draft: July 29, 2005".

AFN EDUCATION SECRETARIAT – NATIONAL WEEK OF ACTION ON EDUCATION

In support of the AFN Education Secretariat, the AFN Elders Council Chair participated in the National Week of Action on Education held September 19-23, 2010. Elders hold crucial roles in supporting formal and informal education in First Nations communities. They impart cultural teachings using the spoken language and role model traditional practices.

AFN HEALTH SECRETARIAT

The AFN Elders Council Chair remains integral in providing guidance and vision in meetings applicable to Health. The AFN Elders Council Chair participated in numerous meetings pertaining to First Nations health including: the National First Nations Health Technicians Network (NFNHTN), National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program (NNADAP), eHealth, and more recently, the Canadian Conference on Global Health.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- The Elders Council will continue to seek additional financial support from the federal government and alternative sources, so as to ensure First Nations cultures and perspectives are reflected in the work conducted regionally and nationally.
- The AFN staff will continue to provide administrative support, and champion the issues facing the Elders Council.

AFN WOMEN'S COUNCIL

The Assembly of First Nations Women's Council (AFNWC) works with the AFN Secretariats to ensure that the concerns and perspectives of First Nations women inform the work of the AFN. Council members hold portfolio responsibilities, including participation in a wide range of panels, presentations and forums that are relevant to First Nations women. The work of the AFNWC has been established and supported by Chiefs-in-Assembly through resolutions 12/2006, 2/2007 and 21/2009.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

GENDER BASED ANALYSIS IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Work has been ongoing on the development of an AFN Gender Based Analysis (GBA) Implementation Strategy to build AFN capacity and provide GBA training across the AFN, regions and in First Nations communities. It is anticipated that the strategy will be implemented during the 2011-2014 fiscal years. This will involve proposal development and identification of areas for needed improvement and gaps in implementation, as well as evaluation and monitoring mechanisms to record progress (e.g., a report card), in an effort to effectively mainstream GBA at all levels.

MISSING AND MURDERED ABORIGINAL WOMEN IN CANADA

The AFN and the AFNWC continue to issue media releases to highlight key issues and concerns of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada. The AFN continues to offer support to the families and communities that are impacted and continues to advocate for urgent and dedicated attention to address the issue and root causes of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada. The AFNWC continues to support the efforts of the Native Women's Association of Canada through the Sisters in Spirit initiative, which calls for solutions to the violence encountered by all Aboriginal women in Canada. The AFNWC has also called for a national strategy and action plan to examine the root causes of why too many Aboriginal women are placed in vulnerable situations and consider approaches to prevent further violence. The AFN and the AFNWC are planning a National Justice Conference taking place in 2011, at which missing and murdered women will be a priority and will be instrumental in facilitating the development of a national strategy.

GLOBAL MOTHER DIVINE ORGANIZATION

Building on previous discussions, the AFNWC has continued to engage with the Global Mother Divine Organization in Fairfield, Iowa, in discussions of collaborative efforts in exploring healing modalities and in looking into community-development projects to create healthy, sustainable communities for First Nations peoples. The Global Mother Divine Organization is the women's wing of the Global Country of World Peace, which represents 192 countries. In October, the Global Mother Divine Organization invited the AFNWC to attend the *Restoring Balance: 'The Indigenous Grandmothers' Call to the Women of the World'* conference. Featured speakers at the conference included members of the International Council of the 13 Indigenous Grandmothers, as well as other visiting Indigenous women leaders from around the world. As a result of this conference, plans are underway to empower Indigenous women through the creation of the Indigenous Global Mother Divine Organization.

CANADIAN CONFERENCE ON GLOBAL HEALTH

In November, an AFN-led symposium entitled *Pathways to Global Health through Indigenous Knowledge: First Nations as Custodians of Natural Law in Restoring Healthy, Sustainable First Nations Communities* took place during the Canadian Conference on Global Health, in Ottawa. The conference profiled First Nations and American Indian presenters on the benefits to applying a Natural-Law-based approach to addressing the social determinants of health in creating healthy, harmonious and prosperous First Nations communities. The AFNWC presented on solution-based tools in reducing societal stress in First Nations communities and at large, as well as illustrating the benefits of transcendental meditation as a technique to facilitate stress reduction for health and community wellness. The Maliseet Nation presented a plan to establish the Turtle Island Foundation throughout America with the help of the Winnibego Tribal leader, Prosper Waukon. This foundation will aim to raise the necessary funds through the Clinton Global Initiatives to carry the 5-point plan (health, land recovery, cultural preservation, education, economic development and communications) to fruition throughout North America.

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS WORKING GROUP

The AFN and the AFNWC continues to contribute to the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group (AAWG) in a coordinated effort with provinces and Aboriginal organizations in the development of a work plan, including timeframes, and scope of work based on the approved AAWG recommendations in the elimination of violence against Aboriginal women and girls.

TONY BLAIR FAITH FOUNDATION AND BELINDA STRONACH FOUNDATION – FAITHS ACT CANADA

The AFNWC continues to participate in the Faiths Act Canada (FAC) initiative and the Belinda Stronach Foundation in creating opportunities for young women, girls, Aboriginal youth and global initiatives. Faith Acts Canada brings together faith communities and councils to work together on issues of health and global poverty, in order to help achieve the UN's Millennium Development Goals.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- The AFNWC will continue to make strides in advancing a culturally-relevant GBA on several fronts, including the development of a GBA Implementation Strategy, and piloting of the strategy in First Nations communities, to be implemented during the 2011-2014 fiscal years.
- The AFNWC will continue to the issues and concerns of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada and get to the root causes of why so many women have gone missing or murdered.
- The AFNWC will continue to collaborate with the Maharishi University of Management and the Global Country of World Peace and its Global Mother Divine wing in restoring healthy, harmonious sustainable First Nations communities.
- The AFNWC will continue to contribute to the AAWG in a coordinated effort with provinces and Aboriginal organizations to eliminate violence against Aboriginal women and girls.

AFN NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL

The Assembly of First Nations National Youth Council (AFN NYC) operates as a 20-member council representing First Nations youth from each of the 10 First Nations regions (each region has one male and one female representative).

This national body, based within the structure of the AFN, represents First Nations youth across the country on issues that impact them on a daily basis. The Council provides insight to many committees and working groups, as well as the AFN Secretariat, on various youth-related issues.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The AFN NYC has had an active period that saw them participate in a number of initiatives and on a number of committees beyond their own Council activities. This participation has ensured that these various initiatives and groups are more reflective of youth values and input, and thus are more representative of what amounts to a significant segment of the First Nations population in Canada.

INDIGENACTION

The AFN NYC has taken a lead role in establishing this exciting new initiative that will carry forth the energy of the Olympic Games into Indigenous communities and the realities/mind-sets of our people. IndigenACTION will enhance existing relationships and develop new partnerships to help improve the quality of life for Indigenous peoples by promoting healthy lifestyles, community togetherness and community-based economic spin-off opportunities. This will include securing greater investment and support for our own athletes, as sport has great potential to encourage, motivate and create confidence in our young people.

During the Annual General Assembly (AGA), the AFN NYC, along with the National Chief and Waneeq Horn-Miller, helped launch IndigenACTION with a 5 km run at the University of Winnipeg. The AFN NYC are excited by the success of the launch and hope to carry that momentum forward in the coming months as the initiative kicks into its roundtable phase.

RAISING AWARENESS

The AFN NYC finalized seven short videos on sexual health promotion with funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and Health Canada (HC). The videos have been launched on the AFN website coinciding with the beginning of Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week (December 1-5) and World AIDS Day (December 1). The AFN NYC has also presented the video campaign before the Senate Committee on the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth.

EDUCATION – NATIONAL WEEK OF ACTION

The AFN NYC participated in events taking place during the National Week of Action on Education in September. The AFN NYC was well represented at both the Advocacy Day on Parliament Hill and the rally which took place on the Hill, later in the week. Education and the movement to improve the quality and access to education for First Nations youth remains a priority for the AFN NYC and they look

forward to continuing their role to bring substantial change and progress to this fundamental aspect of First Nations development and success.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- The AFN NYC will take a lead role in the delivery of the IndigenACTION roundtables which are slated to begin in January.
- Substantial results in addressing the problems of gang and criminal culture among First Nations youth.
- The AFN NYC will begin the planning and delivery of the 4th National First Nations Youth Summit, which is to take place in 2012.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Welcome all Elders, delegates and observers to the Special Chiefs Assembly. I am pleased to provide a report on the recent activities of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and our progress on the path of transforming the organization to better serve the interests of First Nations. Under the leadership of the National Chief and Executive, we have continued to work towards a streamlined, efficient, and accountable AFN with a clear focus on advocacy.

We have made further progress on implementing the key recommendations of the sustainability review. The full sustainability review of our operations recommended the creation of the position of Chief of Operations to replace the position of Chief Financial Officer. The new position of Chief of Operations was posted July 14, 2010, and I am pleased to announce that Peter Dinsdale will join the organization as the new Chief of Operations in January.



Another key focus has been on streamlining the AFN and making the organization more agile and efficient. This has included a number of activities to reduce the organization's deficit. I am also pleased to inform the Assembly that, as a result of successfully working to resolve a bad debt of \$683,000 related to the Aboriginal Languages Initiative, the AFN has now eliminated its deficit. I would like to thank the Management Committee chaired by Regional Chiefs Rick Simon and George Stanley and the staff team who contributed to this notable and hard won achievement.

As an organization, we are also continuing to move ahead with our business planning and organizational strategies aimed at improving the ability to support the concerns, needs and priorities of First Nation governments. This has entailed re-orienting our operations to better reflect First Nations' priorities as opposed to those of funders.

As part of our efforts at achieving sustainability for the organization, we are pursuing options to generate alternative sources of revenue. The First Nations Rights Fund, announced at the Annual General Assembly, was kicked off with an inaugural fundraiser in conjunction with the Planning and Dialogue Forum in Montreal, collecting a total of \$5,268 on site; plus an additional \$10,000 in pledges to be received. We will be doing further events and fundraising, including at this Special Chiefs Assembly, to directly support and deliver on the important mandates of the Chiefs-in-Assembly.

Through registration fees for the Planning and Dialogue Forum and by increasing the registration fees for the Special Chiefs Assembly, particularly for observers, we are ensuring that our events and meetings are more self-sustaining and thereby contribute in a positive way to the functioning and effectiveness of the organization.

Changing the way we conduct our business has also meant that the organization is moving to use technology more effectively – to better reach First Nation citizens, to act in a more environmentally-sustainable fashion, and to reduce costs. Going paperless at the Planning and Dialogue Forum and providing documents on a USB key is one of the measures that speak to this change in direction.

At this year's Special Chiefs Assembly, the new AFN website will be launched which will significantly enhance our communications and outreach. The use of new media such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, linked to the new website, will greatly extend our reach and effectiveness and will provide more opportunities for dialogue and input.

An emphasis on ensuring greater dialogue and exchange was the rationale for the Planning and Dialogue Forum which took place in Montreal, November 8 and 9. Well over 200 delegates came together to share their experiences and to discuss moving forward in the areas of nation-building and supporting First Nation governments' capacity.

There has also been positive initial feedback on our activities focused on Parliamentary relations. The Week of Action on Education in September included an Advocacy Day on the Hill. This was an opportunity for First Nation leadership to speak directly to Parliamentarians about the need for action to achieve fairness in education, among other issues.

I would like to express my thanks to the National Chief and Executive for their leadership and example, to the AFN staff and to all First Nation leaders for their support as we continue to focus on advancing First Nation interests as effectively and efficiently as possible. I look forward to continuing this important work and optimizing the effectiveness of the organization, consistent with the direction from the Chiefs-in-Assembly.

Richard Jock
Chief Executive Officer

COMMUNICATIONS UNIT

The Communications Unit of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) produces, communicates and distributes information designed to advance the goals and priorities of First Nation peoples and governments. The Unit works to ensure that the messages and perspectives of the AFN and First Nations are properly communicated and understood and that the National Chief, Regional Chiefs and other spokespeople are involved in and given the opportunity to speak publicly through media and other fora to communicate First Nation perspectives. The Communications Unit provides ongoing input and assistance on critical issues as they occur.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

MEDIA AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

The Communications Unit advises, prepares and implements strategic communications policy and planning for the AFN as a whole, as well as strategies for specific initiatives and/or activities. The Unit works to develop materials and provide information to First Nations, the media and general public about the AFN, its activities and positions, as well as the National Chief's agenda and priorities.

The Communications Unit prepares press releases, media advisories and statements which are distributed nationally (in English and French) to Aboriginal and mainstream media, with regional distribution as applicable. The Unit also prepares speaking notes for the National Chief and AFN spokespeople that are used at a variety of events for a variety of audiences, including First Nation governments, groups and organizations, professional associations, national and international organizations, and government. Recent events have included the inaugural session of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Healing Our Spirit Worldwide gathering, Nipissing University Convocation address, Institute for Public Administration of Canada annual conference, Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business 8th Annual Gala, various press conferences, AFN Advocacy Day on Parliament Hill and the Treaties 1-11 Gathering.

Since the 2010 Annual General Assembly (AGA), the Communications Unit has prepared and distributed more than 40 press releases/statements on a wide range of issues. Communications also prepares speaking notes, media lines, backgrounders, Questions & Answers documents, letters to the editor and editorials on current issues.

Communications seeks to establish the profile of First Nation peoples and issues through media. In addition to outreach and other relationship-building exercises, the Communications Unit has organized editorial board meetings with the National Chief and select media including the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, CBC Ottawa bureau and the *Globe and Mail* among others.

Over the past six months, there have been several developments that have resulted in widespread national and international media coverage for the AFN and the National Chief, including the inaugural session

of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, National Week of Action on Education held in September and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

The Communications Unit works to raise awareness and understanding of First Nation issues and the AFN's role, responsibilities and activities in this regard.

The AFN understands that First Nations have different communications needs and different ways to access information. For this reason, a mix of traditional and new media are used to disseminate information.

The AFN issues regular updates on the National Chief's activities and work underway at the national office. National Chief's communiqués are distributed by fax to all First Nations, provincial/territorial organizations (PTOs) and tribal councils, and are also posted online in both print and video format.

The Communications Unit launched a redesigned website (www.afn.ca) in December that allows for easier navigation and clearer presentation and organization to enhance access to current information on AFN activities and priorities. The AFN also continues to expand its use of social media including a Twitter account (AFN_updates) and AFN Facebook page. The AFN also has an e-mail subscription service (listserv) on its website through which users can sign up to receive all information publicly distributed by the AFN.

The Communications Unit also provides editing and desktop publishing services. Projects have included reports for the Annual General Assembly, Special Chiefs Assembly and National Planning and Dialogue Forum, as well as products for the First Nations Rights Fund and the Environmental Stewardship and Economic Partnerships units.

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

The Communications Unit develops and implements global AFN communications as well as targeted strategies for specific events, issues and initiatives. The Unit provides advice, recommendations and communications support to the National Chief's Office and other program areas within the Secretariat.

The Unit continues to play a lead role in the ongoing implementation of the "It's Our Time" Communications Strategy which reflects the AFN's five-pillar strategic plan focused on: Supporting First Nations Families; Exercising and Implementing Our Rights; Supporting First Nation Governments and Nation-Building; Advancing Economic and Environmental Interests; and Advocating for Change within our Communities and Organizations.

As part of a dedicated effort to consolidate and improve communications with all First Nations, the AFN is developing and will launch a Direct Communications Plan with First Nations (as outlined at the end of this report). The Plan will enable all First Nation leaders and peoples to learn more about the AFN

and how to become involved and to directly communicate with AFN on an ongoing basis. The AFN will strengthen all aspects of communications, including notification of how and when leaders and citizens can get involved.

TRANSLATION

The Communications Unit coordinates all French/English translation requirements to ensure that the Canadian public and First Nations are able to access and understand all public materials produced by the AFN in both French and English. As per AFN policy, all public documents that are distributed nationally (including those posted on the AFN website) are available in French and English.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- Ongoing media and public relations work involving media advisories, press releases, speeches, and interviews.
- Publication of Bulletins/Communiqués.
- Ongoing French translation of public materials.
- Ongoing editing and desktop publishing of AFN publications.
- Ongoing updates of the AFN website.
- Ongoing use of new media such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS DIRECT COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

As part of a dedicated effort to consolidate and improve communications with all First Nations, the AFN is developing and will launch a Direct Communications Plan with First Nations.

The Plan will enable all First Nation leaders and peoples to learn more about the AFN and moreover how to become involved and to directly communicate with AFN on an ongoing basis.

The AFN will strengthen all aspects of communications including notification of how and when leaders and citizens can get involved. A clear listing of how to participate in AFN will be made available as below:

CONFERENCES

- Annual General Assembly (July)
- Special Chiefs Assembly (December)
- Policy Forums, as determined throughout the year
- Virtual Summits

CONFERENCE CALLS

- Weekly conference calls with AFN Policy staff and Provincial-Territorial Organizations (PTOs)

E-MAIL LISTSERV

- Distribution of AFN press releases, National Chief Monthly Bulletins, Policy & Legislative Bulletins, reports and notices to individuals who sign-up on the AFN website

FAX BROADCASTS

- Distribution of AFN press releases, National Chief Monthly Bulletins, Policy & Legislative Bulletins, and notices to First Nation band offices, PTOs and tribal councils

MEDIA RELATIONS

- Press releases, press statements and media advisories distributed via Canada Newswire and e-mailed to AFN Regional Offices, PTO Communications and individuals
- Targeted distribution of specific news releases via Aboriginal/First Nation distribution networks
- Press conferences
- Regular press conference calls with National Chief and Aboriginal media
- Exclusive Aboriginal press conference calls for major events/announcements
- Editorials/Op-eds
- Speeches (text and video provided when available)
- Backgrounders

PUBLICATIONS

- Annual Report – distribution at Annual General Assembly and posted online
- Fact Sheets – various issues; posted online
- National Chief’s Bulletin – monthly Bulletin on current issues; broadcast faxed to First Nations, PTOs and tribal councils and posted online
- Newsletters – quarterly *AFN Health Bulletin*, hard copy distribution and posted online
- Policy & Legislative Bulletins – on current issues as required; broadcast faxed and posted online
- Special Chiefs Assembly (SCA) report – distributed at SCA and posted online
- Issue-specific reports – posted online

SOCIAL MEDIA

- AFN website – re-design and launch in December 2010. New website will be flexible for viewing and browsing on cell phones, blackberries and PDAs
 - Current information on issues and priorities
 - Webcasts of the AFN Annual General Assembly and Special Chiefs Assemblies
 - Videos on special events and activities
 - Pictures from National Chief travels and regional visits
 - National Chief Monthly Web Address
- Various web portals for PTOs, AFN Chiefs Committees, etc.
- Facebook: posting of photos, AFN press releases and announcements, discussion forums, links to news, videos and information, engagement and response with users and “Friends”
- Twitter: “AFN_updates”
- YouTube – National Chief Monthly Web Address, videos on special events and activities (regional visits, National Week of Action on Education march, etc.)

NEW OPPORTUNITIES:

- AFN Blog
- Conference call briefings with Aboriginal media
- Electronic press release distribution with embedded photos/video
- Mobile video uploads: post videos of travels/events to Facebook or YouTube
- RSS (Really Simple Syndication) news feeds
- Videoconferencing
- Virtual summits / meetings
- Webchats: written and/or video with general public, targeted audiences

PARLIAMENTARY RELATIONS

Over the fall, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) continued work to further efforts to build strong relationships with Parliamentarians, facilitate access of First Nation leadership to key decision-makers, and improve information sharing on Parliamentary activities.

Along with specific focus on building and maintaining relationships between First Nation leadership, Parliamentarians and senior public servants, the AFN also monitors and provides strategic input and communications on legislation affecting First Nations.

Under the mandate of Resolution No. 43/2009, the AFN has continued work to advance strategic issues faced by First Nations as part of the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group (AAWG) created last August by the Council of the Federation (CoF). This has included identifying areas for joint policy discussion with provincial and territorial governments that could be discussed between meetings of the CoF.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

PARLIAMENTARY ADVOCACY AND OUTREACH

Continuing on earlier efforts in June of this year, the AFN coordinated a focused day of meetings with Parliamentarians on First Nation education on September 21, 2010, to support broader efforts of the National Week of Action on Education.

The day began with a breakfast reception with over 120 First Nation leaders, advisors and Members of Parliament. There was also notable participation from international delegates – including the British High Commissioner and representations from Belgium, Spain, Sweden, Slovakia and Bolivia – who all indicated their enthusiasm to assist and advocate for First Nations wherever they could.

Over the course of the day, 14 First Nation teams had 43 scheduled meetings with Members of Parliament, including all of the Opposition leaders and many informal conversations on the Hill. All MPs were provided with information on First Nations' priorities, along with specific information on the crisis in First Nation education.

