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**NEWS RELEASE**  
For Immediate Release  
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## BCAFN Statement on International Women's Day

**(Lheidli T'enneh Territory, Prince George, BC and Heiltsuk Territory, Bella Bella, BC – March 8, 2022)** – International Women's Day (IWD) is a day dedicated to celebrating the political, social, economic, and cultural achievements of women. It is also a day to call for accelerated action and commit to change. The British Columbia Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) recognizes and commits to advancing women's rights and gender equity in all spheres and calls on everyone to join this movement. This year's international theme is "Break the Bias". The government of Canada's theme is "Women Inspiring Women".

BCAFN Women's Representative, Louisa Housty-Jones stated, "First Nations women are diverse. We occupy many spheres and are challenging the colonial stereotypes that exist about what our roles should be. We are exchanging these biases and constraints and instead reclaiming our rightful and sacred places in our own journeys, families, communities, places of work, and in leadership. I lift up all those women who have mentored others and helped forge the way forward. You are my inspiration."

Regional Chief Terry Teegee stated, "Today we celebrate and honour the accomplishments and contributions of women, and commit ourselves to positive change. While one day provides a crucial opportunity for reflection and solidarity, we must remember to do this each and every day. The fight for equity, healing, and justice for First Nations women in Canada will take sustainable and markedly expanded commitments. The implementation of the Calls for Justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, questioning, intersex, and asexual (2SLGBTQQIA) people are a top priority. An Indigenous-led response, well-supported by all levels of government and sectors of society is crucial."

First Nations women continue to experience disproportionate rates of violence and incarceration. Transformational action is required, and a pathway for change has been articulated in the Calls for Justice, and a number of BC region-specific reports and recommendations. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which has been affirmed in law by the governments of BC and Canada, provides a principled foundation for the recognition of First Nations inherent rights, which is an integral component of advancing First Nations women's wellbeing and leadership.

*IWD has occurred for well over a century, with the first IWD gathering in 1911 supported by over a million people. Today, IWD belongs to all groups collectively everywhere. IWD is not country, group or organization specific.*

*#IWD2022 #BreakTheBias #WomenInspiringWomen*

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