



BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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NEWS RELEASE

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AFN Concludes Special Chief Assembly in Ottawa

(Lheidli T'enneh Territory, Prince George, BC) — First Nations gathered in Ottawa, in-person and online, this week to attend the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Special Chiefs Assembly. First Nations leaders, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, women, and youth, representing many First Nations communities across British Columbia gathered for the three-day meeting to discuss and bring forward their priorities and urgent issues.

“I am pleased Chiefs were able to come together on a resolution to support the \$40-billion Agreement-in-Principle for survivors of a broken child welfare system. It is time to begin compensating people harmed by this failed system that inadequately resourced our First Nations communities and children in care,” stated Regional Chief Terry Teegee. “I hold up my hands to Cindy Blackstock, Regional Chief Cindy Woodhouse and all our leaders, who have worked persistently to seek justice, compassion and fairness for First Nations children.”

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and government ministers David Lametti, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada; Patti Hajdu, Minister of Indigenous Services Canada; Marc Miller, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations; and Marco Mendicino, Minister of Public Safety Canada, addressed the Chiefs-in-Assembly. In addition, leaders of opposition parties, Pierre Poilievre, Leader of the Conservative Party, Jagmeet Singh, Leader of the New Democratic Party and Yves-François Blanchet, Leader of the Bloc Québécois, spoke before the First Nations leaders and took questions and listened to their urgent concerns.

“First Nations continue to press for transformational change in economic, social, and cultural sectors, which requires true and proper relations to be central to their work. The expression of First Nations and Indigenous human rights and proper functioning of government-to-government relationships must be fully supported with the advancement of key laws such as the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*,” stated Regional Chief Teegee. “Together, we must implement and develop innovative approaches to aligning laws, policies and practices with the *UN Declaration* as quickly and thoughtfully as possible.”

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) advocates on behalf of First Nations on issues such as treaties, Indigenous rights, and land and resources with authority to review and enforce decisions and directions brought forward through resolution.

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