To further support public education and awareness of the realities facing First Nation citizens and communities across Canada, the AFN sponsored the Ottawa premiere of *Third World Canada*, a documentary produced by award-winning filmmaker Andrée Cazabon. *Third World Canada* explores the day-to-day challenges faced by First Nations, while at the same time showcasing the courage and resilience of the people of Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inniniuwug (KI) located about 1800 km northwest of Ottawa. There was great demand to see the film, and the event sold-out the week before the screening. The AFN hosted a special reception of Parliamentarians before the screening to encourage dialogue and understanding.

Finally, to facilitate networking, relationship-building, and extend outreach between First Nation leaders and the diplomatic community and international delegations, the AFN coordinated an International reception to coincide with the December 2010 Special Chiefs Assembly. Efforts in this area will continue through 2011.

LEGISLATION AND ENGAGEMENT IN PARLIAMENTARY PROCESSES

Parliament continued to be active on legislation and studies with specific impacts on First Nations. Over the fall, the AFN has presented on seven occasions to committees of the House of Commons and Senate. As well, the AFN provided input to the annual Pre-Budget process, identifying critical areas for investment to support First Nations.

Since the start of the fall session, the AFN has sent out weekly Parliamentary wrap-ups, which provide a quick summary of legislation and committee business.

Key legislation followed during this session included:

- Bill C-3: *Gender Equity in Indian Registration Act*, which introduced amendments to the *Indian Act* to respond to the BC Court of Appeal decision in the McIvor case. The Court has given Canada until January 31, 2011, to enact its decision. The bill is currently under review by the Senate Committee on Human Rights. As the deadline approaches, it is anticipated that this legislation will move quickly to Royal Assent.
- Bill C-575: *First Nations Financial Transparency Act*, introduced by Conservative MP Kelly Block on October 1, 2010, would require that salary, travel, honoraria and all expenses paid to First Nations chiefs and councilors through Federal funds be published. In such event that these amounts are not disclosed, the Act would empower the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs to provide this information. The AFN is working to counter underlying myths associated with this bill and support the development of true reciprocal accountability mechanisms.
- Bill S-4: *Matrimonial Real Property Act* was introduced in the House of Commons on September 22, 2010, after passing through three readings in the Senate. There are a number of significant flaws with this bill – but there is some openness on the part of Canada to address issues. The AFN will continue to advocate for respect and support for implementing laws as developed by First Nations in this area, as well as access to justice related areas of housing and domestic violence prevention.
- Bill S-11: *Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act* was introduced in the Senate on May 26, 2010, and is currently at second reading. The bill creates regulations regarding First Nations' drinking water, but has no provisions for capacity to comply.

COUNCIL OF THE FEDERATION / ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS WORKING GROUP

The CoF is a body formed in 2003 consisting of all provincial and territorial (PT) Premiers. The CoF has invited leaders from the five National Aboriginal Organizations (NAOs) to meet with them in advance of their regular annual meeting since 2004. At the meeting of the CoF in Saskatchewan in 2009, the Premiers agreed to establish a working group consisting of PT Aboriginal Affairs Ministers

and national Aboriginal leaders to follow-up on work between meetings of the CoF and to advance commitments made by PTs.

This year, National Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo and Manitoba Regional Chief Bill Traverse met with Premiers and Territorial Leaders for the CoF on August 4, 2010, in Churchill, Manitoba. The agenda included discussions on education and skills training, economic development and violence against Aboriginal women. The AFN challenged all jurisdictions to work with us, particularly on critical improvements in education to support our students and to improve completion rates at every level.

Most recent discussions amongst the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group (AAWG) have been oriented to developing work plans building upon the established priorities from last year's CoF meeting intended to lead towards the upcoming Council of Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC) and CoF meetings in 2011. Established priorities include education, economic development and the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls.

In terms of priority issues moving forward at AAWG, the AFN and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami have agreed to the role of co-leads on education, the Métis National Council has taken the lead on economic development, and the Native Women's Association of Canada continues as the lead on the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls.

As co-lead on education, the AFN continues to support improving the relationship with the CMEC to ensure that efforts between the AAWG and CMEC are consistent moving forward. Furthermore, the AFN continues to call for a First Ministers Meeting on education and will continue to press for equitable funding levels on-reserve from the federal government with no downloading of responsibilities to provinces, to ensure First Nations are provided with the jurisdiction, opportunity and flexibility to design, build and implement the best education systems available in order to improve overall academic achievement standards, close existing graduation rates, as well as eliminate gaps in other success measures between First Nation and non-First Nation learners.

In regards to economic development, the AFN supports the direction to explore regional opportunities related to infrastructure, micro-financing and resource revenue sharing. The AFN also supports the sharing of best and innovative practices between regions.

The AFN continues to support all efforts on the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls, including ensuring that all resources available are directed at the work of families and victims involved, calling on the federal government to create an Federal/Provincial/Territorial/Aboriginal (FPTA) Task Force, inviting the federal government to commit to a 3rd National Aboriginal Women's Summit, and exploring other forums for discussion on this critical matter.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- Continue facilitating access to Parliamentarians and key decision-makers.
- Focused advocacy days in spring 2011 and continued efforts on international outreach.
- Continue to monitor key legislative initiatives, provide information to First Nations and advocate on their behalf to Members of Parliament and Senators.
- Further updates on progress arising from the CoF / AAWG process.

SUPPORTING FIRST NATION FAMILIES

EDUCATION AND LANGUAGES

MANDATE

The mandate of the Education Secretariat is to engage, inform and coordinate with First Nations in all regions on education issues through proactive collaboration with the Chiefs Committee on Education (CCOE) and the National Indian Education Council (NIEC). The Secretariat assists First Nations by advocating governments through policy development and analysis. It works to advance the development of quality and comprehensive First Nations education systems through a focus on projects and initiatives inclusive of the following: Head Start, early years, elementary/secondary education, special education, post-secondary education (PSE), vocational training, comparable and equitable funding, accountability, languages and cultures. The Secretariat also works toward increasing educational access and attainment for First Nations learners.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

NATIONAL CHIEF SHAWN A-IN-CHUT ATLEO'S "CALL TO ACTION" ON EDUCATION

1. Reconciliation – the federal and provincial governments must reconcile our rights within education acts across the country to ensure consistency with constitutional provisions.
2. First Nations Education Guarantee – a secure fiscal framework is needed for funding for education.
3. Sustainability – statutory funding arrangements based on real costs, indexation and appropriate treatment for northern and remote communities.
4. Systems – First Nation education must be supported through professional and accountable institutional supports delivering second and third level supports.
5. Support and Partnership – creating a learning environment in our communities and linking with organizations, the public and private sector to invest in our schools and for our kids.

ANSWERING THE CALL – IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND FOLLOW-UP

ADVOCACY AND AWARENESS

The two policy papers, *First Nation Control of First Nation Education* and *Taking Action for First Nations Post-Secondary Education: Access, Opportunity, and Outcomes*, lay a strong foundation for a multi-pronged approach to advancing First Nations education. Both papers have been widely distributed to key organizations and agencies who have publicly endorsed the need for First Nations consultation in the

development of education policy. Advocacy efforts include the National Week of Action on Education, the Sept. 23rd rally on Parliament Hill, parliamentary liaising, and support of numerous local activities in Kitigan Zibi (Quebec), Garden River (Ontario), Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, amongst others. The National Chief was also a key catalyst in the Council of the Federation's call for a First Ministers' Meeting on First Nations Education.

LEGAL STRATEGY

Further to a human rights challenge on education, a trust fund has been established, and a legal review is currently underway to explore various legal and legislative options to advance an agenda on education. In addition, Shannen's Dream has been launched, both as an NDP parliamentary motion and as a social movement (www.shannen'sdream.ca), and the Bloq Quebecois is working on a bill focused on a statutory funding guarantee for First Nations education.

PLANNING AND DIALOGUE FORUM

Held in Montreal in November, a session was hosted on the Strategy for the Advancement of Education. A sub-committee has been formed to work closely with the Education Secretariat, the Chiefs Committee on Education, and the National Indian Education Committee to work on identified action items. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was finally endorsed by Canada on Nov. 12, 2010, and the AFN is optimistic that this is another step forward to working with Canada to ensure equity for our children and communities.

EDUCATION INFORMATION SYSTEM

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) is moving forward on the revision of Data Collection Instruments (DCI) and ongoing development of the Education Information System (EIS). The AFN will continue to review and provide feedback and recommendations on these developments.

LEGISLATIVE OPTIONS FOR FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION

In addition to a legal review and political advocacy, the Education Secretariat is conducting research on various Education Acts and legislative options that exist both nationally and internationally, to develop a model of options that First Nations may wish to consider in the development of regional and local education policy. The AFN continues to pursue a statutory guarantee for First Nations education funding in elementary/secondary and post secondary education.

STRENGTHENING EDUCATIONAL ALLIANCES

The Education Secretariat has enjoyed the support of many First Nations education organizations and non-First Nation organizations which have assisted in implementing our mandate. These include but are not limited to the following groups:

- Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC)
- Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC)
- Canadian Association of School Administrators (CASA)
- Canadian Federation of Students (CFS)
- Canadian Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC)
- Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT)
- Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF)
- Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- Implementation of *First Nation Control of First Nation Education* through a coordinated national strategy that aligns with the National Chief's "Call to Action" utilizing five key strategies: federal engagement, communications, litigation, social movement, and provincial engagement.
- Continued efforts by AFN to review INAC's Education Information System to ensure adherence to the principles of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP), privacy, data governance, and third-party access to information.
- Clarification of education roles and responsibilities between INAC and First Nations and implementation of a systematic review and evaluation process.
- Establishment of a legislative basis to ensure comparable, predictable and adequate funding for First Nation schools including the resources necessary for provision of holistic programs and services grounded in First Nation languages, values, traditions and knowledge.
- Full research agenda for post-secondary education including the establishment of a legislative basis for post-secondary student support.
- Development of a national communications strategy aimed at mainstream Canada that highlights best practices in Aboriginal education across Canada and the benefits to Canada of a well-educated Aboriginal population on the economic well-being of our country as a whole.

LANGUAGES

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) complied with all requests from Canadian Heritage to provide reporting for the Aboriginal Languages Initiative (ALI) and the Critically Endangered Languages (CEL). Following an intensive file audit, it was determined that Canadian Heritage owed the AFN over \$1 million. Reporting was successfully completed in August 2010 and the funds received have been paid against the outstanding language expenses from previous fiscal years.

It is noted that Canadian Heritage has removed the AFN as a Third Party Manager for the ALI and no longer receives funding for this file. However, language activities are still being carried out by the AFN:

- The AFN hosted a Special Evening Session on Languages on July 20, 2010, in Winnipeg that was well attended by leaders, youth, Elders, teachers, parents and students. A Declaration on the Right to Indigenous Languages in Canada was drafted from input of those in attendance – stressing that urgent action is needed.
- The AFN has organized three conference calls (October 19, November 10 and November 19) with language champions to develop a coherent plan to identify immediate actions for the AFN, which have been included in a draft resolution for consideration at the Special Chiefs Assembly.
- A Discussion Session on Languages will be held December 13 just prior to the Special Chiefs Assembly to review the Languages resolution going forward.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECRETARIAT

The Health and Social Secretariat (HSS) report is broken into sections: Strategic Policy, Community Programs, Public Health, and Social Development. Health strategies and decisions are developed in partnership with the National First Nations Health Technicians Network (NFNHTN) and the Chiefs Committee on Health (CCOH).

STRATEGIC POLICY

AFN-HEALTH CANADA (HC) TASK FORCE WORKPLAN

The Task Force is the highest level of work on health and has the potential for immense influence and change on program and funding sustainability, program coherence and innovation, such as that of the multi-jurisdictional partnerships approach. Phase One is complete and an agreement was signed on January 13, 2009, between the National Chief and the Minister of Health initiating work under Phase Two (2009-2011).

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

PHASE TWO WORKPLAN

The Task Force Workplan working group is currently developing Phase Two of the workplan to build on previous accomplishments. Building on Phase One and recognizing the joint interest in multi-lateral collaboration, the Task Group has identified three areas of mutual interest that future projects will support: Structural Change, Strengthening Relationships and Accountability. These areas have been further expanded upon in the workplan to develop and implement projects which focus upon key priorities in addressing First Nations health issues.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- Finalize the workplan and continue to collaborate with HC in the development and implementation of workplan activities.
- Ensure that the needs of First Nations continue to be reflected in the work outcomes.

FIRST NATIONS HEALTH MANAGERS ASSOCIATION (FNHMA)

AFN Resolutions 58/2008 and 46/2009 supported collaboration to address First Nations health human resource shortages and to support the development of the FNHMA and approved the First Nations Health Managers Competency Framework.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

INCORPORATION OF FNHMA

On February 10, 2010, the founding Board of Directors for the FNHMA was established; and official incorporation was confirmed May 17, 2010. The FNHMA president, Ella Arcand, and the Interim Executive Director, Marion Crowe, met with the NFNHTN and presented the goals and objectives of the FNHMA.

AFN – FNHMA MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

In the spirit of collaboration and cooperation a MOU was drafted by the AFN. The MOU is being finalized and will serve as a partnership agreement to reflect the parameters within Resolution 46/2009.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- Engagement in a collaborative partnership with the FNHMA to address the needs of Health Managers in First Nations communities.

ABORIGINAL HEALTH HUMAN RESOURCES INITIATIVE (AHHRI)

In 2005, the federal government secured \$100 million for Aboriginal Health Human Resources. This five-year initiative had three priority elements: increase the number of health care providers which included, but was not limited to, activities that increased health career awareness, access and integrated cultural competencies into curricula; improve retention; and, supportive elements (Capacity and Collaboration initiatives, as well as Information and Research initiatives). The AHHRI was renewed for an additional two years in 2010, with a budget of \$40 million over two years.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

CULTURAL COMPETENCY PROJECTS

The AFN provided a number of recommended changes to the former AHHRI. However, in the renewal, a number of these recommendations had not been considered or incorporated. The original draft of new AHHRI guidelines omitted the component of cultural competency. Through lobbying efforts in collaboration with regional First Nations partners, the AFN persuaded the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB) to continue its funding of established cultural competency projects. The AFN has continued its advocacy efforts to obtain funding for new cultural competency projects as they remain unfunded under the new AHHRI guidelines.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- Continue to work with regional First Nations partners to ensure that community needs are being addressed and met.
- Continue to push for funding of new cultural competency projects.
- Continue to work collaboratively with regional First Nations partners and participate in knowledge exchange.

ABORIGINAL HEALTH TRANSITION FUND (AHTF)

Originally announced as a five-year initiative, the AHTF provides transitional short-term funding to federal, provincial, territorial governments and Aboriginal organizations to integrate provincial/territorial health systems and federally funded health systems within First Nations and Inuit communities. The initiative was also meant to adapt provincial/territorial health services to better meet the needs of all Aboriginal peoples, including Métis and those living off-reserve. The fund was structured into three envelopes and was jointly managed and accounted for by HC. Although originally scheduled to sunset in 2010, the initiative was extended for one year to allow for completion of project work and is now scheduled to end on March 31, 2011. However, in mid 2010, it was announced informally that while AHTF would sunset, a new program referred to as the daughter of AHTF, would emerge and be known as the Health Services Integration Fund (HSIF).

In the budget announcement, the HSIF was allocated \$17 million over two years; \$5.5 million for 2010-11 and \$11.5 million for 2011-12. Year one activities (\$5.5 million) will be “planning” activities with the development and formation of Regional Advisory Committees (RAC) who will have the role of developing tool kits, defining proposal criteria and establishing and setting priorities. Year two (\$11.5 million) will be for the integration of those plans.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

Recently, information on funding renewals for the HSIF has been confirmed in the amount of \$80 million for 2010-2015 with the following breakdown:

2010-2011:	\$5.5 million
2011-2012:	\$11.5 million
2012-2013:	\$18.4 million
2013-2014:	\$21.4 million
2014-2015:	\$23.2 million

The Treasury Board requires that a comprehensive meta-evaluation be conducted in the AHTF's final year. This evaluation includes a synthesis of the research and an analysis of the activities funded under AHTF. Various partners have, and continue to participate in the working group meetings to ensure that the outcomes reflect the communities involved in the activities.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- Participate and provide input into the development of advisory committees for the new HSIF.
- Participate and provide input into the development of the final meta-evaluation report of AHTF.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT/ EHEALTH

There are many First Nations eHealth projects underway across the country such as Electronic Medical Records, Client Registries, Panorama, Telemedicine and Community Health Records. In addition, some First Nations are working on establishing Epi-Centres and Data Management Centres. These projects are facing similar issues of sustainability, funding, engagement with provincial eHealth initiatives, and support from national funding bodies such as Canada Health Infoway. In addition, HC lacks an approach to supporting community-based priorities and initiatives.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

AFN EHEALTH STRATEGY

In May of 2010, the AFN hired a full-time eHealth Coordinator. Since that time, the AFN eHealth Strategy has been approved by the NFNHTN and implementation is now underway. Part of this work includes engaging the regions to determine their eHealth priorities and develop strategic plans. As part of this process, a site visit was done in Alberta to attend their Co-management Committee on eHealth.

NATIONAL STRATEGIC EHEALTH POLICY FORUM

A National Strategic eHealth Policy Forum, co-hosted by the AFN and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, was held in Winnipeg, Nov. 8-10, 2010. First Nations experts in eHealth from each region, as well as First Nations Inuit Health (FNIH) and provincial representatives came to discuss the policy requirements for First Nations eHealth. The forum was well attended and a final report is underway that outlines the policy priorities and specific recommendations to an approach to eHealth. The report will guide the implementation of these priorities with the AFN and the regions. One of these priorities was the formation of a national body of First Nations eHealth leads as appointed by the NFNHTN. It is anticipated that policy requirements from the regions will be brought forth to the AFN through the "National eHealth Coordinator's group".

CANADA HEALTH INFOWAY

The AFN is working to secure funding for Phase Two of the Client Registry pilot projects and begin implementation. Ongoing engagement with Canada Health Infoway (Infoway) to review Infoway funding practices and policies for First Nations continues. A meeting was held in September between the AFN Chief Executive Officer, and the Director of AFN HSS, with Senior Vice President Investment Programs Management and the Chief Operations Officer from Infoway to discuss strategies to develop a "First Nations Blueprint" and support First Nations access to Infoway investments. In addition, monthly meetings have been held with technical staff from Infoway and the AFN to form a draft template for the "First Nations Blueprint".

EHEALTH INFOSTRUCTURE

There is a process underway to review HC's Health Infostructure Strategic Action Plan for FNIHB and its relevance to First Nations eHealth projects. The AFN participates in the eHealth Infostructure Advisory Committee to ensure that First Nations Health Infostructure Strategic Action Plan (HISAP) projects are First Nations driven and based on First Nations community priorities.

PANORAMA

The AFN continued participation and support to regions implementing Panorama and the AFN eHealth Coordinator is now on the National Implementation Steering Committee to support First Nations engagement and participation.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- Develop National eHealth Coordinator’s Group as approved and directed by the NFNHTN.
- Development of a “First Nations Blueprint” in collaboration with Canada Health Infoway that can be brought to the regions for input and feedback via the National eHealth Coordinators.
- Support the regions to work with the provinces and territories to develop sustainable, interoperable eHealth applications.
- Participate and engage with HC on the implementation of HISAP.
- Explore linkages between Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP) Principles, eHealth Data Management and the First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC).
- Ongoing implementation of the AFN eHealth Action Plan.
- Review and implementation of eHealth Strategic Planning Forum recommendations.

NON-INSURED HEALTH BENEFITS (NIHB)

The NIHB Program provides coverage for 815,800 (as of March 31, 2009) registered First Nations and recognized Inuit. Benefits include: pharmacy benefits (including prescription and over-the-counter drugs, as well as medical supplies and equipment); dental services; eye and vision care services; medical transportation; crisis counseling; and out of country benefits for migrant workers and students.

The AFN HSS has a role to ensure that all First Nations citizens, regardless of residence, have access to quality health services provided by FNIHB-HC.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

DATA SHARING AGREEMENTS

At the July 2010 Annual General Assembly the AFN was directed to demand that FNIHB- HC account for all disclosures of First Nations health data so that the extent of the problem regarding data sharing of First Nations health data, such as the case between FNIHB and Brogan Consulting, can be assessed and options for remediation considered. A letter is currently being drafted to address Resolution 30/2010 as recommended.

AFN FIRST NATIONS ORAL HEALTH STRATEGY

The AFN recently completed a First Nations Oral Health Strategy in response to the FNIHB’s Oral Health Strategy for First Nations and Inuit. The AFN’s Oral Health Strategy will serve as a guide to furthering advocacy efforts on NIHB Dental Benefits.

