



News Release

For Immediate Release
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First Nations Leadership Council supports 'call to action' to prevent further disappearances and murders of young women along northern BC highway

Coast Salish Territory/Vancouver – The First Nations Leadership Council welcomes today's release of *The Highway of Tears Symposium Recommendations Report* and fully supports its 'call to action' to address the issues and circumstances surrounding missing and murdered young women, the majority of them Aboriginal, along Highway 16 in northern BC.

The report and its 33 recommendations follow up on the Highway of Tears Symposium held in Prince George on March 30 and 31, 2006.

The symposium was organized by First Nations and Aboriginal organizations in the Prince George area to address the numerous disappearances and murders that have occurred along Highway 16, over the past two decades. The symposium's participants included the victims' families, concerned citizens, numerous community and provincial agencies and organizations, high-ranking RCMP officers, and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal elected representatives.

"The recommendations contained in the report provide clear direction on how Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities can work together with the RCMP and government agencies in an effort to prevent more tears from being shed along Highway 16. It is now incumbent that we collectively work together to implement the report's

recommendations," said Grand Chief Edward John, a member of the First Nations Summit Political Executive and the First Nations Leadership Council.

"I was honoured and greatly humbled to witness the strength and resilience of the families and participants during the course of the symposium," said Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs and member of the First Nations Leadership Council.

"The recommendations reflect the heart-breaking lessons learned from the tragedies of the Highway of Tears. I look forward to working with the families, communities and the RCMP in implementing these recommendations in the hope that, by doing so, we prevent further tragedies and yield positive results for the ongoing investigations," added Chief Phillip.

"The Highway of Tears symposium brought together diverse organizations and people, aboriginal and non-aboriginal, to hear the way in which they have been impacted by the disappearances and murders on Highway 16", said A-in-chut, Shawn Atleo, Regional Chief, BC Assembly of First Nations. "We now have the opportunity to reflect on their stories and experiences and to move forward. We must continue this work together to ensure the safety and protection of our youth, women, and community members so that we can bring an end to these tragic events"

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The First Nations Leadership Council is comprised of the political executives of the First Nations Summit (FNS), the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC), and the BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN). The First Nations Leadership Council works together to politically represent the interests of First Nations in British Columbia and to develop strategies and actions to bring about significant and substantive changes to government policy that will benefit all First Nations in the province.

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