NON-INSURED HEALTH BENEFITS (NIHB) CLIENT HANDBOOK

The collaborative agreement for the joint NIHB client handbook was signed between HC and the AFN over the summer of 2010. The joint client handbook is currently being translated and NIHB is anticipating that the booklet will be printed in December 2010.

NIHB REGIONAL MANAGERS MEETING

The First Nations Caucus on NIHB and the NIHB Regional Managers had their first meeting on October 27, 2010. Caucus members were able to raise concerns that were shared across the regions and territories.

DAYS ON THE HILL

The Canadian Dental Association (CDA) and the AFN collaborated on a “Days on the Hill” joint advocacy effort in early May 2010 and planning is underway for another “Days on the Hill” event. The AFN advocacy effort will focus on NIHB program restrictions and the funding shortfall estimated at \$376 million for next fiscal year. The AFN is planning to have CCOH representatives meet with Members of Parliament (MPs) prior to the House of Commons closing for the Christmas holiday season.

NEED FOR INCREASED NIHB FUNDING

A large driver in needed increases to NIHB funding as a result of new beneficiaries is illustrated in the AFN Fall Submission to the Standing Committee on Finance for the 2011 Federal Budget. The Federal Budget will need to consider estimates of approximately 50,000 new Status First Nations as a result of the McIvor Case and another 27,000 Qalipu Mi’kmaq First Nations from Newfoundland who were recently recognized under the *Indian Act*. This amounts to a 9.7% increase in the NIHB Program eligible population growth. In addition, the AFN has estimated that increases of 6.3% to 9.3% are required in various benefit areas when growth of the existing client population, inflation, changes in health service utilization and health status, and effects of technological change are examined. If no resolution is found to this funding crisis, the added stressors on dental, pharmacy, transportation, medical supplies and equipment, and mental health services, will result in First Nations children, adults, and elders facing an uphill battle in accessing basic health care needs.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- The AFN NIHB Caucus goal for this fiscal year is to undertake a review of options and next steps for leadership to consider; and to undertake a further review of FNIHB-HC costs for administering the NIHB Program.
- The AFN HSS and the First Nations Caucus on NIHB will continue its advocacy efforts to obtain additional and sustainable program funding to meet the population growth needs of First Nations in order to ensure quality access to health benefits and minimize risks to patient safety. Key priorities include urging the federal government to streamline the NIHB program’s administrative processes, abandon its pre-determination and prior approval policy, and work in partnership with First Nations on a nation-to-nation basis to establish policies that are based on health needs in order to fulfill the government’s fiduciary obligations.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH

The Children's Health portfolio addresses the Child and Youth Cluster Programs: Aboriginal Head Start On-Reserve (AHSOR), Maternal Child Health (MCH) program, Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP) and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).

Two other emerging priorities are also currently being addressed: the impending crisis of childhood obesity and the serious implications of tobacco affecting maternal and child health in First Nations communities.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

CHILD & YOUTH CLUSTER

The AFN continues to liaise with FNIHB's Childhood Division-Child and Youth Cluster Programs. This past fall, the AFN conducted community focus groups to garner feedback on the new AHSOR Operations Guide and Principles and Guidelines. These decade-old documents are currently being revised to reflect new realities. As well, the AFN is part of a committee examining how First Nations cultural values and languages are incorporated into AHSOR programming and what the successes and challenges are for this component of the program.

TOBACCO

The AFN is also conducting an Environmental Scan and developing a Maternal and Child Health Tobacco Strategy to address maternal smoking during pregnancy, links to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), the low initiation age of many First Nations children taking their first cigarette, and second and third-hand smoke. This child focused strategy will complement the overall AFN First Nations Tobacco Strategy.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION (NGO) LIAISON

The AFN continues its advocacy work with other NGOs such as the Canadian Paediatric Society (CPS) and the 4th International Meeting on Indigenous Child Health (IMICH), which will take place in March, 2011. We also are working with the Canadian Association of Speech Language Pathologists and Audiologists (CASLPA), who are currently examining First Nations access to speech and language pathologists.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- The AFN will continue to raise awareness of the First Nations Childhood Obesity epidemic. Increased food security, increased physical activity, increased breastfeeding rates, and overall community-based awareness is required to address a bleak future which will result from this looming health crisis including: increased diabetes rates, increased cancer rates, increased heart disease, and shorter life spans.
- Through the MCH program, the AFN will be assisting in developing a community-based approach to raise awareness of the risk factors and risk reduction strategies for sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), which has long been known to have higher rates in First Nations communities.

- The AFN will continue to push for expansion of the AHSOR program, as well as Child Care Centres.

DIABETES

The Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative (ADI) works to reduce type 2 diabetes by supporting health promotion and disease prevention activities and services, delivered by trained community diabetes workers and health service providers. The ADI was renewed in March 2010, at \$285 million over two years. The First Nations Diabetes Working Group (FNDWG), with regionally-appointed First Nations representatives, provides ongoing support and guidance to the ADI, as well as other related diabetes initiatives and AFN activities.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

LIFE-GIVING MEDICINE WHEEL WORKSHOP

Throughout the ADI renewal discussions the AFN advocated for a priority focus on pregnancy/ maternal/ gestational health. The FNDWG Life-Giving Medicine Wheel workshop and video is a tool in self-care management and also works to increase awareness and knowledge of diabetes during a women's gestational/ prenatal period. On behalf of the AFN and the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians, the *Life-Giving Medicine Wheel Walk* video was premiered at the Healing our Spirit Worldwide Conference Film Festival in Hawaii in September.

AFN FITNESS CHALLENGE – JUST MOVE IT

Since the completion of the 2nd annual AFN Fitness Challenge in 2009, the AFN diabetes file has been exploring opportunities with the ADI to take the AFN Fitness Challenge to the next level. Discussions have been underway with FNIHB, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) and Indian Health Services - Healthy Native Community Partners in the United States (US) to determine interest and the potential of expanding the "Just Move It" initiative across Canada. "Just Move It" is a national on-line network running across the US that promotes physical activity through the sharing of American Indian community activities, tools and resources. The Indian Health Services - Healthy Native Community Partners are enthusiastic about creating an international network and extending this opportunity to First Nations and Inuit communities in Canada.

CANADIAN CONFERENCE ON GLOBAL HEALTH

In November, an AFN-led symposium, entitled *Pathways to Global Health through Indigenous Knowledge: First Nations as Custodians of Natural Law in Restoring Healthy, Sustainable First Nations Communities*, took place during the Canadian Conference on Global Health, in Ottawa. The conference profiled First Nations and American Indian presenters on the benefits to applying a Natural-Law-based approach to addressing the social determinants of health in creating healthy, harmonious and prosperous First Nations communities; this was in addition to presentations of the benefits of transcendental meditation as a technique for regulating diabetes and tools to facilitate stress reduction for First Nations communities. Dr. John Hagelin, a Harvard-trained quantum physicist, educator, author, and science and public policy expert, expounded on cost-effective solutions to critical problems, including educational programs that develop human potential and bring individual and collective consciousness into harmony

with Natural Law. The Maliseet Nation presented a plan to establish the Turtle Island Foundation throughout America with the help of the Winnebago Tribal leader, Prosper Waukon. This foundation will aim to raise the necessary funds through Clinton Global Initiatives to carry the 5-point plan (health, land recovery, cultural preservation, education, economic development and communications) to fruition throughout North America.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- The FNDWG will plan to meet 2-3 times including teleconference calls to advance their objectives.
- Continue to foster the development of the “*Just Move It*” international network initiative in Canada for First Nations and Inuit communities, with the potential to develop a partnership agreement with Indian Health Services - Healthy Native Community Partners.
- The FNDWG will continue to support the Diabetes *Life-giving Medicine Wheel Walk* video presentations at varying forums.
- The FNDWG members will continue to explore transcendental meditation as a potential technique for regulating diabetes and tools to facilitate stress reduction in First Nations communities.

MENTAL WELLNESS & ADDICTIONS

AFN work on the issue of Mental Wellness includes advocacy within federally funded programs and initiatives, advocacy of First Nations engagements in national initiatives, and development of a First Nations driven agenda on mental wellness. Advocacy within federal programs includes: the National Aboriginal Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy (NAYSPS), National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program (NNADAP), Indian Residential Schools Resolution Health Supports Program (IRS RHSP), and First Nations & Inuit Mental Wellness Advisory Committee (MWAC). National advocacy relates to work of the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC). Building a First Nations driven agenda includes development of an AFN Committee on Mental Wellness.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

SUICIDE PREVENTION TOOLKIT FOR FRONT-LINE WORKERS

The AFN HSS continues to advise on the development of a Suicide Prevention Toolkit for Front-line Workers. The toolkit is being developed by HC through NAYSPS funding. It is expected that the toolkit will be made available to First Nations communities in winter-spring 2010/2011.

CULTURAL-ECONOMIC-POLITICAL-SOCIAL (CEPS) YOUTH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CURRICULUM

Working in partnership with the AFN National Youth Council, the AFN HSS is finalizing the completion and printing of the Cultural-Economic-Political-Social (CEPS) Youth Leadership Development Curriculum and the accompanying Implementation Guide. The CEPS curriculum and Implementation Guide is designed for use by First Nations youth and will be launched and nationally distributed to all communities during spring/summer 2011.

ONLINE TRAINING CURRICULUM ON SUICIDE PREVENTION

In accordance with Resolution 05/2009, the AFN has been exploring ways to support the development and delivery of an online training curriculum on suicide prevention. The AFN has been in discussions with Millbrook Technologies and the Centre for Suicide Prevention to identify ways for the AFN to support the development and delivery of the River of Life online training curriculum to better meet the needs of First Nations communities in its content, delivery and accessibility.

NATIONAL NATIVE ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE PROGRAM (NNADAP) RENEWED PROGRAM FRAMEWORK

Since 2008, the NNADAP Renewal Process has engaged AFN regions and First Nations communities, alongside other stakeholders, in the development of an evidence base and First Nations driven development of a Renewed Program Framework for the NNADAP program. The final draft of the framework has now reached a pivotal point in its presentation to the Chiefs-in-Assembly for ratification. Following the last update to the Chief-in-Assembly in July 2010, the NNADAP Renewal Process has met several key activities in the development phase. Regional Needs Assessments, research papers and input from a National NNADAP Renewal Forum were used to inform the development of a draft framework before it underwent regional focus group sessions and online public review for feedback and recommendations. While focus group sessions did not include the Northwest Territories or Yukon, current efforts are underway to explore approaches to ensuring that northern perspectives and realities are considered and met in the final draft. The Renewed Program Framework takes a systems-model approach to program design, outlining a client-centered, culturally-competent, and community-owned, -directed, and -delivered addictions system; providing communities with more flexibility in localized design of addictions programming.

LEADERSHIP TEAM - NNADAP RENEWED PROGRAM FRAMEWORK

A Leadership Team composed of representatives from a diverse scope of expertise, including First Nations communities, field experts and other stakeholders, has been established to guide the implementation of the Renewed Program Framework for the NNADAP Program. An initial meeting of the Leadership Team produced key priorities for implementation, including: development of an implementation strategy that considers engagement, change management, communications, research, and evaluation as key pillars of implementation.

INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS RESOLUTION HEALTH SUPPORTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The AFN HSS has been actively participating in an IRS Resolution Health Supports Advisory Committee (IRS RHSAC), which advises HC in the coordination of mental health supports at and around Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) national events. While the committee was established behind schedule and as a result was unable to efficiently advise on the coordination of health supports for the first national TRC event held in Winnipeg in June 2010, the committee is now commencing work to establish development of processes for health support coordination at upcoming national TRC events to be held in Inuvialuit during June 2011, and Halifax during fall 2011.

EVALUATION OF JUNE 2010 TRC EVENT

There were many lessons learned from the coordination of mental health supports at the national TRC event in June 2010. The AFN HSS called for an independent evaluation of the process and services

delivered; the evaluation was conducted and results will be used to inform the IRS RHSAC in advising on coordination for future events.

MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION OF CANADA (MHCC)

The MHCC has produced a framework that will serve as the base for the National Strategy on Mental Health for all Canadians. The MHCC continues to take both a pan-Canadian and pan-Aboriginal approach to strategy development, including limited First Nations representatives in regional consultation sessions. The AFN continues to advocate for increased engagement of First Nations in developmental processes, and increased visibility of First Nations in the strategy.

AFN MENTAL WELLNESS COMMITTEE

Based on direction provided through the National First Nations Health Technicians Network (NFNHTN), the AFN HSS has established an AFN Mental Wellness Committee. The committee is composed of representation from each AFN region, and is mandated to advise the AFN on current work in the area of mental wellness, including mental health and addictions. The first meeting of the committee was recently held and focused on the provision of information and updates on the field of mental wellness.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- Pending successful ratification of the Renewed Program Framework for NNADAP:
 - Integration of northern perspectives in the final framework draft;
 - Production of a final Program Framework for NNADAP, with dissemination to all communities; and,
 - Production of a strategy for implementation which includes components of engaging communities, networking, communications, change management, research, and evaluation.
- National distribution of CEPS Youth Leadership Development curriculum and accompanying Implementation Guide.
- Support for developing regional implementation plans founded on principles, objectives and activities of the MWAC draft Strategic Action Plan.

TOBACCO

As a result of the cancellation of the Federal Tobacco Control Strategy, continued high rates of smoking amongst First Nations, especially youth, forecasted increases to smoking-related cancers, and ongoing issues around tobacco control and legislation, the AFN is currently developing a National First Nations Tobacco Control Strategy.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

NATIONAL FIRST NATIONS TOBACCO CONTROL STRATEGY

Advised by the AFN Tobacco Action Circle, the AFN HSS has been working on the development of a National First Nations Tobacco Control Strategy. The strategy will guide the AFN on work in tobacco

control, and places advocacy for community-based resources, knowledge development, exchange, and transfer at the centre of its activities.

DON'T MISUSE TOBACCO: KEEP IT SACRED

The AFN has been working on a significant update of *Don't Misuse Tobacco: Keep it Sacred*, a popular information resource for First Nations youth on tobacco prevention and cessation. Expected release of the resource is scheduled for winter 2010.

NATIONAL FORUM ON TOBACCO CONTROL

Preparations for a National Forum on Tobacco Control are underway. The forum will be held in February 2011 and will serve as a knowledge exchange forum, highlighting promising community-based practices in tobacco prevention, cessation and control.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- National Forum on Tobacco Control conducted and report disseminated to all communities.
- National distribution of new *Don't Misuse Tobacco: Keep it Sacred* youth booklet.
- Production of a National First Nations Tobacco Control Strategy.
- Reviving the National First Nations Tobacco Control Network (NFNTCN) to review the First Nations Tobacco Control Strategy.
- Environmental Scan of Tobacco Reduction Best Practices in First Nations communities.

HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE (HCC)/ CONTINUING CARE (CC)

The AFN and First Nation Partners of the HCC Committee continue to work with FNIHB to address home care issues and recommendations by way of monthly regional telephone updates and biyearly all partners meetings.

There has been no increase in HCC funding since 1999 and the overall funding does not meet the needs of the communities. The AFN has advocated for an increase in funding. A proposal is being considered to integrate the HC's HCC program with the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) Assisted Living Program.

The Joint Working Group on CC finalized a Policy Options Analysis Paper in 2008 which provides a comparative analysis of three options outlined to identify the need for an increase in funding and CC services such as increased home care services, palliative care, supportive housing options, and accessible long-term care facilities either on reserve or within close proximity. As part of the improvements to home care services, the report recommends that the in-home care services funded by INAC be integrated with HC's HCC program. A Costing Study has been completed which provides the estimated costs for all proposed improvements to CC, which include enhancements to HCC, supportive housing, facility-based care, and palliative care.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

INTEGRATION OF HCC AND ASSISTED LIVING

Discussions have taken place between INAC and HC to integrate the HCC program and the Assisted Living program. These discussions have taken place but are not currently being shared with the partners. An impact analysis was conducted, however similar to the discussions are not being shared with the partners. A request through the *Access to Information Act* is in progress.

STUDY THREE FINAL EVALUATION

The AFN participated in the review of the Study Three Final Evaluation and the draft publication report will be released following internal HC approval processes. Study Three is a summative or “wrap up” study which will include HCC Studies One and Two and other home care research.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

The AFN advocates for First Nations in the Quality Improvement file, with activities to increase awareness and support in communities. Currently, pilot implementation of Quality Improvement sites in selected First Nations communities is underway with future telecoms planned with the Quality Improvement working group and the pilot sites.

PHASE 4 OF THE HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE PROJECT

Work is currently underway to develop a “Creating a Healthy Work Place” manual to highlight the importance of creating a healthy work place environment for nurses working in First Nations communities. This AFN project is being done in collaboration with FNIHB and will underline the growing demands for services and emerging concerns/ priorities for health care workers.

A first draft is to be completed by mid January 2011. It is anticipated that Community Home Care front line workers will be able to provide direct input and comment on recommendations and findings. The target completion date is the end of March 2011.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- Recently, the regions have agreed to provide updates to all of the First Nations communities that are not currently receiving HCC services. This will be discussed and reviewed further with the First Nation partners.
- Obtain more information on the proposed improvements and/or changes to the Assisted Living program and determine impact on the proposed CC Policy Framework.
- Using the evidence provided from the CC Options and Analysis report, the AFN will work with both HC and INAC to continue to seek federal government support for improvements to CC services and to collaboratively work on a process to address sustainability issues for the existing Assisted Living and HCC programs.

PUBLIC HEALTH

PUBLIC HEALTH

Following the completion of the AFN's Public Health (PH) Framework in 2006, support was secured for three five-year projects in Four Arrows Regional Health Authority, File Hills Qu'Appelle and Kenora Treaty 3. These projects are now in their fourth year. These initiatives recognize the need for increased capacity at the regional level, a more inclusive governance structure in the management of public health services, enhanced disease surveillance, integrated public health programming with the provinces and an agreed upon legislative base on which to protect the health of individuals and their community.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The PH Pilot Projects have made strides in advancing their goals. A clear example of this is the finalized draft of the tripartite agreement in the Manitoba project that will support the implementation of the community developed PH Framework. Saskatchewan is actively collaborating with the FNIH office and the Province to advance their Framework Model and Kenora, Ontario will be hosting the PH Pilot Project in November 2010. Due to the lack of an evaluator, it was decided that an Interim Progress Report would be prepared for year three. An early identification and start of the year-four evaluation was proposed and agreed upon. Discussions with the partners are ongoing to address the concerns regarding the continuation of activities after year five (last year of the pilot).

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- Signed tripartite agreements in at least two of the pilot sites.
- The successful development of community driven PH Frameworks in all three pilot sites.
- Completion of year four evaluation in preparation for year-five final evaluation process.

INJURY PREVENTION

Injuries are a major cause of morbidity and mortality in First Nations communities; this is especially the case among youth and young adults. Injury prevention is concerned with modifying behavioral or contextual factors that place First Nations at greater risk for unintentional injury, morbidity and mortality from (unintentional) injuries when they occur.

The work at the national level is focused on: 1) raising awareness of injuries and their impact; 2) building capacity for communities to carry out injury prevention work; and, 3) relationship development with the goal of addressing programming gaps with the adaptation of existing injury prevention programming. Much of this work is guided by the First Nations Regional Injury Prevention (FNRIP) Advisory Group. The Chiefs-in-Assembly have, and continue to support the work on injury prevention through Resolutions 34/2008 and 57/2009.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

RAISING AWARENESS

Injury prevention was a major component in the launch of the First Nations' Public Health website and a First Nation Injury Prevention communications plan has also been developed. It is designed to coordinate and promote injury prevention efforts from a national perspective with the overall goal of safe and healthy First Nations communities that are injury free. Recent postings include a new page on dog management in First Nations with links, articles and how-to guide. The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Team in Child and Youth Injury Prevention will be launching their report on First Nations Injury Prevention Indicators for Children and Youth in December 2010.

COMMUNITY CAPACITY IN INJURY PREVENTION

The FNRIP Working Group continues to implement the National Comprehensive Injury Prevention Strategy. In November, FNRIP members met with FNIHB national and regional Injury Prevention Coordinators, Inuit Health Council members and key stakeholders to develop strategies and an evidence base to raise the profile of Injury Prevention nationally, regionally and locally.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The British Columbia Injury Research and Prevention Unit's grant application for the 'CIHR Team in Child and Youth Injury Prevention' project was accepted, which the AFN participates on as part of their First Nations and Inuit Injury Indicators Working Group. The project will identify and address gaps that will lead to the generation, translation and mobilization of new knowledge for end-users and stakeholders who develop and deliver policy and programs, and advocate for children and youth in Canada. In addition, the AFN participates on the First Nations Dogs Working Group, a group which is developing an action plan with strategies to help First Nations manage their community dog populations.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- Implementation of the National Comprehensive Injury Prevention strategy (including development and refinement of AFN's Injury Prevention Business Case, Workplan, Handbook, and Press Kit) with direction from FNRIP working group as per Resolution 34/2008 and Resolution 56/2009.
- FNRIP working group meetings to discuss AFN Injury Prevention resolutions, strategic planning, activity updates and network with national injury prevention organizations.
- Continue discussions with FNRIP and the Canadian Red Cross (CRC) on next steps from the AFN-CRC community injury prevention needs assessment survey and report.
- Development of a collective evidence base on injury prevention, including the collection of community-based stories on successes with injury prevention activities.

CANCER

The incidence of cancer is rising faster in First Nations than in the general population. It is now the leading cause of death in some First Nations communities and the third leading cause of death in others. With the rapidly growing First Nations population, cancer may soon become an enormous public health issue for First Nations and Canada. There is the potential for cancer to surpass diabetes as the number one killer of First Nations peoples. First Nations peoples have low rates of participation in organized cancer screening programs (where available), cancer survival rates tend to be worse, and patients are likely to be diagnosed at a later stage of the disease.

The AFN HSS focuses efforts and limited resources in key areas in order to maximize results. Efforts are currently directed towards the importance of screening and prevention. The AFN works in collaboration with the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer (CPAC) and the Canadian Cancer Action Network (CCAN).

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

CANADIAN PARTNERSHIP AGAINST CANCER (CPAC)

The AFN has obtained funding from CPAC for the 2010/2011 fiscal year. The main objective of the work is to raise awareness of cancer as an emerging crisis for First Nations. Activities include policy development and analysis, capacity building, and development of communication components that will support the objective of raising awareness with leadership, all levels of government, professional organizations, and First Nations communities.

FIRST NATIONS/INUIT/MÉTIS (FN/I/M) ADVISORY COUNCIL ON CANCER CONTROL

The AFN has worked with CPAC and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) to draft Terms of Reference for the FN/I/M Advisory Council on Cancer Control. The AFN participates and provides support to First Nations representatives on the CPAC FN/I/M Advisory Council. The Advisory Council is currently in the process of developing an action plan. Validation and implementation of the action plan is planned for winter 2011.

CANCERVIEW.CA WEBSITE

The AFN also participates on CPAC's Advisory Council for the FN/I/M website portal page. CPAC is in the process of developing a FN/I/M web portal for the Cancerview.ca website, which connects Canadians to online services, information and resources for cancer control. The portal brings together resources for cancer prevention, screening, treatment, and supportive, palliative and end-of-life care. The FN/I/M portal will have a collection of FN/I/M specific resources for each of the population groups.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- Continue to raise the profile of cancer as an emerging crisis for First Nations, particularly in the area of screening, diagnosis and treatment, with political leadership, Chiefs Committee on Health (CCOH), National First Nations Health Technicians Network (NFNHTN) and First Nations communities.

- Continue to approach cancer by way of the cancer continuum: Risk Factors/ Prevention, Screening, Diagnosis, Treatment, Recovery, and End of Life/ Palliative Care.
- Continue to identify key issues, explore options for policy change and other measures in cancer control.
- Continue to inform First Nations and leadership on cancer issues as they arise.

HIV/AIDS

First Nations are acquiring HIV at a disproportionately higher rate than the general Canadian population; in particular, the rate among First Nations women and young adults (under 30 years of age) are much higher than those observed in Canada. As well, two-thirds of new infections are acquired through injection drug use; this proportion is two times higher than that seen in Canada overall.

The work in HIV/AIDS involves raising awareness among First Nations leadership and research and policy analysis on national level initiatives around HIV/AIDS.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

RAISING AWARENESS

The AFN National Youth Council finalized seven short videos on sexual health promotion, with funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and HC. The videos have been launched on the AFN website, coinciding with the beginning of Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week (December 1-5) and World AIDS Day (December 1). The video campaign has been presented before the Senate Committee on the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth and at the 2010 International AIDS Conference as a poster campaign. In partnership with the Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network (CAAN) for Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week, the National Chief recorded a public service announcement for television, is featured in their poster campaign and released a bulletin calling for action and to address discrimination, ignorance and stigma in our communities. In addition, the AFN partnered with Canadian AIDS Treatment Information Exchange (CATIE) on the distribution of Aboriginal youth AIDS awareness materials to First Nations communities.

RESEARCH AND POLICY ANALYSIS

The AFN participates on several national committees, including the CAAN National Steering Committee on Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week, their National Toolkit Committee on HIV/AIDS and On-Reserve First Nations and Inuit Research Capacity Building Workshop on HIV/AIDS Steering Committee. The AFN attended the 2010 International AIDS Conference and participated as an associate member of the International Indigenous Working Group on HIV and AIDS to develop strategies on increasing support for capacity development for Indigenous People, and to build partnerships with Indigenous and national governments to support Indigenous specific prevention on all levels.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- Development of an *AFN Health Bulletin* on HIV/AIDS and Sexual Health.
- Re-establishment of the Young Eagles Challenge with CAAN and the AFN National Youth Council.
- Development of a joint position paper on Emergency Contraceptives and Access with the Native Youth Sexual Health Network, Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and the Canadian Federation for Sexual Health.

IMMUNIZATION

Vaccines against vaccine preventable diseases are proven to reduce the burden of disease, many of them potentially fatal, during childhood and adulthood, thus, improving life and health quality, and representing one of the most cost-effective preventable public health interventions.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

IMMUNIZATION DATA GAPS IN FIRST NATIONS

Active collaboration with FNIHB and PHAC has allowed for the identification of data and program gaps. Data flow and analysis has proven inadequate to draw a clear picture of the immunization status of First Nations.

SOCIAL MARKETING CAMPAIGN

The AFN is currently working with FNIHB in the development and implementation of a social marketing campaign aimed at young parents and decision-makers promoting the importance of immunization. This initiative will be strongly based on the use of social media and electronic distribution channels such as Facebook, Youtube and Twitter, as well as printed materials and DVDs.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- Information gathering on the immunization status of First Nations communities per region will be completed.
- Materials from the first phase of the social marketing campaign will be completed and available for distribution.

ASTHMA AND THE LUNG HEALTH FRAMEWORK

The National Lung Health Framework (NLHF) is an initiative led by the Canadian Lung Association that has brought several key lung stakeholders together to develop a framework to address lung health issues facing Canadians, including First Nations. The AFN has a seat on the Steering Committee of the NLHF.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The AFN is a member of the Core Working Group (CWG), along with representatives of ITK and the Métis National Council (MNC), to develop the implementation plans of the NLHF. This is done in collaboration with FNIHB and the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC).

The Lung Health Program Phase I Projects Outcomes are ready to be released. These outcomes identify the current level of healthcare providers' knowledge of lung disease within First Nations, which show a low level of awareness of social determinants of health and their impact on respiratory health, in addition to the lack of information resources at community level.

The Asthma Society of Canada has published the final report "An Exploration of First Nations and Inuit Perspectives on Community Respiratory Health Awareness Initiatives". This report evaluated the existing educational materials and resources on respiratory health that are available to First Nations to understand the kind of programs that need to be developed to meet the unique respiratory health needs of First Nations communities.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- Continue working with the NLHF and participate in the decision of the Phase II Lung Health Research Projects.
- Complete draft plan of implementation of the NLHF by the CWG Working Group.
- Distribution of the results of the final report "An Exploration of First Nations and Inuit Perspectives on Community Respiratory Health Awareness Initiatives".

TUBERCULOSIS (TB)

TB is not just a public health issue; it is a social justice issue and a true marker of poverty. First Nations currently have rates of TB that are 31 times that of non-Aboriginal Canadians. Overcrowded housing, poor access to health care and food insecurity contribute greatly to this national disgrace.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The AFN has continued working with FNIHB and PHAC in the FNIHB Strategy Renewal, where the AFN is sitting on and providing input into the TB Strategy Steering Committee, the TB National Strategy Working Group and the Writing Sub-Working Group.

The AFN is reactivating its partnership with the STOP TB initiative. The work is in progress to complete the animation and voice-over of the AFN National Youth Council developed cartoon strips. This will be done with the participation of the National Youth Council Members.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- A new list of TB indicators will be approved by all partners.
- Ongoing active participation in the STOP TB initiative, raising awareness of TB issues in First Nations.
- Animated cartoon strips to be ready for the next World TB Day Campaign.

PANDEMIC PLANNING AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Health Emergency Preparedness has been a top priority for all First Nations communities since the H1N1 pandemic last year. The AFN has been actively engaging with key stakeholders in an effort to ensure that all First Nations have access to appropriate prevention and treatment responses for any future health emergency. The AFN has participated on a three-year Trilateral First Nations Pandemic Working Group with PHAC and FNIHB since 2006.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

STUDIES ON H1N1

Several reports have been submitted by the AFN, including: “Final Report H1N1 Assessment of Preparedness and Response in First Nations Communities” and “PHAC Module 5 Review – Exercise Builder for First Nations, Inuit and Métis Communities”. These documents provide a picture of the preparedness of First Nations communities before and during the H1N1 Influenza Pandemic. In addition, the “PHAC/CIHR Influenza Research Network (PCIRN) Study of Immunogenicity of Monovalent, Adjuvanted H1N1₂₀₀₉ Vaccine in Aboriginal Adults”, a study conducted by CIHR, concludes that First Nations peoples had a better overall response to the H1N1 vaccine than the general population.

TRILATERAL FIRST NATIONS PANDEMIC WORKING GROUP

The Trilateral First Nations Pandemic Working Group with PHAC and FNIHB is entering its last phase of agreed collaboration and an evaluation process of the group is being conducted by an external consultant. An electronic and interactive version of the “Influenza Like Illness (ILI) Surveillance Guide” is being developed and will provide a greater opportunity to distribute surveillance forms and training on use of the forms.

eHEALTH DURING H1N1

A questionnaire has been developed to collect data on the use of eHealth during H1N1. It will be distributed by the end of the year to selected communities in each region.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- The results of the different reports will be shared with the regions.
- A final evaluation report on the Trilateral First Nations Pandemic Working Group will provide the evidence to recommend the continuation or not of this and similar sub working groups.

- The ILI webinar tool and the results from its feedback would be shared and future instruments will be planned accordingly.
- A final report on the results of the e-Health utilization questionnaire will be shared and recommendations made.

ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH

The AFN is committed to working collaboratively with our First Nations regions and FNIHB's Environmental Public Health Division to assist with the reduction of environmental public health related issues. The AFN recognizes the importance of preventing disease through environmental public health stewardship as it relates to preventing disease and monitoring programs.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

MERCURY CONTAMINATION

The AFN HSS worked in collaboration with the Environmental Stewardship Unit in the drafting of a letter of support from the National Chief to both the Prime Minister and the Premier of Ontario. The letter of support addressed the severe environmental and health-related consequences of mercury poisoning in the communities of Grassy Narrows First Nation and Wabasseemoong First Nation. The letter called upon the Government of Canada to address mercury contamination and the negative effects this contamination has had on the people of these communities.

Work is ongoing on the review of environmental public health issues in First Nations communities. An assessment is being prepared to garner information on environmental public health concerns and priorities, as well as to identify current ongoing programs. An action plan is also being developed to increase awareness and distribute information regarding environmental public health issues.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- Completed comprehensive environmental scan of environmental public health in First Nations communities.
- Increase awareness and the profile of the environmental public health among First Nations leaders and community members.
- Strengthen relationships with existing environmental public health networks.

FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

The AFN works on ensuring and increasing First Nations participation in the development of food security related policy and initiatives in collaboration with FNIHB, PHAC, INAC, AFN regions, and other stakeholders.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

NUTRITION NORTH CANADA (NNC)

In May 2010, INAC and HC announced a new food subsidy program for the North called the Nutrition North Canada (NNC) program. The NNC program intends to bring healthy nutritious foods to residents of the North. The new program is now a market-driven/retail-based model that is to be a sustainable, efficient, cost-effective and transparent means of helping Northerners access nutritious food in eligible communities. NNC will replace the old Food Mail program with a number of changes being incorporated into the new program. HC will play a larger role in the new NNC program than it did in the Food Mail program by introducing nutrition promotion and retail education initiatives to support healthy eating. These activities will be culturally-appropriate and community-based to deliver vital information on the use, marketing and preparation of nutritious foods. The NNC is being delivered in two phases, with full implementation of the program to be completed in April 2011. The AFN has been monitoring the progress of INAC and HC in the development and implementation of the new NNC. The AFN was invited to present at the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Nutrition North Canada Study on November 1, 2010, along with other First Nations and Inuit stakeholders.

FOOD SECURITY REFERENCE GROUP (FSRG)

The AFN participates on the FSRG to ensure collaboration towards improved food security for First Nations and Inuit. Key activities include building on the promising practices document, developing tools for community planning, exploring opportunities for influencing agendas to include food security, and continuing to build the evidence base. The next meeting of the FSRG is anticipated for January 2011.

HEALTHY LIVING ISSUES GROUP

The AFN has suspended its participation in the Healthy Living Issues Group due to the pan-Canadian approach. The NFNHTN will be reviewing our involvement in all Pan-Canadian initiatives and activities to ensure that we are focusing on First Nations approaches.

FNIHB FOOD SECURITY PLANNING TOOL

The AFN participated and provided input into FNIHB's Food Security Planning Tool for FNIH Regions. This work is ongoing and expected to result in a framework to support the FNIH Regions in planning their food security work. It is envisioned that the template will help promote inter-sectoral collaboration around the issue of food security and identify strategies for advancing coordinated and practical action in First Nations and Inuit communities. It is expected that many community-based/driven initiatives will result from this framework in the coming year.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- Complete an impact analysis of the Nutrition North Canada (NNC) program on eligible communities, as well as on remote communities that have been deemed ineligible for NNC subsidies.
- Complete a review of food security initiatives, statistics on food insecurity and a needs assessment to address community concerns and priorities.

INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

Resolution 6/2010 is focused on protecting the rights of former Indian Residential Schools (IRS) survivors in the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA). It calls on the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to seek a five-year extension to the IRSSA, audit existing Common Experience Payments and Independent Assessment Process (IAP) files, inquire into delays in recognizing IRS and delays in appeals to the National Administration Committee (NAC), advocate for an Ombudsman to protect the rights of former IRS students, advocate for form fillers and health supports and the eventual transfer to First Nations control, meet with the IAP Oversight Committee and NAC to address issues, and pursue an accountability mechanism regarding the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and national events.

Resolution 20/2010, Redress for Day Scholars, directs the AFN to coordinate a political action plan that seeks redress for day scholars by engaging the Government of Canada in a reconciliation and compensation package for day scholar students and seek support for a class action suit on this matter, if necessary.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

ADMINISTRATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE IRSSA

The AFN has participated in meetings with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) to review service standards and updates, liaised with the AFN representative on the IAP Oversight Committee to address concerns with the IAP, and met with the NAC on November 25, 2010, to address concerns raised in Resolution 6/2010 and the ongoing need to protect the interests of former IRS students in the IRSSA.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

The AFN IRS Manager participates in the All Party meetings of the TRC. The national events are scheduled as follows: Inuvik - June 2011; Atlantic - fall 2011; Saskatchewan - spring 2012, B.C. - fall 2012, Quebec - spring 2013, Alberta - fall 2013, and a final national event in Ottawa in June 2014. The TRC will begin taking applications for the commemoration events and community-based TRC events. National and regional liaison positions have been filled to work with the TRC.

ABORIGINAL SUPPORT WORKER (FORM FILLER) AND HEALTH SUPPORTS

The AFN has submitted proposals to the IAP Secretariat and Health Canada to access funds for regions to be actively engaged in the IAP application process and the provision of appropriate health supports. Both proposals are pending approval.

Health Canada has completed a gap analysis to respond to the closure of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (AHF) projects. All treatment centres funded by the AHF will close in 2012.

ADVOCACY FOR DAY SCHOLARS

The AFN had a legal opinion on the day scholar issue prepared with a work plan to seek redress for these students. The AFN has started a database to determine the number of day scholars impacted by rejections in the IRSSA. Day scholar exclusion from the IRSSA will be raised at the next NAC meeting.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- AFN Form Filler and Health Supports will be available to the regions before the end of December 2010;
- AFN will apply to facilitate a final notice on the IAP process;
- AFN will proceed with the work plan for compensation for Day Scholars and, failing to secure compensation, will support a class action;
- AFN will review the church agreements in the IRSSA and their progress to date in regard to healing and reconciliation.

EXERCISING AND IMPLEMENTING OUR RIGHTS

HONOURING TREATIES – NATIONAL STRATEGY ON TREATY IMPLEMENTATION

The Assembly of First Nations' National Strategy on Treaty Implementation is guided by our resolution Sacred Treaties – Sacred Trust: Working Together for Treaty Implementation and Advancing our Sovereignty as Nations (no. 07/2010) adopted by the Chiefs at the Annual General Assembly last July in Winnipeg.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

First Nation leaders have affirmed a path to move forward not based on the *Indian Act*, but based on the original Treaty relationship, our rights and on strengthening and building our governments. The strategy calls on the AFN to fulfill its advocacy role and to stand behind the efforts of Treaty holders to secure the full recognition and respectful implementation of Treaties with the Crown.

As part of our national strategy, the AFN recognizes and fully supports the Spirit and Intent of the Treaties and continues to stress that appropriate ceremonies and protocols must always be conducted when Treaties are being discussed. As part of this approach, the AFN is engaging our Elders in a dialogue regarding ceremony and protocol at this Special Chiefs Assembly to provide direction to our ongoing discussions. The AFN is also working with our Elders to establish appropriate mechanisms for recognition of those groups demonstrating utmost leadership on Treaty implementation.

The resolution speaks to the importance of legal action to achieve Treaty implementation. Accordingly, the AFN is working to support the establishment of an impartial tribunal to adjudicate conflicts that arise with respect to the implementation of Treaties, as there is no question that independent and impartial dispute resolution is emerging as a central element in Treaty implementation. As such, Dr. Sharon Venne has been contracted to develop a paper to scope-out the full range of issues pertaining to the establishment of a Tribunal to adjudicate disputes relating to Treaties in Canada.

The AFN has undertaken work to establish a Treaty Litigation Trust Fund to ensure that resources are available to pursue alternative remedies where it is considered strategic to use legal action in aid of political action. Work on the establishment of a Treaty Litigation Trust Fund is complete. This fund will aim at a national strategy for both Aboriginal and Treaty rights, and will support efforts such as Grand Council Treaty #3's approach to implementation of the Treaty Right to education.

The AFN is advancing a number of related initiatives focused on moving beyond the *Indian Act*. This includes research on developing approaches to land tenure and property rights based on Treaty that is currently underway. This also includes further work on approaches to fiscal relations, elections, and justice based on Treaty.

The AFN also supports the examination and development of alternate formulations of fiscal relations between First Nations and the Crown that will lead to increased flexibility and self-sufficiency. Research is underway to develop an alternative model to contribution agreement funding for First Nations based on a new fiscal relationship that is truly government to government.

The AFN has also begun work on the development of a series of proposed roundtables to establish an appropriate process for Treaty implementation that identifies common principles flowing from the sovereignty of First Nations. As part of these discussions, the AFN is focusing on the confirmation of a Terms of Reference for two roundtables to take place in the coming months that will have a focus based on pre- and post-1867 Treaties, as well as dispute resolution and implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). There is also ongoing engagement with Parliamentarians to support Crown involvement/engagement as a part of roundtable process and advocacy on issues including citizenship and land.

The endorsement of the UNDRIP provides a significant focal point for a Treaty-based dialogue with the federal government and between Treaty holders. The UNDRIP provides a common framework to guide Treaty implementation, self-determination and recognition of rights, and the AFN will aggressively pursue the fullest and unqualified implementation of the UNDRIP with the Crown.

Lastly, the AFN continues to support First Nations in their development of resource revenue sharing frameworks that can be used as the basis for implementing Treaties. Work is ongoing on resource revenue sharing options/models, building upon regional successes. As part of this approach, the AFN has also stood arm-in-arm with a number of different regional efforts that challenged violations of Treaties, such as impacts based on decisions stemming from the Natural Resources Transfer Agreement (NRTA), and other government decisions that circumscribed or attempted to minimize/eliminate the ability of Treaty nations to benefit from their lands, and/or undermined First Nation jurisdiction and rights.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- Progress regarding exploring the establishment of an independent Tribunal.
- Fundraising efforts pertaining to the Treaty Litigation Trust Fund.
- New approaches to land tenure and property rights, as well as new fiscal relationship models based on the Treaty relationship.
- Results of pre- and post-Confederation roundtables and outcomes.
- UNDRIP implementation with the Crown.
- Development of revenue sharing frameworks.

COMPREHENSIVE CLAIMS

Resolution 10/2010, passed at the Annual General Assembly (AGA), advanced the need for the establishment of a First Nations and Crown process to jointly review the existing Comprehensive Claims Policy with a view to ensuring that Aboriginal title and rights are dealt with in an equitable and expeditious manner.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

In accordance with the direction set out in the resolution, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) has established a Comprehensive Claims Policy (CCP) Working Group that has met twice since the 2010 AGA. The specific outcomes from the meetings have been the development and advancement of a proposal to the federal government to seek resources for the CCP Working Group to conduct its work; that the proposal, as developed, has enabled the National Chief to engage in discussions with the Prime Minister and Minister of Indian Affairs regarding the advancement of a joint CPP reform process to address process issues, but to also advance the need for an independent tribunal to deal with disputes in negotiations.

The Government of Canada has indicated an interest to work with First Nations on policy change. However, Canada has not expressed a specific commitment to engage in the process and developmental work envisioned by the AGA Resolution.

Work is underway to confirm a strategy of engagement that will seek to address the many challenges that exist with Canada's current Comprehensive Claims Policy. Again, in accordance with the AGA Resolution, the CCP Working Group will report to the Special Chiefs Assembly on December 14, 2010.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- Establishment of a joint Crown and First Nations policy review and development process.
- Update on progress to the Chiefs-in-Assembly resulting from the activities of a new working group regarding policy review and other related strategic activities.

IMPLEMENTING THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP / the “Declaration”) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on September 13, 2007. Although Canada had been an active participant in drafting this document over a period of two decades, Canada opted to oppose the adoption in 2007, along with three other UN member nations: Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. Since then both Australia and New Zealand have reversed their position on the Declaration. In Canada, this past March, after more than two years of Indigenous advocacy, in its Speech from the Throne, Canada also expressed its intention to take steps to endorse the Declaration. Finally, on November 12, 2010, Canada announced that it had advised the President of the United Nations General Assembly that it was endorsing the UNDRIP.

The UNDRIP was adopted by the Chiefs-in-Assembly in Resolution No. 37/2007. It is an expression of the fundamental rights of Indigenous peoples around the world. It sets out the principles of partnership and mutual respect that should guide the relationship between states and Indigenous peoples. It provides ways to measure and assess the way states are respecting and implementing the rights of Indigenous peoples.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

At the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) meeting in New York in April 2010, National Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo was honoured to be selected to represent the North American Indigenous Caucus in the Half Day of Dialogue on North America.

The National Chief spoke to key areas for action by First Nations and the Government of Canada, including Treaties, citizenship, comprehensive land claims, border rights, water rights and missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls. In each area, the National Chief identified the need to address these issues based on the principles of the UN Declaration – principles that serve to establish a minimum baseline upon which to address a wide range of issues affecting First Nations in Canada.

In June 2010, the UNPFII released its Report from its April session. The Report recommends, among other things:

The Permanent Forum urges the Governments of Canada and the United States to work in good faith with indigenous peoples for the unqualified endorsement and full implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and urges that such endorsement and implementation honour the spirit and intent of the Declaration, consistent with indigenous peoples’ human rights.

The Permanent Forum encourages United Nations agencies and other bodies to offer training programmes for Canadian and national parliamentarians and United States members of Congress, and staff within national institutions such as human rights commissions and other agencies, with the aim of integrating the spirit and intent of the Declaration into national policies.

AFN Resolution 41/2010 concerning “Sacred Treaties-Sacred Trust: Working Together for Treaty Implementation and Advancing our Sovereignty as Nations” directs the AFN to provide First Nations with a draft resolution that can be passed by First Nation governments to reflect their own adoption of the UNDRIP. The draft resolution is included in the meeting materials for the December 2010 Special Chiefs Assembly.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- To develop a First Nation implementation plan with the Government of Canada regarding the reflection of the standards set out in the UNDRIP within the laws and policies of Canada regarding Treaties, comprehensive claims, self-government and the full range of issues affecting First Nation and Canada relations.

RESOURCE REVENUES

Green and renewable energy will gradually gain a larger share of the energy market, replacing non-renewable sources, such as oil, gas, and coal. First Nations business and investment opportunities are also becoming more apparent in this emerging market through wind, solar, hydro, and bio-mass generated energy projects. Other resource revenue opportunities are being explored to assist First Nation communities in their bid to strengthen local economies.

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) will include green and renewable energy and harvesting natural resources from a benefit sharing perspective in planning of the 2011 Inter-Nation Mining and Energy Summit.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

Through speaking engagements, the National Chief has promoted green energy as a means of economic self-sufficiency. In this light, planning for an Inter-Nation Mining and Energy Summit continues for June, 2011. The National Chief has presented the concept for a summit to the Province of Ontario, and has been informed of interest to participate in the event as a co-host. The AFN will ask First Nations involved in resources development to participate in this event, as well as resource development companies, provincial and territorial ministries, federal government, and international proponents.

The Economic Partnerships Secretariat coordinated a presentation on resource benefit sharing tools for the Chiefs-in-Assembly information during the 2010 Annual General Assembly (AGA). During the AGA, the AFN held a side event on First Nations and Taxation, as the policy area continues to be important given tax immunity issues and revenue generation needs. The session was hosted by Regional Chief Eric Morris, Chair of the AFN Chiefs Committee on Economic Development. The side event discussed explored technical-level interventions to support taxation immunity protection and opportunities for more fiscal resources being coordinated through First Nation revenue systems, such as in abilities to tax. This discussion also provided a complete overview of the June 29-30, 2009, working group meeting on taxation where a focus was recommended on establishing better fiscal systems, relationships and arrangements. The meeting also included a comprehensive presentation by subject experts from Gowlings law firm. A summary on the discussion from this meeting is available from the Economic Partnerships Secretariat.

The AFN was invited to participate in an Advisory Committee to focus on the Mining Sector, namely the Natural Resources Canada – Deputy Minister Evaluation Advisory Committee on Mining Sector Performance Review. The first meeting of the Advisory Committee was held in November, 2009. The committee meets twice a year and brings together federal officials for NRCAN with mining industry, national organizations, AFN, Mining Watch Canada, and the forest industry to define key issues.

The Economic Partnerships Secretariat will support the Environmental Stewardship Unit in monitoring the Forest Products Association of Canada's (FPAC) agreement with the environmental non-government organizations (ENGOS) on reducing activity in certain regions of the boreal forest.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- Update on planning for the Mining and Energy Summit;
- Continue to explore, research and provide information to First Nations on resource revenue options;
- Monitor resource development, impacts to domestic economy, industry agreements, issues, and new revenue sharing/impact benefit sharing tools; and,
- Promote public education of First Nations' unique relationship with the Crown and the federal government.

SUPPORTING FIRST NATION GOVERNMENTS: NATION BUILDING AND RE-BUILDING

Historically, First Nations were organized on the basis of Indigenous Nations with distinct structures of government. These structures included hereditary systems, clan systems, federations, confederacies and systems of military, economic and cultural relationships and alliances among Nations. The current structure of reserves and the governance on reserves that resulted from the imposition of the *Indian Act* does not reflect First Nation political, legal or governance traditions. There is a general consensus among First Nations that this must change.

First Nations have collectively expressed a need to focus on rebuilding our governing structures and are leading these efforts all across the country. Positive change within our Nations will require the full engagement of our peoples. In this way, First Nations can determine the tools each needs to move forward based on the fulfillment of our rights to self-determination and affirming effective, efficient and successful First Nation governments.

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) has consistently advocated for the recognition and re-establishment of First Nation jurisdiction and related and necessary support for capacity of strong and stable governments.

As part of supporting these efforts, the AFN convened the Fall 2010 Planning and Dialogue Forum on November 8 and 9, in Montreal, Quebec to provide an opportunity for First Nation leaders to share experiences and explore opportunities for furthering their objectives of Nation building. The Forum included presentations from First Nations already engaged in different aspects of Nation building and exercising jurisdiction in key areas of government such as law making; institution building; land and resource management; public administration and community engagement; and fiscal management and intergovernmental relationships.

A summary report from the Forum is available at www.afn.ca. The AFN will continue to engage with First Nations and seek ideas about the day-to-day tools and support their governments require and will develop a broad framework to support First Nation governments' capacity, and stand together with First Nations on the need to advance a new reality and to reset the relationship with Canada.

SPECIFIC CLAIMS

The heading of specific claims involves two elements: (1) Specific Claims and (2) Additions to Reserves. Work in these areas is mandated by a variety of resolutions including 08/2007 (Specific Claims); 24/2010 (Using Alternative Dispute Resolution to Settle Outstanding Specific Claims); 82/2008 (Endorsement of the Think Tank Principles for Large Specific Claims); 50/2007 (Specific Claims Tribunal Act); and 09/2010 (Improving the Additions to Reserves Policy).

Each of these resolutions relates to a set of issues that have emerged, beginning in 2007, with the advancement of work under the federal government's "Justice at Last" initiative, which focused on the establishment of a new independent tribunal to adjudicate specific claims valued up to \$150 million. The AFN began its work with Canada based on this initiative in July 2007, focusing on the joint development of the *Specific Claims Tribunal Act* (SCTA) and a companion Political Agreement signed in November 2007. The SCTA came into force on October 16, 2008.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

Delays in the receipt of project funding in the first half of the fiscal year delayed progress in this area to the early fall. With the receipt of funding, the AFN is focusing on the following initiatives through the balance of this fiscal year:

1. Discussions with respect to claims processing and funding;
2. Discussions about the provision of mediation services;
3. Engagement with the Specific Claims Tribunal of Canada;
4. Confirming a framework for the five-year review; and,
5. Scoping relating to claims excluded by the monetary cap or other provisions of the legislation.

While progress is expected to be made in each of these areas, the primary focus to date has been on engagement with the Specific Claims Tribunal. The Tribunal issued a first set of draft Rules of Practice and Procedure in June 2010. The AFN took the initiative of commenting on the draft Rules and has since helped to coordinate advocacy efforts in this regard with the Tribunal. A group of eleven parties – all of whom had commented on the Tribunal's draft Rules – met with the Tribunal justices in October to discuss and review their respective comments with feedback from the Tribunal. Fortunately, the Tribunal was very receptive to the AFN's comments and it is expected that final Tribunal Rules will be made public by the Tribunal in the near future. The Tribunal is expected to begin hearing cases early in the next fiscal year.

In its engagement with the Chiefs Committee on Claims, the AFN has determined that Canada's current approach to the provision of mediation services during the negotiation of specific claims does not meet the threshold set out in resolution 24/2010 passed at AFN's most recent Annual General Assembly in July 2010. As result, AFN officials are continuing to advocate for a renewed approach to the provision of mediation by Canada, rather than engaging in a substantive discussion of mediation itself.

Support for First Nations with claims over \$150 million also remains a part of the AFN's advocacy efforts. These claimants do not have access to the Tribunal and, therefore, can have significant difficulties in advancing their claims in a manner that treats them fairly or impartially. As a result, the AFN is planning to commence a scoping exercise with Canada, as well as engagement with the House Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs which is expected to conduct a study involving these large claims sometime this winter. It is expected that a resolution relating to these claims will be brought to the Chiefs-in-Assembly at this year's Special Chiefs Assembly.

ADDITIONS TO RESERVE

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

Reforming the Additions to Reserve (ATR) process is an issue identified as a part of the work that began to take place in 2007, and is identified as a specific area of activity in the Political Agreement of 2007.

There is no statutory authority under the *Indian Act* or any other federal legislation to set aside land as a reserve. The act of adding land to existing reserves or creating a new reserve is an exercise of the Royal Prerogative through an Order in Council (OIC).

Following extensive discussion with Canada on the nature and content of an ATR policy reform exercise, a detailed joint work plan is being developed for consideration by the Minister of Indian Affairs and National Chief. Subject to ongoing engagement with the Chiefs Committee on Claims, it is anticipated that extensive discussion on this initiative will take place through to the next fiscal year. This will include confirmation of a revised Interim Policy on Additions to Reserve on the part of Canada, as well as extensive research and engagement with First Nations regionally on the part of the AFN. The ultimate objective in this regard will emphasize the creation of a faster and more effective process to implement ATRs across Canada.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- Monitoring and engagement of the Tribunal as it becomes fully operational.
- Progress and reporting on the provision of mediation during specific claims negotiations.
- Advocacy and support for First Nations with claims over \$150 million.
- Reporting on progress relating to ATR policy reform initiative.
- Ongoing engagement with the Chiefs Committee on Claims.

FIRST NATION CITIZENSHIP

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

Focus continued on Bill C-3: *Gender Equity in Indian Registration Act*, introduced in March 2010 to respond to the April 2009 McIvor decision of the British Columbia Court of Appeal which found sections 6(1)(a) and 6(1)(c) of the *Indian Act* continued gender discrimination in how eligibility for registration is determined. The Bill passed 3rd reading in the House of Commons on November 22, 2010, and was referred to the Senate on November 23, 2010.

AFN Regional Chief Jody Wilson-Raybould presented to the Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights regarding C-3 on December 6, 2010. The presentation reiterated the AFN's earlier submission to the House Committee on Aboriginal Peoples and Northern Development, with the following key points:

- Ongoing gender discrimination is unacceptable and should be eliminated from the *Indian Act*;
- Canada must ensure that First Nations are provided adequate resources to respond to increases in registration and related demands on federal programming (such as Non-Insured Health Benefits and post-secondary education);
- Long-term solutions do not lie in further tinkering with the *Indian Act*. Our Nations have an inherent right to determine who is and who is not a citizen in accordance with our own laws, customs and traditions. The real and ultimate solution to addressing ongoing discrimination in the *Indian Act* lies in the full recognition of First Nations' jurisdiction over our own citizenship.

In the tabling of Bill C-3, the Minister announced an exploratory process to examine broader issues surrounding registration, band membership and citizenship that could not be addressed through the Bill. Subsequently, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) has refused to move on this process until the Bill had passed. As the Court-ordered deadline approaches, and C-3 moves through the Senate, the AFN is seeking a commitment on this process. Resolution 17/2010, Principles for an Exploratory Process on First Nations Citizenship, clearly articulates the AFN's approach to this process, as follows:

- Maintain that Canada needs to engage directly with Treaty and Rights holders on citizenship;
- Any process must be First Nations-specific;
- Assert that this exploratory process is an initial information-gathering step and dialogue must take place at multiple levels (national, local, regional, Nation or Treaty-basis);
- Affirm that the specific and ultimate outcome sought is clear recognition of First Nations jurisdiction over citizenship, and Canada's full recognition of these citizens;
- AFN role is to facilitate national dialogue; also directed to strongly advocate that resources be provided to support regional and local dialogue and decision-making.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- Continue supporting efforts to end legislative discrimination in the determination of eligibility for Registration as an Indian under the *Indian Act*.
- Confirm 'exploratory' process with Canada regarding the broader, more important, issue of citizenship.
- Launch a multimedia forum for dialogue, exchange and advancing First Nations' perspective and approach on asserting and implementing First Nations' jurisdiction over citizenship.

URBAN STRATEGY

A priority under the AFN Strategic Plan, the First Nations Urban Strategy is intended to strengthen connections between First Nation governments and citizens, to move away from the restrictions of the *Indian Act*, and to work towards a continuum of services and rights for First Nation citizens.

This was affirmed by the Chiefs-in-Assembly at the 2010 Annual General Assembly (AGA) by way of Resolution 18/2010 which calls for the development of a locally-led, regionally-coordinated, and nationally-facilitated First Nations Urban Strategy. The resolution also calls on the AFN to facilitate the creation of a First Nations Urban Strategy Advisory Committee with representation from Chiefs and technicians. The AFN has not yet been able to secure funding for a range of activities outlined in the resolution, including the creation of a database of best practices and governance models, a web presence to facilitate information-sharing, a series of Urban First Nation Citizens Forums, and exploring options for inclusion of urban perspectives in AFN decision-making.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The creation of a First Nations Urban Strategy Advisory Committee with representation from Chiefs and technicians from all regions is a key priority, with the first meeting planned to coincide with the Special Chiefs Assembly, December 2010.

The renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding between the AFN and the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC), in conjunction with a work plan, has been another area of focus.

The AFN will continue to work with partners, such as NAFC, to move forward on the development of a nationally-facilitated, regionally-coordinated, and locally-led First Nations Urban Strategy.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- Urban Strategy Presentation of progress to date to 2011 AGA.
- Development of a communications strategy, including web page.
- Creation of database and research hub.
- Funding agreement.

JUSTICE

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

The AFN has also continued to advocate to governments about the seriousness of violence against our women, in particular, the extremely high incidences of murdered and missing Indigenous women. Alberta Regional Chief George Stanley has been designated lead on moving forward on this critical issue and has been active in meeting with affected communities and families.

Budget 2010 announced \$10 million over two years to address this matter, however the recent decision of how this funding will be allocated has raised continued concerns regarding the limited portion of this money that will go directly to assisting families and communities of murdered and missing women. Also, the federal government has discontinued support for the Native Women's Association of Canada's (NWAC) well-regarded Sisters in Spirit Initiative. On November 23, 2010, National Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo and NWAC President Jeanette Corbiere-Lavell issued a joint statement calling on Canada to work with First Nations and women's organizations to end violence against Indigenous women. "We must support initiatives that work for our people, like Sisters in Spirit, as well as working together on a national action plan that will prevent further violence," said National Chief Atleo.

The AFN has sought standing in the Pickton Inquiry called by the government of British Columbia whose purpose is to "...inquire into and report on the conduct of the missing women investigations". It is expected that the Inquiry will examine how dozens of women disappeared from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside over several years and how Pickton was able to prey on them despite warnings that he was a suspected serial killer.

Work continues on the new Justice Initiative on Prevention of Community and Gang Violence. The focus of this initiative is on preventative measures designed to assist First Nation communities in preventing future gang recruitment, activities and violence, and contribute to safe, stable communities.

Also, as directed in Resolution 25/2010, the AFN has been advocating for a new legislative framework and financial resources to support the First Nations Policing Program, in particular for capital, officer recruitment and retention, officer training and development, and the purchase, support and replacement costs of equipment and technology.

In addition to addressing gang violence and violence against women, the AFN Secretariat is continuing to improve communications with federal departments on Justice and Corrections initiatives, and has met with the federal co-chairs of the FPT Ministers on Aboriginal Justice Working Group, Public Safety on changes to the First Nations Policing Program, and the Department of Justice Aboriginal Affairs Portfolio on collaborative activities.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- Move forward on an Action Plan to respond to violence against First Nation women, including the unacceptably high incidences of murdered and missing indigenous women.
- Participate in the Pickton Inquiry, regarding the conduct of investigations into women missing from the Vancouver Downtown Eastside.
- Plan a national gathering on justice, to bring together various stakeholders to discuss policing, murdered and missing women, corrections and related justice issues.
- Coordinate research with First Nations on community safety and pathways to gang activities and will initiate the compilation and sharing on the AFN website of best practices to support First Nation youth.
- Efforts will continue to improve capacity and intergovernmental relations on corrections, justice and policing.

CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

Legislation passed by Parliament opens the doors for discrimination complaints to be made in regard to decisions under the *Indian Act*. *An Act to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act* S.C. 2008, c. 30, came into effect on June 18, 2008. For Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), this took effect upon the passing of the legislation in 2008, but for First Nation governments it will take effect in June 2011.

It was the enactment of section 67 in the first version of the *Canadian Human Rights Act* (CHRA) in 1977 that shielded any decisions made pursuant to the *Indian Act*. Recognizing that the repeal of section 67 and the full application of the CHRA has the potential to trigger critical capacity, implementation and planning issues for First Nation governments, the Chiefs-in-Assembly directed the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to undertake a study to determine the preparation, capacity and fiscal and human resources that will be required in order for First Nations to meet the challenges under the CHRA (AFN Resolution No. 05/2008, Implementation of Bill C-21, Repeal of s. 67 of the Canadian Human Rights Act, July 16, 2008).

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

A draft report based on a dialogue with First Nations in all regions of Canada about the repeal and the broader issue of protecting First Nations human rights was undertaken. Ten regional engagement sessions were held between January and March 2010, attended by a total of 216 persons. In addition, surveys were sent to all participants in advance of the regional meetings.

Among the findings in the draft report, *Assessing the Readiness of First Nations Communities for the Repeal of Section 67 of the Canadian Human Rights Act*, are that: 1) awareness of the repeal of section 67 and the CHRA is low; 2) communities have various levels of existing capacity to create and review policies to ensure compliance with the CHRA and First Nations human rights principles; and 3) approximately 1,700 public buildings and 21,000 band-owned houses are estimated to require accessibility improvements, according to a preliminary readiness assessment of community infrastructure.

In addition, the fiscal hardships associated with ensuring that communities are ready for the repeal of section 67 have not been adequately addressed, especially in the critical areas of communications, infrastructure needs, education, policy review and internal human rights mechanisms.

As further outlined in the report, various concerns related to the repeal of section 67 have been identified. The lack of resources for First Nations to prepare for the application of the CHRA and meet the new responsibilities flowing from application of this Act during the 36-month transition period is a key concern identified by First Nations during the engagement sessions.

True legitimacy in human rights legislation can only arise from a meaningful inclusion of First Nations people in developing a process that respects our traditional and customary practices and which is directly related to our self-determination. Therefore, the AFN report emphasizes the need to recognize and

develop opportunities for the principles of self-government through First Nation specific human rights mechanisms.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- The AFN will conduct further surveys with leaders or administrators from First Nation communities concerning the application of the *Canadian Human Rights Act*. These additional interviews, together with those previously done, will inform the preparation of a report by the AFN to Parliament in connection with the Minister of Indian Affairs' requirement to report to Parliament by June 2011 regarding the potential implications and challenges of implementation of the *Canadian Human Rights Act* against the *Indian Act*. The AFN report will be a separate chapter in the Minister's report to Parliament.

MATRIMONIAL REAL PROPERTY

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

After completing all stages in the Senate, Bill S-4: *Matrimonial Real Property on Reserves Act* was introduced in the House of Commons on September 22, 2010.

In its current form, this Bill remains flawed and does not adequately recognize or respect First Nations' law-making authority. First Nations mandated in Resolution 23/2010 for a First Nations-driven approach to Matrimonial Real Property, to include:

- Clear and full recognition of First Nations' law making authority;
- Removal of any role for a third party or "verification officer" with regards to recognizing or implementing First Nations' laws;
- Support for the development of land management regimes, and community-based mechanisms and institutions for dispute resolution and the administration of justice;
- Removal of the requirement to hold a referendum for First Nations to enact their own Matrimonial Real Property laws, as no other level of government is required to do so;
- Removal of the voting threshold requirement, as no other level of government in Canada has a voting threshold and it is not required at the municipal, regional or other levels.

As well, the AFN has been calling on Canada to move to an approach that supports the capacity of First Nation governments to build and sustain strong and stable communities where First Nations' families are protected, including increased funding for expanding the network of emergency and second-stage shelters, and enhanced family violence prevention support.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- The AFN will work to address the challenges in Bill S-4.
- The AFN will continue to advocate that the work of First Nation governments in developing their own laws be recognized; that they be supported in the development of local dispute resolution mechanisms; and, that barriers to accessing justice are removed.

BORDER CROSSING

First Nations have Indigenous and Treaty border crossing rights as recognized and affirmed in Treaties, such as the Jay Treaty of 1794, section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, and Article 36 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Issues of interest in this policy area are cross border mobility, enhanced border security, transport of cultural/sacred items, and Indigenous identification cards.

In the current context of heightened identification and security standards through the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), effective June 1, 2009, crossing the Canada-US border has presented complex challenges for First Nation citizens. In many instances, First Nation communities are divided by the international border which means that border crossing is a daily necessity. The Chiefs-in-Assembly have asserted that the remedies that are currently available, including passports from Canada and the US and the new Secure Certificate of Indian Status (SCIS), do not meet the needs of First Nation citizens.

Resolution 20/2010, Support for Recognition of Nationhood of Iroquois Hotinonsionne Confederacy and the Validity of Indigenous Passports, calls for the use of Indigenous passports and urges the Government of Canada to work with First Nations in establishing their own system of secure identification based on their nationhood, citizenship, jurisdiction, and inherent rights.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

Key activities included facilitating a meeting of the AFN Border Chiefs Committee and representatives of the SCIS program on July 9, 2010. The need to engage in a multi-lateral dialogue with a number of US and Canadian government agencies to address Indigenous border crossing rights was identified by Chiefs. A funding proposal for an International Indigenous Cross Border Rights Summit has been developed.

Consistent with Resolution 20/2010, the National Chief outlined the First Nations position on border crossing rights in letters to the Ministers of Indian and Northern Affairs and Public Safety. In a letter to the Assistant Deputy Minister responsible for the new secure status card, the AFN Chief Executive Officer also reiterated the need to support the development of First Nation border secure identification cards.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- Co-hosting an International Indigenous Cross Border Rights Summit in 2011.
- Continuing to engage Canada on the development of First Nation border secure ID cards.
- Facilitating the exchange of technical expertise on secure identification systems.

ADVANCING ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL INTERESTS

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

The Environmental Stewardship Unit (ESU) works on a broad spectrum of international, national, regional and local environmental issues. The ESU has a mandate to conduct research, develop policy and advocate on behalf of First Nations. The ESU is highly aware of the complex relationships among many environmental issues. For example, climate change, water quality, and chemical contaminants each have an impact on traditional food security, which then impacts First Nations' health and lifestyle. Through its work, the ESU considers each of the factors which may have an impact on any given issue, and looks at how their interplay must be considered in order to affect real and positive change.

The ESU continues to focus its work on a group of key policy areas: environmental health; chemicals and contaminants; traditional foods safety, climate change, forestry, mining waste, oil extraction, nuclear source water protection, fisheries, species at risk, biodiversity and ecosystems, and Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge and genetic resources.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

BIOMONITORING

In 2008/09 the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), began working on a First Nations' specific biomonitoring initiative (FNBI). The FNBI is a biomonitoring study specific to First Nations people that will allow for the assessment of environmental contaminants for First Nations people on reserve. Biomonitoring is a scientific technique that can detect both synthetic and naturally occurring chemicals in human tissues.

The First Nations Biomonitoring Initiative seeks to:

- Identify toxic chemicals that First Nations are exposed to; and,
- Provide the opportunity to seek out the sources and routes of exposure.

The goal of the initiative is to create baseline data on environmental contaminants that are found in First Nation communities. Currently there is no baseline data on environmental chemicals for First Nations people on reserve.

The ESU designed and developed the FNBI. Two resolutions were passed on Biomonitoring. The first resolution (49/2009) mandated the ESU to develop public information documents and an interest assessment among First Nation communities. In carrying out this directive, the ESU developed fact sheets, a video and two interest assessment questionnaires. The second resolution (34/2010) was passed reaffirming the support to the initiative and directed the ESU to develop and implement a project plan, methodology and roll out the study.

A Planning and Advisory Committee was formed in May 2010 to ensure that First Nation protocols are respected and that data collected under the initiative are compliant with the principles of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP). The Committee is comprised of health and environmental representatives as well as an Elder and representatives from the ESU and Health Canada. Two meetings have been held.

The ESU presented the FNBI before the Health Canada-Public Health Agency Research Ethics Board (REB) in September and received ethical approval to proceed with the initiative. The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) determined the site selection for the pilot project (2010-2011) which includes the Northlands Dene First Nation and Swan Lake First Nation (one remote and one non-remote community).

The FNBI was presented to the Chief, Council and Health Director at Northlands where it was well received and they decided to participate in the initiative. A Band Council Resolution is soon to be approved. A visit to Swan Lake First Nation is scheduled for late November, where the FNBI will be presented.

CHEMICALS AND THE CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT

Environmental contamination of First Nations' homes, bodies, traditional foods, water and environment are of particular concern to many, and as a result, the ESU is currently engaged in a number of initiatives regarding this issue. The ESU is involved in the First Nations Food, Nutrition and Environment Study (FNFNES), the First Nations Indoor Air Quality Study (FNIAS) and the Toxic Exposure Survey (TES). These are designed to be complementary and to provide information on reducing First Nations' exposure to toxic and harmful chemicals. These studies are governed by the OCAP principles and First Nations are the sole owners of all data collected.

Of particular interest is mercury contamination. The AFN is presently preparing for participation on an international discussion group that will debate an international agreement on reducing mercury in the environment. For more information on mercury or the FNBI that includes mercury, please see the relevant AFN Special Chiefs Assembly Reports.

The FNFNES is currently engaged in data collection in 12 communities in Manitoba. The study is collecting information on environmental contaminants in traditional foods, pharmaceutical products in surface water, trace metals in tap water, mercury in hair, as well as nutritional information concerning First Nations' diets. In British Columbia FNFNES has collected the same data over the past two years and the ESU is currently involved in drafting and editing a regional report for BC. Community-specific reports are currently being presented to participating First Nations and feedback is being requested for the regional report.

The FNIAS is currently awaiting approval from Health Canada's Research and Ethics Board before the study commences. Swan Lake has been selected as the community to participate in this study and a visit

to present FNIAS to the community is planned for November 22. This study will measure the indoor air quality of First Nations homes and will enable the AFN to develop communication materials and advocate based upon these findings.

The TES is a survey designed to gather information on which chemicals are currently in use and being stored in First Nation communities. An invitation has been sent through the First Nations Environmental Information Network asking for interested First Nations to participate. A draft survey has also been completed which will be sent to all First Nations after the completion of five site visits. The ESU is drafting of a number of fact sheets which will support the communication requirements of this survey.

A series of chemical fact sheets are currently in development. These educational materials are being produced to be First Nations specific.

CLIMATE CHANGE

The ESU has been advocating for First Nation specific climate change adaptation programs that reflect the needs for responding to climate change impacts to First Nations' health and well-being. The ESU has assisted the First Nations Inuit and Health Branch in designing their Climate Change and Health Adaptation in Northern First Nation and Inuit Communities program, which funds research in northern First Nation and Inuit communities on expected climate change impacts to human health and possible adaptation strategies.

The ESU is currently conducting a gap analysis of the federal government's adaptation funds. The gap analysis focuses on First Nation communities south of 60° and will examine and describe the difference between current adaptation programs in First Nation communities and the desired goals of the Government of Canada. Using a variety of analytical methods and tools, the ESU will examine and document any shortcomings in adaptation programs, determine any disconnects in practices and assess if programs can be integrated, consolidated or coordinated.

The ESU continues to develop its program of work related to clean energy. Clean energy programs are already being utilized at the community level to provide improvements to energy supplies and sustainable energy solutions. Renewable energy and energy efficiency projects offer a solution to current infrastructure that relies on diesel generators. These include small-scale hydro and wind power projects, solar energy projects in the North, district heating, waste heat recovery and energy efficiency in housing. These projects have had a strong track record of success in promoting sustainability and economic development for First Nations. The First Nation communities involved have also gained valuable management and project development experience, economic benefits and increased capacity.

The ESU continues to participate in international discussions on climate change through the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Accord. The AFN participated in intergovernmental working groups held in Bonn, Germany, and the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties in Copenhagen, Denmark. The ESU is putting pressure on developed countries to reach concrete

agreements on monitoring, reporting and verification on CO₂ emissions on the second round of the Kyoto Protocol. The AFN also has been advocating for specific adaptation programs for Indigenous peoples.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND CONTAMINANTS

The ESU is actively engaged in environmental health issues. With its environmental health program, the ESU is conducting research which promotes health and quality of life by reducing the risk of diseases or deaths that result from interactions between people and their environment. The ESU is also working with government and First Nation communities on primary prevention of illnesses through a combination of surveillance, education, enforcement, and assessment programs which identify, prevent and abate the environmental conditions that adversely impact human health.

The ESU continues its involvement with the National First Nations Environmental Contaminants Program through participation on the steering committee, as well as through promotion of the program and providing input as First Nations' advocates. The program provides funding for First Nations community-initiated research projects on environmental contaminants.

The First Nations Environmental Health Innovation Network (FNEHIN), administered by the AFN ESU, is a partnership-based national network designed to virtually connect First Nation communities with environmental health researchers. The network is designed to provide access to available research and resources with the goal of building capacity within First Nation communities.

The FNEHIN provides First Nation communities the opportunity to participate in environmental health related research as well as the ability to access and make use of data and knowledge concerning environmental health issues. Through enhanced participation and access to environmental health research the network hopes to advance and inform the decision-making processes and improve the health of First Nation individuals and communities.

Currently work is being undertaken to develop an acceptable governance road map among current collaborating partners. This will provide a basis upon which future efforts and initiatives may be guided. The ESU is also working to contribute relevant information, materials and documents for State of Knowledge Papers as well as focusing on the continued development of the FNEHIN website portal.

Moving forward, the development of the FNEHIN will focus on promotional efforts through various forums, gatherings and events along with engagement in environmental health related outreach activities. Further emphasis will be placed on the continued improvement of the FNEHIN website portal to provide a one-stop access point for important and relevant health information resources for First Nation communities.

SPECIES AT RISK

The National Aboriginal Council on Species At Risk was officially established on September 21, 2005. Regional Chiefs Eric Morris and Roger Augustine have been appointed by the Minister of Environment to sit on the National Aboriginal Council on Species At Risk. An AFN staff member serves on the

Policy and Planning Subcommittee on the National Aboriginal Council on Species At Risk and provides technical support and advice to the AFN representative. The Policy and Planning Subcommittee has met several times since December 2009, at the direction of the National Aboriginal Council on Species At Risk to provide technical support and assist in the preparation for the National Species At Risk Workshop.

The AFN Species at Risk Act (SARA) toolkit has been updated and revised. The expected distribution to all First Nation communities will be this fall 2010. The SARA toolkit will again be publicly available on the AFN website. The ESU continues to provide information to assist First Nations across Canada of the possible implications of this Act on their rights and economic interests.

The ESU has responded to a number of potential listing requests from Canadian Wildlife Services and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. The ESU is currently reviewing Canada's draft policy suite on species at risk and will be making recommendations to Canada on how to incorporate First Nation interests in the policies. Occasionally the ESU is asked to comment on a certain aspects of the Act. The National Chief appeared before the Standing Committee to make a submission on the legislated five-year review of the *Species at Risk Act*.

BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

The ESU has been advocating for changes in Canada's biodiversity file by providing a First Nation perspective on the value and status of plant and animal species in First Nation territories, as well as identifying threats to its biodiversity. It is the AFN's position that Canada cannot develop policy and programs related to biodiversity unless it has an accurate picture of what is actually on the land and the relative health and stability of the various species that inhabit that land.

The AFN strongly believes that First Nations must be included in decision-making that has an impact on the health of the environment in which they live. The AFN has encouraged the strengthening of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to provide more protections to First Nation communities. The AFN maintains that Canada cannot develop sound policy and programs related to biodiversity unless it has an accurate picture of what is actually on the land and the relative health and stability of the various species.

The ESU has been monitoring international negotiations on implementation of the CBD's provisions relating to access and benefit sharing, traditional knowledge and long-term commitments. The AFN has taken a strong position on the inclusion of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples into the recent international protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing. The ESU will provide recommendations to Canada on how best to implement the domestic application of the protocol so that it accommodates and conforms to First Nation rights and interests, while redressing past theft of First Nation innovations and traditional knowledge. The ESU will continue to monitor work completed on the Convention and work towards meaningful engagement for all First Nations.

NUCLEAR WASTE FUEL DIALOGUE

Nuclear waste storage presents a unique set of concerns and challenges for First Nations people. There is considerable emotional apprehension associated with radioactive contamination, long-term exposure effects and the permanency of containment facilities. Nuclear waste can continue to be hazardous for thousands of years after deposition.

The ESU will get current and relevant information on nuclear storage to First Nation communities. The AFN will liaise with First Nation communities by developing and providing information and public education documents. These materials would include background papers, fact sheets, discussion journals and other public education materials.

During the several dialogue sessions attended by the AFN over the past few years and most recently at the AFN's National Planning and Dialogue Forum, it has been expressed by First Nations that the AFN has a role in monitoring the Nuclear Waste Management Organization's (NWMO) site selection process to ensure it is fair and inclusive of First Nation interests. First Nations want to ensure that the NWMO lives up to its assurances and legal obligations to avoid the problems associated with poorly implemented projects. Through the AFN's relationship with the NWMO and our commitment to supporting the best interests of First Nations, the AFN will monitor the NWMO's site selection process and report any issues that arise.

It has also been expressed by First Nations that they would like the AFN to ensure capacity-building funds are available to communities that might be affected by the site selection process. For these First Nations to become meaningfully involved in the process and understand the issues and choices before them, they must have the capacity to conduct their own research when the AFN cannot satisfy their specific information needs. Again, the AFN will play a positive role in advising the NWMO on issues as they arise to ensure these funds reach the communities that require them.

WATER

The January 2009 *Budget Act* contained significant amendments to the *Navigable Waters Protection Act* (NWPA) that threaten the ability of this Act to provide adequate protection to waterways to ensure protection of their navigability. The amendments to the NWPA were pursued with no consultation with First Nations. Despite this lack of consultation and a lack of information from the federal government on the content of the proposed changes, the AFN continues to provide comments on the regulatory and Ministerial Orders produced by the federal government. The AFN remains concerned that the amended NWPA will enable infringements of First Nations' rights and is continuing to seek avenues of recourse in this regard.

In 2002, the government amended the Fisheries Act's Metal Mining Effluent Regulation (MMER) to allow lakes and other freshwater bodies to be re-classified as "tailings impoundment areas". This means that mining companies can use pristine lakes as tailings ponds. There is no consultation process in place prior to the re-classification of a lake as a tailings pond. The AFN continually asks the federal government to require mining companies to use existing technologies to properly manage their mining wastes instead of using lakes as tailings dumps.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- The ESU will finalize its analysis on federal climate change policy and programs, and advocate for the creation of First Nation specific climate change adaptation programs. The ESU will also develop a report and action plan for consideration by the Chiefs-in-Assembly.
- The ESU will continue to participate in the Chemicals Management Plan Stakeholder Advisory Council. The ESU will provide information on chemicals that pose problems to First Nation communities, as well as advocate for programs that will allow for cleaning up contaminated sites and the safe removal of unwanted chemicals.
- The ESU will conduct an analysis on the international protocol on access and benefit sharing. The ESU will develop a political action plan so that the implementation of the protocol is consistent with First Nation rights, interests and standards of consultation and accommodation, and free, prior and informed consent.
- The ESU will finalize its work on the Traditional Food Nutrition Study in the Manitoba Region and provide a report of findings for the British Columbia Region.
- The AFN will continue to participate in Climate Change related discussion at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
- The ESU will complete its biomonitoring pilot projects in Manitoba and will roll out the study in 14 First Nation communities across Canada.
- The ESU will produce public information papers, which may include fact sheets, discussion papers and backgrounders, for use by First Nations on nuclear waste and other contaminants.
- The ESU will establish a communication network between the AFN and First Nation provincial/territorial organizations to stay informed about regional nuclear waste-related issues or decisions.
- The AFN will provide advice and recommendations to the NWMO on how best to approach First Nations communities.
- The ESU will develop formal AFN positions on access and benefit sharing, climate change, biodiversity, traditional knowledge, based on regional input and acceptance by the Chiefs-in-Assembly.

ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIPS

The AFN Economic Partnerships Secretariat addresses several policy areas which fall into the broad categories of Economic Development, Labour Force and Human Resources Development, Connectivity, and building Resource Revenue Options. This portion of the report will focus on the three first areas, and updates on additional areas will be provided in other sections of the Special Chiefs Assembly (SCA) report.

In the recent past, over a dozen national resolutions have been passed by the Chiefs-in-Assembly dealing with portfolio interests ranging from federal strategies, economic trade cooperation, policy coordination, communications technology, taxation, certification processes and necessary economic infrastructures.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Since the July 2010 Annual General Assembly (AGA), the National Chief has spoken at a number of events and in-person meetings in support of First Nation economies. This includes a keynote speech at the September 16th Canadian Council on Aboriginal Business (CCAB) Gala Dinner in Vancouver and at a Chief Executive Officers meeting hosted by TD Bank Vice-President Frank McKenna on October 25th.

The Chiefs Committee on Economic Development (CCED) met at the July 2010 AGA and will meet again to continue discussions during the week of the December Special Chiefs Assembly. With funding for Secretariat activity having recently been approved, the Secretariat will be in a stronger position to bring forward items on economic cooperation, trade and policy options for CCED consideration

At the AGA, the Secretariat coordinated a First Nations and Taxation side event, as well as a First Nations and Gaming side event. Meeting summaries are available from these side events.

The Secretariat has attended a federal procurement meeting to begin exploring improvements needed for the federal strategic initiatives aimed at supporting First Nation access to contracts and provision of services. The Secretariat had a positive introductory meeting with senior federal officials playing a key role in program redesign of the procurement strategy and related programs. Since the last presentation by federal officials regarding the Federal Framework on Aboriginal Economic Development, where the CCED communicated concerns to Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) on the federal framework's development, there has yet to be a follow-up meeting. The CCED reminded INAC that with time remaining before federal designs on programs and related materials are finalized, there are still opportunities to work together to establish the necessary constructs to support First Nations economic growth.

Planning is underway for the AFN to host an Inter-Nation Mining and Energy Summit in June, 2011. The National Chief has met with Province of Ontario Ministers Brad Duguid (Energy), Michael

Gravelle (Northern Development and Mines), and Chris Bentley (Aboriginal Affairs), on becoming major partners for this event. The meeting held a positive tone, and the Ministers indicated they would have their officials assess the AFN proposal. INAC has agreed to provide support to an event held this fiscal year. Private sector sponsors have also begun to communicate their interest to be involved in this event. Announcing major speakers will include highlighting the National Chief, along with Mike Holmes, Holmes on Homes, who accepted an invitation by the National Chief at the AFN AGA. The Secretariat has also begun exploratory meetings and searching for top caliber speakers and sponsors, at domestic events as well as at the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) meeting in New Mexico on November 18, 2010.

The National Chief met with His Excellency Lan Lijun, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Canada on October 22, 2010. The National Chief invited the Ambassador to address the Chiefs-in-Assembly at this SCA. The Ambassador expressed much interest for this invitation, however, acknowledged that he would be starting a new assignment soon. The National Chief and the Ambassador spoke of the need to begin exploring cultural exchanges, economic and trade cooperation, trade missions and creating more awareness about each other's nations. The AFN has planned for a side event to further explore a trade mission to China and a trade mission of businesses representatives from China to First Nations.

In follow-up to the statement of partnership signed with the National Centre for American Indian Enterprise Development (NCAIED) at the AGA, the AFN and NCAIED have drafted an action plan, met monthly via teleconference and in person, identified primary projects, and drafted steering committee terms of reference. The four primary projects are focused on trade education, information development, scoping out trade policy, and a trade model. The AFN and NCAIED have begun to discuss a trade mission between First Nation and American Indian businesses.

FIRST NATION LABOUR FORCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

As of November, 2010, First Nation Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement (AHRDA) holders have made the transition to begin agreements as Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) holders, with the exception of one First Nation AHRDA that continues its internal decision-making processes. ASETS was designed to help First Nations, Inuit and Métis people prepare for, find, and keep high-demand jobs into the long term. All distinct groups, regardless of status or location, may access its programs and services. These include: job-finding skills and training, programs for youth, programs for urban and Aboriginal people with disabilities, and access to child care.

Since January 1, 2010, the AFN has been a partner on two national projects funded by the Aboriginal Skills and Training Strategic Investment Fund (ASTSIF). The objectives of these projects were to build partnering efforts and new relationships with sector councils and bridge cooperation more directly to the First Nation ASETS holders. The funding is a result of the federal government's Economic Action Plan to stimulate the Canadian economy out of the current recession. Both projects will end on March 31, 2011.



The AFN and the Railway Association of Canada's First Nation Railway Training and Employment Project will see at least 35 First Nation students enrolled in railway conductor courses that are being held at colleges in Vancouver, Winnipeg and Thunder Bay. Both CN and CP have pledged to interview all graduates. In addition, 30 participants will be trained and hired into the track maintenance workforce, as well as seven Signals and Communications (S&C) workers. Railway Career Awareness kits for ASETS offices have

also been developed. A website is now available at www.yourlifeontrack.ca. A Best Practices Guide for Recruitment and Retention of First Nation Railway Employees will be finalized by March 31, 2011.

The AFN and Mining Industry Human Resource Sector Council (MiHR) are developing a Ready to Mine: Mining Essentials Training Program for Aboriginal Peoples. Industry, educators, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), Métis National Council (MNC), and the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) have also been involved in the development of the training standards. The AFN has taken a lead role in facilitating the research and design of the Trainer's Guides and Learner's Workbooks. A two-day Train the Trainer Workshop was held at the AFN on October 14-15, 2010. As of November 1st, there are three pilot sites operating with a total of 40 students, located in Hazelton, B.C. and Pic River and Lake of the Woods, Ontario. A number of mining companies have committed to hiring the graduates. The 12-week pilot site courses will conclude by mid-February, 2011, at which time the program will be assessed and validated.

FIRST NATIONS E-COMMUNITY

The Chiefs-in-Assembly mandated the AFN through Resolution 16/2008 to seek support for initiatives for the continued development of Information Communication Technology (ICT) services at the community and regional levels until a comprehensive framework is in place. The AFN has continued to promote the need for a strategy on the First Nations E-Community.

On November 22-24, 2010, the AFN convened a First Nations ICT Ad Hoc Working Group meeting. The working group is comprised of First Nations ICT specialists. The meeting discussions focused on the further development of the 2007 National Strategic Framework into a First Nations E-Community Strategy. The strategy includes key components such as: First Nations infrastructure needs; sustainability of operations and maintainance; First Nations labour force/human capacity; and, corporate relations. The strategy will be presented to the Chiefs Committee on Economic Development (CCED) for further consideration. A draft terms of reference for the ICT Ad Hoc Working Group has also been developed and will be formalized in the near future.

The AFN continues to advocate for greater attention to community connectivity requirements, and is monitoring the federal Dialogue on the Digital Strategy for Canada. The AFN also continues to monitor the recently held Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) hearings regarding connectivity and have submitted comments outlining key First Nation issues and concerns.

During the next few months, the AFN plans to develop and distribute communication materials promoting the First Nations E-Community concept amongst First Nations, federal and provincial governments, and private enterprise.

The AFN recently developed an ICT Historical Overview paper that examines information management – information technology (IM-IT) historical opportunities, connectivity issues, and barriers and sustainability issues that impede on services or show trends of impacts. The Secretariat has also developed profiles of regionally-based First Nation service providers.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- Coordinate economic policy planning meeting amongst organizations;
- Continue event planning and announce confirmed dates for the Inter-Nation Mining and Energy Summit;
- Coordinate activity for economic trade initiatives, research and proposals for trade missions with NCAIED and China business communities;
- Continue to work with the First Nation Technical Working Group on Human Resources Development (TWG);
- Coordinate technical meetings related to the First Nations E-Community portfolio;
- Continue to raise awareness of First Nations ICT policy issues;
- Follow-up on the First Nations E-Community Forum held in the fall 2010;
- Present business institute research/work plan to CCED;
- Continued monitoring and updates on the transition from AHRDS to ASETS; and,
- Provide an update on the projects with the MiHR and RAC.

HOUSING

MANDATE

Resolution No. 81/2008 called for a direct and inclusive role for First Nations in the evaluation of the 1996 On-Reserve Housing Policy. The evaluation process includes a critical look at the manner in which the policies, programs and activities of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) were devised; the degree of First Nations consultation and influence in the developmental process; regional variations of interpretation of policy intent and decision making; and that the evaluation process be seen as the starting point of meaningful participation in all future activities in the renovation of the 1996 Policy in preparation for the next Treasury Board Submission and its accompanying Memorandum to Cabinet.

Resolution No. 14/2007 called for the recognition of First Nation governments to manage and control housing and infrastructure programs from a local, tribal council, Treaty organization, or provincial/territorial organization structure. It also called for the transition of management and control of all housing matters from the federal government to First Nations, with an appropriate First Nation network of support, including national and/or regional First Nation 'Centres of Excellence' that are local, territorial and regional in scope and be made available to ensure an adequate First Nation capacity development framework.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

EVALUATION OF THE 1996 ON-RESERVE HOUSING POLICY

INAC and CMHC, with the engagement of the AFN Chiefs Committee on Housing and Infrastructure (CCoHI) and the Technical Working Group (TWG), have been actively participating in the *Evaluation of the 1996 On-Reserve Housing Policy, its programs, activities and initiatives*, and assessing the need for change.

AFN Resolution No. 81/2008 was put forward at the Special Chiefs Assembly in December, 2008, in an effort to ensure that the policy evaluation process, inclusive of planning, contracting, data collection and reporting, respect the authority and jurisdiction of First Nations and work with First Nations and their duly-authorized representatives and organizations to accomplish this effort through regional, territorial and local First Nation initiatives. It also resolved that there be direct involvement of First Nations in the management and delivery of the evaluation process in First Nations communities and that any external consultants engaged in these activities be First Nations in origin and agreed to by First Nations and their duly-authorized representatives and organizations in the process.

Data and information collection has included both external (First Nation available) and internal (INAC) literature and documentation, household occupant surveys, key informant interviews, housing condition assessments and case studies. Use of First Nation expertise for household occupant surveys and the housing condition assessments was undertaken. An evaluation of the Ministerial Loan Guarantees and Shelter Allowances for housing has also been conducted by KPMG through a standing offer with INAC.

A final draft report has been completed and will be made available by the AFN following its posting on the INAC Audit and Evaluation Branch website at http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/pub/ae/index_e.html.

The report recommendations have been agreed to by the Director General of INAC's Community Infrastructure Branch. A Management Response and Action Plan has been undertaken with the AFN, with the active involvement of First Nations, CMHC and other key stakeholders.

Recommendations:

1. Develop a policy statement building on the 1996 Policy that lays out objectives and is flexible enough in its application to meet the different needs of First Nation communities.
2. Work to clarify roles and responsibilities and strengthen accountabilities.
3. Advance First Nation capacity-building initiatives in order to better manage and monitor housing stock, advance local First Nation operational control, and to achieve the minimum standards of the National Building Code to ensure long-lasting and environmentally-sustainable housing units.
4. Work to ensure houses are built to address overcrowding and deterioration and to maximize the use of resources to alleviate current and future housing pressures.

BILL C-304 – AN ACT TO ENSURE SECURE, ADEQUATE, ACCESSIBLE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR CANADIANS

This is a private member's bill that sets out parameters for the development of a National Housing Strategy that recognizes that improved housing conditions are best achieved through cooperative partnerships of government and civil society and the meaningful involvement of local communities.

The Minister responsible for the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation shall, in consultation with the provincial ministers of the Crown responsible for municipal affairs and housing and with representatives of municipalities and Aboriginal communities, establish a national housing strategy designed to ensure that the cost of housing in Canada does not compromise an individual's ability to meet other basic needs, including food, clothing and access to education.

In a recent presentation to the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development, the AFN expressed a commitment to participate in the development of such a strategy. This commitment was made in a spirit of optimism that reflects what we know can take place if we create collaboration that allows for strategies to emerge within a multi-jurisdictional environment – a National Housing Strategy that meets the 'Continuum of Housing Needs' from Homelessness and Emergency Shelter to Elderly and Disabled, to community owned assets and social housing stock, to rent to own and private homeownership.

A National Housing Strategy that truly acknowledges what secure, adequate, accessible and affordable housing is and spells out how all parties can work collaboratively to achieve desired outcomes. The participation of the AFN will assist in linking First Nation leadership to existing or emerging multilateral tables of dialogue that will result in the ability to harmonize programs and services between on and off reserve.

It will provide a First Nation perspective in a long-term strategy that addresses the need for more culturally-appropriate social housing, transitional housing for women and men, second stage housing and mental health programs that directly involve the people they are meant to serve. It will foster new relationships that allow for First Nation access to programs, activities and initiatives in the off-reserve environment and will help to create a First Nation institutional framework for housing that assists in developing appropriate capacities for sustainable housing strategies and linking that framework to the multi-jurisdictional environment found off reserve.

Bill C-304 has been sent back to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities for amendment and will then move to a third reading in the House of Commons.

FIRST NATIONS MODEL HOUSING POLICY GUIDELINES

In response to Resolution No. 14/2007, the Housing and Infrastructure Secretariat has been actively researching two key areas of housing that reflect practices illustrating good governance. These include a First Nation Regulatory Environment and the Operational Control of Housing within the regulatory environment. A regulatory environment will identify the manner in which each First Nation, region or territory structures their own means of service delivery and capacity building. The work will help to define the replacement of Government of Canada control and interventions by creating First Nations solutions that develop new options and opportunities.

The AFN also undertook a contract with CMHC to produce “First Nation Model Housing Policy Guidelines” to assist First Nations in developing their own community-specific policies. This guide outlines an approach to enhancing First Nations’ understanding of the developmental process. It will assist in creating the environment to properly control the various aspects of the First Nation housing portfolio. The project has drawn from successful housing initiatives implemented by First Nations across Canada and helps to define necessary elements, provide templates and act as a guide for the development and implementation of local First Nation Housing Policies that foster internal First Nation controls and create greater self-reliance.

This project is now complete, including translation, and is posted on the AFN website at http://www.afn.ca/cmslib/general/10-05-11%20Housing%20Policy%20Guide_FINAL%20ToC.pdf.

THE HOLMES GROUP PROJECT

National Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo and “Canada’s Most Trusted Contractor” Mike Holmes of “Holmes on Homes”[®] and The Holmes Group, signed a Statement of Partnership at the AFN’s Annual General Assembly in July. The agreement establishes a new pilot project that aims to assist in building homes, enhance community design and planning and utilize appropriate green technologies and clean energy sources to improve health and living conditions in First Nation communities, as well as establishing a First Nation Centre of Excellence on green and sustainable community design.

The project will demonstrate the necessary actions that lead to heightened environmental responsibility, focus on energy efficiency and cost effectiveness, and meeting the First Nation continuum of needs. The

project will respect the First Nation as the ‘authority having jurisdiction’ and actively engage the First Nation and their duly mandated technical service providers and authorized representative organizations in all facets of the process.

The AFN has actively facilitated a process that engages First Nations in project selection, design and implementation. The Holmes Group will use the AFN website as a vehicle of communication for all First Nations and will chronicle and document the process and its features so that all First Nations may undertake similar activity.

The Holmes Group has also agreed to assist the AFN in developing the Centre of Excellence defined in Resolution No. 14/2007. Their assistance will focus on defining the parameters of the First Nation regulatory environment and the operational controls necessary to achieve green and sustainable First Nation community design.

Nine First Nations submitted proposals by the November 26, 2010 closing date. Announcement of the selected First Nation for the pilot project will be made on December 16, 2010.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- Final report on the 1996 On-Reserve Housing Policy Evaluation will be circulated and reviewed by First Nations and their respective organizations. It is expected that the comments and feedback gathered to this report will frame the next phase of policy renewal and revitalization. The position taken by AFN has been that the policy renewal process include active and meaningful engagement of First Nations and that the roles and responsibilities of all parties are clearly defined and communicated.
- The First Nations Model Housing Policy Guidelines are completed and have been translated into French. A workbook will be under development to assist facilitators and First Nations in the process of developing individual First Nation Housing Policies. A Train-the-Trainer session is anticipated to ensure that there are available facilitators to assist First Nations in each region.
- The AFN Housing and Infrastructure Secretariat will investigate the need for a Housing and Water Policy Forum that will potentially bring together First Nations and their duly mandated organizations with various federal departments and agencies, industry, professional associations and technical service providers. This policy forum will be a critical ingredient to the revitalization and renovation of the 1996 On-Reserve Housing Policy.
- Establishment of a web portal to host an integrated Centre of Excellence on Green and Sustainable Community Design.

- Development of a Community Planning Tool that outlines the process a First Nation may undertake in the planning and design of a Green and Sustainable First Nation. This resource will utilize the tools, models, best practices other information that will be found in the Centre of Excellence.
- The Holmes Group project has received proposal submissions from nine First Nation communities and an announcement on the selected community will be made on December 16, 2010 during the Special Chiefs Assembly.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The role of the Housing and Infrastructure Secretariat is to advocate for adequate resources for First Nations to build and maintain all areas of infrastructure and housing. This includes roads and bridges, community buildings, electrical facilities, fire services, water and wastewater and housing.

Resolution 24/2008, Environment Canada Wastewater Effluent Regulations Consultation Process, called on the Government of Canada to respect the Honour of the Crown and immediately conduct meaningful consultation and accommodation with First Nations in this matter and provide adequate resources to First Nations to fully assess the impacts of the proposed regulations on their rights and interests and to enable them to participate in Crown consultations.

Resolution 42/2010 directs the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to hold a National Indigenous Water Conference in 2011 to discuss current water-related issues and develop a strategic action plan aimed at the recognition of First Nation jurisdiction over water and ensuring First Nations access to safe, adequate sources for freshwater as a treaty and Aboriginal right for the preservation of health, economic and spiritual activities – now and for future generations.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF WATER AND WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE ON FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES

The final report of the National Assessment of Water and Wastewater Infrastructure on First Nations Communities will be released in the next few months. This is a project to conduct an engineering assessment of private and public water and wastewater systems, and associated operation and maintenance practices, in First Nation communities, including an evaluation of risk to health and overall serviceability analysis (i.e., communal systems as well as private individual systems such as wells, septic systems, cisterns, etc.) for each community. The results of this study will inform the government of the capital, operating and maintenance needs for First Nations. It will also provide supportive information to Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) to seek renewal of the First Nations Water and Wastewater Action Plan (FNWWAP).

ENVIRONMENT CANADA DRAFT WASTEWATER SYSTEMS EFFLUENT REGULATIONS

On March 20, 2010, Environment Canada published the proposed Wastewater Systems Effluent Regulations (the proposed Regulations), in the Canada Gazette, Part I. According to the Regulatory Impact Analysis Statement, which was published in the Gazette immediately preceding the proposed regulatory text:

“The objective of the proposed Regulations is to reduce the risks to ecosystem health, fisheries resources and human health by decreasing the level of harmful substances deposited to Canadian surface water from wastewater effluent. To achieve the objective, the proposed Regulations would

set national effluent quality standards that would require secondary wastewater treatment, or equivalent, in wastewater systems across Canada.”

Thus, once implemented, the proposed Regulations are expected to:

- Protect the ecosystem against pollution. The ecosystem includes fish, people and the environment.
- Help address lack of consistent regulatory regimes and level of sewage treatment across Canada.
- Prevent the release of untreated or inadequately treated sewage from contaminating drinking water sources.
- Protect Canadians from the risk of consuming contaminated fish and shellfish and from engaging in recreational activities in polluted water bodies.

The AFN developed a Consolidated Comments Report which was distributed to First Nation communities and Tribal Councils as a tool that could be used by them as supporting information if they wished to provide comments to Environment Canada on the proposed Regulations. The Consolidated Comments Report was also submitted to Environment Canada as AFN’s comment on the proposed Regulations. The report is available on the Water page on the AFN website.

The draft regulations were to be published in the Canada Gazette 2 in December 2010 but that date has been set back to February 2011 or later. The municipalities and First Nations have expressed concern over the costs to meet the regulations and also question information used in the Regulatory Impact Analysis Statement. Environment Canada (EC) has indicated that it will continue with its outreach and dialogue with jurisdictions and other stakeholders. The AFN will ensure that the dialogue with First Nations continues and will work with EC to make these changes available.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT IN ON-RESERVE FIRST NATION COMMUNITIES

In Canada, emergency management in support of Aboriginal peoples adopts an all-hazards approach that addresses both natural and human-induced hazards and disasters. The most pressing activity is the draft “An Emergency Management Strategy in Support of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada”. This document refers to “service agreements” as the basis for the provision of emergency management services and support to Aboriginal communities.

A national approach to service agreements for emergency management services will help to standardize the mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery activities required for emergencies across Canada. The Senior Officials Responsible for Emergency Management (SOREM) First Nations, Inuit and Northerners Working Group will be developing guidelines to ensure national consistency in service agreements between federal/provincial/territorial governments related to emergency management services. Service agreements also help to provide assurance of comparable service delivery to all Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

A draft document titled “National Guidelines or Developing Service Agreements between INAC and the Provinces for Emergency Management On-Reserve First Nation Communities” has been prepared. The purpose of this is to provide national guidelines in order to promote a national approach for emergency management in First Nation communities.

The AFN was invited and recently agreed to join the SOREM Working Group. Considerable work has been done to date without the involvement of First Nations.

EVALUATION OF THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The 2010 Evaluation of the Emergency Management Assistance Program recommended that INAC clarify its roles and responsibilities as they relate to emergency management. This process should consider the current environment of emergency management, specifically the implications of the 2007 *Emergency Management Act (EMA)*. To do so, the Department must define relationships with all external stakeholders and put in place the appropriate governance structures and agreements to ensure fulfillment of responsibilities related to emergency management. All aspects of emergency management should be considered in this process, with particular emphasis on the following areas:

- a) The precise role of the Department in emergency management in the three northern territories.
- b) The precise role of the Department with respect to emergencies that fall within the responsibility of another department or jurisdiction (such as health issues and civil unrest).
- c) The program delivery mechanisms and structure relating to the four pillars of emergency management: mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery activities.
- d) Horizontal engagement of other relevant INAC programs that have a potential to contribute to an all-hazards approach to emergency management, such as capital infrastructure in mitigation projects or land claims in civil unrest issues.

It further recommended that INAC consider a revised funding structure, to alleviate the impact on regions, other program areas, and communities and provide a secure funding base for the Department’s emergency activities. To facilitate this transition, INAC should document its existing funding for emergency management programming and develop forecasts for future expenses relating to an all hazards approach to emergency management.

INAC should also identify appropriate resources in alignment with its roles and responsibilities. Specifically, ensuring that the Department has the ability to provide preparedness and mitigation services in accordance with Departmental obligations under the *EMA*.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- Continue to recommend to INAC that First Nations have the opportunity to review the recommendations from the National Assessment of Water and Wastewater Infrastructure on First Nations Communities before the report is finalized and that the final report be shared with the AFN, regional organizations and tribal councils;
- Advocate for resources for water and wastewater facilities to address the needs identified in the National Assessment;
- Work with Environment Canada to ensure information on the Wastewater Systems Effluent Regulations is provided to First Nations;
- Participate in the SOREM Working Group and provide information and seek input from the regional technicians; and,
- Plan the 2011 National Indigenous Water Conference to be held in Alberta.

FISHERIES

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Environmental Stewardship Secretariat - Fisheries Unit is working on the development and implementation of a renewed five-year National Fisheries Strategy 2010-2015 (AFN-NFS). Access to fisheries, aquatic and ocean resources continue to represent an integral part of the diet, socio-economic well-being and cultural survival of First Nation communities within coastal and inland areas.

The AFN-NFS is designed to assist and restore First Nations' rightful role in managing the fisheries, and provides a long-term plan that embodies the recognition, protection and implementation of First Nations' Aboriginal and Treaty rights.

The AFN-NFS addresses a broad range of First Nation priority issues and discusses key policy and program sectors within the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) that may impact and require input from First Nations. In addition, the AFN-NFS also supports and promotes sustainable First Nation fisheries in the inland and coastal aquatic and ocean resources.

The following resolutions have strengthened and renewed the AFN-NFS to undertake a series of new initiatives that will help First Nations fully share in economic opportunities through fisheries, aquatic and ocean resources.

- Resolution No. 83/2008 – Strengthened and Renewed Mandate for the National Fisheries Strategy to Fully Share in Economic Opportunities;
- Resolution No. 76/2008 – Support for First Nations Fisheries Management; and,
- Resolution No. 53/2009 – Support to AMIK Fisheries.

Over the next five years, the AFN will develop and implement an enhanced National Fisheries Strategy that encompasses a strategic plan to support the development of new technical and socio-economic development strategies that will include components directed from First Nation communities.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

AFN FISHERIES COMMITTEE

The National Fisheries Committee (NFC) is a unique committee within the AFN in that it consists of Chiefs, First Nation fishermen and technical experts from the East and West coasts, Inland-Prairies, Great Lakes and Northern areas. The NFC meets once a year and consists of political and technical regional representation. Regional Chiefs Roger Augustine (NB/PEI) and Eric Morris (Yukon) co-chair the NFC.

First Nations have emphasized the need to engage in discussions and activities related to “Taking back our First Nation fisheries” as a central theme of the new AFN-NFS framework. It is now focused on the

importance of building a balanced strategy that will promote economic and environmental initiatives that can create sustainable communities through the fisheries.

This has included preliminary discussions on the creation of a First Nations National Fisheries Marketing Cooperative, increased marketing opportunities, and ways that First Nations can develop their own eco-labeling products. It also speaks to the need for decision-making related to habitat management and protecting Aboriginal title and rights to the resource.

NATIONAL FISHERIES TASK FORCE

The AFN National Fisheries Committee meets once a year to address all fisheries issues. The NFC co-chairs have struck a National Fisheries Task Force (NFTF) that will develop strategies and action plans to provide technical and political support on fisheries issues through monthly conference calls.

The NFTF also committed to developing proactive plans on other stocks that have been diminishing and addressing other issues that have impacted First Nations' fishing rights and activities. Priority access remains a key principle in all fisheries management issues with First Nations. The NFTF also identified ways to encourage youth involvement within the overall strategy. The AFN continues to support First Nations in their efforts to promote sustainable fisheries and provide assistance as required.

NEW RELATIONSHIP PROTOCOL BETWEEN AFN/DFO

First Nations have been calling for a high level mechanism that will assist in fostering better relationships with DFO on policy development and communications. On December 3, 2009, National Chief Shawn Atleo and Fisheries Minister Gail Shea agreed to the establishment of a joint AFN/DFO National Relationship Protocol.

The Protocol will promote collaborative partnerships on policy development and transparent communication mechanisms that are efficient, timely and accountable through respectful dialogue processes throughout DFO sectors, nationally and regionally.

The joint AFN/DFO National Relationship Protocol will emphasize the need for regular conversations with First Nations through joint review processes that ensure government legislation, policy and programs are fully consistent with Aboriginal and Treaty rights, through transparent consultation and accommodation processes. It is suggested that this Protocol could be formally signed between the National Chief and Minister before the end of 2010.

NATIONAL FISHERIES STRATEGY 2010-2015

AFN Resolution 83/2008, Strengthened and Renewed Mandate for the National Fisheries Strategy to Fully Share in Economic Opportunities, directs the AFN to explore opportunities and provide First Nation support for new innovative technical and socio-economic development strategies under the AFN National Fisheries Strategy for the next five years. It also lists a broad range of new collaborative opportunities that will support First Nation communities to achieve priority access of fisheries, aquatic

and ocean resources that will contribute to Canada's overall economy. It also directs the AFN to host a National Policy Forum on Fisheries during the 2010-11 fiscal year subject to availability of funding.

The National Fisheries Committee and Chiefs-in-Assembly have suggested that the AFN explore the feasibility of establishing a First Nations owned and operated National Fisheries & Aquatic Resource Corp/Institute/Commission/Cooperative. The AFN welcomes First Nations' input on how a new body would be structured and what is needed to meet the aspirations and goals of their communities. The strategy will also identify new opportunities for research and business partnerships with academic institutes, industry, private sectors, foundations and government.

DFO ABORIGINAL CAPACITY PROGRAMS

There are two major aboriginal capacity programs for coastal and inland First Nations – the Aboriginal Aquatic Resource and Oceans Management (AAROM) is for the First Nations on the West and East coasts, while the Aboriginal Inland Habitat Program (AIHP) is designed for the prairies, Ontario and parts of Quebec First Nations. Through these programs, approximately 35 AAROM groups and 14 AIHP bodies have obtained much needed capacity such as hired biologists, scientists, and policy and habitat managers in the coastal and inland areas.

All seven DFO Aboriginal capacity programs are now being revamped so that financial accountability and reporting will be mainstreamed within DFO, including the introduction of new reporting tools. It will be important that First Nations are informed of the new proposed DFO reporting requirements and proposal templates. The AFN ESU participates in the joint DFO/Aboriginal working group that provides ongoing input and advice on development of the draft tools for the programs.

AQUACULTURE

The AFN supports the First Nations who are engaged in discussions with the DFO Aquaculture sector to develop a new BC Aquaculture Regulatory Framework to ensure the proposed regulatory discussions are conducted through government to government dialogue processes to address Aboriginal and Treaty rights, jurisdiction, environmental protection and economic development. Many First Nations have been successful in aquaculture by using it as an economic driver for their communities. However, some First Nations do not welcome aquaculture in their traditional areas if there are environmental threats to their wild stocks.

It has also been suggested that the AFN establish a National Aquaculture Working Group that can facilitate dialogue as an ongoing vehicle that provides technical support to the regions and provides First Nation input on the National Aquaculture Strategic Action Plan and other supportive initiatives at the national level.

COURT DECISIONS

Over the past two decades, a number of court cases have emerged and influenced the legislative landscape in policy sectors that impact Aboriginal and Treaty rights. The AFN ESU is planning to undertake a

legal annotated review of the various cases and how they have influenced Canada's laws, legislation and policy direction and how they have impacted Aboriginal and Treaty rights with regards to fisheries.

HEILTSUK GLADSTONE RECONCILIATION GROUP

Resolution 83/2008 in the AFN-NFS 2010-2015, provides a mandate to examine and develop new bodies and assess court decisions. Following a technical meeting on July 9, 2010, at the request of the Heiltsuk Gladstone Reconciliation group, Bill Gladstone proposed the establishment of a new permanent body specific to the implementation and negotiation secretariat of court decisions and inquired about potential interest among First Nations in pursuing an alliance with other groups who have won court decisions.

This multi-pronged permanent body would bring high level mechanisms that can integrate comprehensive negotiation strategies for legal, political lobbying, and for a negotiation table on fisheries management and increased access.

This proposed body is seen as much needed instrument to provide leverage and assist in implementation of court decisions where the federal government has ignored court decisions and/or where the government has intentionally denied proven First Nations rights.

NUU-CHAH-NULTH DECISION

On November 3, 2009, the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council celebrated a historic victory in the B.C. Supreme Court which recognized that Nuu-chah-nulth Nations have an Aboriginal right to harvest and sell all species of fish found within their territories.

The Government of Canada and the Nuu-chah-nulth were given two years to work out an arrangement for access suitable to both parties. It is clear that the courts have affirmed Nuu-chah-nulth rights and it will be essential that the parties engage in a constructive dialogue process and effective negotiation for the implementation of the decision.

Now that the decision has been appealed, it is critical to support the Nuu-chah-nulth in the next stage of the courts. The AFN will continue to monitor and provide support as required. A strategy will be developed that will endorse a commitment between First Nations and Canada to engage in a constructive dialogue process and effective negotiations for the implementation of court decisions.

NORWAY HOUSE CREE NATION

On October 29, 2010, fishermen from the Norway House Cree Nation celebrated a victory when Tax Court of Canada judge J.E. Hershfield ruled that Ronald Robertson and Roger Saunders, commercial fishermen from Treaty 5, qualify for tax exemption under the *Indian Act* and will no longer have to pay tax on their commercial fishing earnings.

FIRST NATION REPRESENTATION ON FISHERIES BODIES

The AFN has produced an inventory of fisheries bodies associated with the federal, provincial and territorial governments. Only a small percentage of First Nations hold any representative capacity in these bodies. The current processes have not been viewed as effective, accessible, transparent, timely, cost-effective or representative of First Nation interests. First Nations are seeking to actively participate in bi-lateral and tri-lateral processes with government that will provide information and accountability that will broaden and enhance communications with First Nations.

FRESHWATER FISH MARKETING CORPORATION

Resolutions have directed the AFN to engage with DFO in a review the operations and functions of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation (FFMC). The joint review could assess the fisheries management and regulatory regimes to ensure that First Nations harvesters are “equal players” with the federal and provincial governments. Other concerns are related to the management of the Inland fisheries, including all decisions and initiatives related to research, conservation, allocation, management, enforcement, marketing and economic development planning.

First Nations are interested in participating in a joint review to look at opportunities to improve the current corporation and examine the feasibility of the establishment of a First Nation entity. The AFN is looking for First Nations’ input on a suitable approach before a review begins.

FISHERIES ACT - RENEWAL

The March 2010 Speech from the Throne indicated that there will be another attempt to revise the Fisheries Act, possibly within the next few months. The federal government has made a public commitment to modernize the legislation, with a possible focus on streamlining environmental assessments and other habitat and conservation provisions. The AFN will continue to monitor Parliament activity and will be providing a coordinated approach to informing First Nations about potential impacts.

HABITAT MANAGEMENT

The AFN has established a National Habitat Working Group that provides a forum where 14 Aboriginal Inland Habitat program (AIHP) groups and other interested First Nations can begin to address policy, program and legislative reviews. The National Habitat Working Group continues to address relevant areas towards the protection and conservation of fish habitat. It is important to involve First Nations engagement and provide recommendations on how to strengthen the provisions on habitat and environmental assessments.

First Nations are interested in looking at other partnerships and habitat project source funding that will assist groups to develop innovative resource habitat management tools, such as direct involvement with the Major Projects Management Office, conservation and protection, provincial partners, academic institutes, and the establishment of Environmental Habitat Monitoring Program related to fish habitat.

SPECIES AT RISK ACT (SARA) – AQUATICS

A parliamentary review of SARA is scheduled to commence before the end of 2010. It will be important for First Nations engagement in the five-year review to ensure any proposed amendments to the existing legislation do not adversely infringe upon Aboriginal and Treaty rights related to aquatic resources. It is recommended that the national coordinated approach continue to be supported throughout the scheduled SARA review that will provide additional capacity to allow First Nation discussions on related issues such as Aboriginal and Treaty rights, Aboriginal traditional knowledge, compensation, and recovery strategies.

First Nations are interested in establishing a specific First Nation SARA Advisory Committee that can work with the Ministers and Canadian Endangered Species Conservation Council. For example, there are approximately 14 sets of regulations that have yet to be drafted under SARA that will benefit from dialogue with First Nations. In order to engage effectively, First Nations require capacity that will enable them to develop and assess the socio-economic costs and benefits with the listing and recovery strategies under SARA (e.g., Lake Sturgeon, American Eel, and loss of traditional diet, culture and socio-economic significance to First Nations).

MAJOR PROJECTS MANAGEMENT OFFICE

The Major Projects Management Office (MPMO) has been established to improve the federal regulatory system for major resource projects to enhance international competitiveness, and enable more effective examination and mitigation of environmental, human health and socio-economic impacts by providing a more efficient and effective regulatory system.

The MPMO was created by a cabinet directive to fast-track approvals through the environmental assessments and mainstream Aboriginal consultations as a “one-stop” shop. It has been recommended that the AFN and MPMO develop a joint coordination process for the development and implementation of the Cabinet Directive, through a federal regulatory framework that incorporates First Nation interests in the process to secure meaningful consultation.

First Nations continue to emphasize the need for ongoing communication and engagement of the MPMO with the AFN and First Nations, in the development of the federal framework for Crown-Aboriginal communications. There has only been one national MPMO workshop with First Nations. This was held in March, 2009, however, the report has not been released by MPMO.

METAL MINING EFFLUENT REGULATIONS

The Metal Mining Effluent Regulations (MMER) are federal regulations under Canada’s *Fisheries Act*. The regulations set discharge limits on mine effluent to help ensure protection of downstream ecosystems. However, Schedule 2 of the MMER is a loophole that allows for the reclassification of natural water bodies as “tailings impoundment areas”. This means that natural fish-bearing bodies of water can be used as disposal sites for mine tailings and that ordinary protection under the *Fisheries Act* does not apply. The recent decision to not approve the Prosperity Mine in Fish Lake, B.C. shows that environmental impacts can outweigh the benefits and need for industrial development.

Taseko Mining Limited proposed a new mining project (Prosperity Mine) north of Teztan Biny in B.C. The land is part of Tsilhqot'in territory and the BC Supreme Court recognized the Aboriginal right to hunt and trap on the proposed mining site. The project called for the draining of Teztan Biny to create a tailings pool to collect mining effluent and waste. Teztan Biny is a sacred lake and the Tsilhqot'in fish in its waters.

In order for the project to move forward, the lake must be placed on Schedule 2 of the MMER, which will allow for harmful alterations, disruptions and destruction of fisheries habitat and the deposit of deleterious substances. The lake is home to 85,000 rainbow trout and would have been destroyed by the project. The communities comprising the Tsilhqot'in National Government were unanimously opposed to the mine. Despite the federal Cabinet decision to not proceed with the Taseko Mining Limited project, the company is re-filing for approval permits to open the mine.

This issue has an important national component to it. Schedule 2 requires compensation for damage and should not encourage the use of fecund natural water bodies as mining dumps. If the federal government allows new additions to Schedule 2, First Nations may face new industrial threats to their territory and infringements on their hunting, fishing and trapping rights. First Nations need capacity to understand DFO roles and responsibilities within the regulatory process to gauge potential impacts on their Aboriginal and treaty rights with resource development. This includes impacts on habitat such as forestry, mining, oil and gas, hydro-electric activities, etc.

The AFN continues to provide support to many First Nations, including Atlantic First Nations on the reduction of the snow crab quotas, increased access to turbot and protection of the Atlantic salmon. Within the Inland First Nation fisheries, efforts have been focused on the protection of Treaty rights to fish, habitat protection and examining the impacts of the Major Projects Management Office, and looking at improvements to the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. On the West coast, the AFN has attended the BC Fish Council Assembly and provided support in their technical efforts to engage in the Aquaculture regulatory reform, as well as to the Tsilhqot'in National Government on the Prosperity Mine issue.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- Coordinate meetings of the National Policy Analysis Group, National Fisheries Committee and National Habitat Working Group with First Nations and DFO sectors.
- Establish joint National Aquaculture Working Group and National Oceans Working Group, and draft terms of reference.
- Publish and distribute a plain language Aboriginal Inland Habitat Program (AIHP) information guide for Inland First Nations.
- Publish and distribute four resource tools on Environmental Assessments, Major Projects Management, Metal Mining Effluent Regulations and Regulatory Compliance, Trends in fisheries management and a guide to AAROM and AIHP bodies.
- Draft the terms of reference and framework for the National Fisheries Task Force.

- Publish and distribute of a SARA aquatic toolkit.
- Develop communications tools including quarterly newsletter and updated inventory of experts, and populate the AFN Fisheries Portal.
- Prepare mail-outs for First Nations, Tribal Councils and Provincial Territorial Organizations.
- Review the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation to enhance improvements.
- Provide First Nation input/feedback on the DFO National Aquaculture Strategic Action Plan Initiative.
- Provide an analysis and First Nation recommendations on the *Fisheries Act*.
- Report on National Policy Analysis Group and National Fisheries Committee meetings.

WATER AND WASTEWATER

The management of water resources, wastewater treatment and the protection of source water is a right that First Nations have not relinquished through treaties. It is a crucial and paramount requirement that First Nations be consulted and accommodated in any policy, legal and other decisions related to this precious resource. As such, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) advocates and supports First Nations positions where the control and access to adequate water resources threatens First Nations rights and jurisdiction.

Through past resolutions, the AFN has been directed to advocate for the protection of water rights and the right to be consulted and accommodated. In addition, the AFN brings forward to the attention of the government the lack of adequate capital resources, training and management capacity to address the growing backlog in First Nations infrastructure. This policy area advocates for resources to address the capacity and capital needs resulting from new wastewater effluent standards, potential regulations for water and wastewater services, and the need to develop source water protection plans to ensure protection of water supplies in the future. The AFN has also responded to the Expert Panel report recommendation to examine the viability of a First Nation Water Commission by conducting research in how such an entity might function.

Resolutions 23/2008 and 24/2008 directed the AFN to advocate for meaningful consultation on matters affecting First Nations rights with respect to water and wastewater. Resolutions 49/2008, 51/2008, 52/2008, 12/2009 and 42/2009 also provide similar direction on water rights, addressing the resource gap and the duty to consult. Resolution 50/2008 directed the AFN to start the process for the development of the framework for a Commission on Water.

Resolution 43/2010 called for the provision of adequate financial resources to each region to conduct a thorough impact analysis to determine the financial, technical, and policy development needs for each region. It also directed the AFN to urge Canada that any further discussion on Bill S-11, Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act, be suspended until its full economic impacts are identified and presented to Parliament.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

Bill S-11 was tabled in parliament on May 26, 2010. This bill, if enacted, will have sweeping implications for First Nations ability to govern water on reserve lands and on other First Nation owned lands. Bill S-11, does not guarantee that First Nations will have access to safe drinking water.

The AFN is calling on the federal government to engage in real action to address the capacity gap as well as working towards a regulatory regime that reflects our rights and jurisdiction and delivers equitable and guaranteed access to safe drinking water.

By introducing the bill as a health and safety issue and ignoring both the facilitator's comments and the Expert Panel recommendation that "the federal government must close the resource gap", it is very clear

that the government has not heeded the First Nation concerns elaborated in the Impact Analyses reports and that there was not adequate consultation carried out on this matter.

The AFN has been active in meeting with senators to relay First Nations' concerns about the provisions of this bill. Further, it has been determined that when this bill passes second reading it will be referred to the Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, at which time the AFN will request time to make a presentation before the committee.

The AFN's communications effort will continue through the development of three documents that provide supportive information, which will be tailored for and distributed to First Nations, senators and non-governmental organizations.

IMPACT ON RIGHTS

The legislation, if passed, has the potential to impact First Nations rights. The government has steadfastly held the view that this is not a rights issue but one of health and safety. Reviews by regional groups have identified areas where this legislation infringes on First Nations rights. Analysis of the legislation has clearly identified the objectionable clauses that must be removed or substantially changed.

DEVELOPMENT OF REGULATIONS

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) has been soliciting interest from regions in working with the legislation and has prepared a terms of reference for the development of federal regulations governing drinking water for On-Reserve Lands in Canada. The terms of reference contain the scope of work that a regional First Nation organization could consider in the preparation of the regional regulatory development model. Two regional organizations have passed resolutions – one to “start an exploratory exercise, on a regional level, to developing water/wastewater regulations” and the other “initiate discussions with INAC in order to explore this window of opportunity.”

In some respects this advance activity presents an opportunity for those regions to examine how they can exercise their right to manage their water resources. This work would look at the operational aspects of water and wastewater regulations and would study how the region could provide assistance to their First Nations to prepare them to move into a regulatory environment. The AFN has indicated that it will support those regions that wish to carry out these studies.

LOOKING-FORWARD AGENDA TO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JULY 2011

- Continue to advocate for resources to be provided by the government to enable regions to conduct financial, technical, legal and policy analysis of the proposed regulations.
- Convene dialogue sessions with First Nation water technicians to develop a common framework that is mutually acceptable.
- Present for approval a substantially revised Bill S-11 that respects First Nation constitutional rights.
- Examine options to support First Nation capacity including additions to the bill relating to reports to Parliament on infrastructure and the creation of institutional capacity such as a First Nations Water Commission.

