



BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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NEWS RELEASE

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First Nations leaders from across British Columbia gather in Ottawa and online for Assembly of First Nations Special Chiefs Assembly

(Anishinabe Algonquin territory/Ottawa, ON) – The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) convened a Special Chiefs Assembly (SCA) this week in Ottawa, ON, and online to host a national dialogue primarily concerning the Draft United Nations Declaration National Action Plan.

“The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act National Action Plan is a crucial opportunity to build better political, social and economic processes for change, and improve the experience of reconciliation across the country,” stated Regional Chief Terry Teegee. “Broad and transformative changes must happen, and we require a vehicle that can help to advance this work.”

Highlights during the Assembly included an honouring ceremony held for Jully Black, a R&B/Soul artist and Juno Award winner from Toronto, ON. Black was blanketed and gifted an eagle feather for her significant and impactful change to the lyrics of ‘O Canada’ at the NBA All-Star Game earlier this year.

Chiefs-in-Assembly passed numerous resolutions, including support for the \$23.4-billion revised agreement to compensate victims of the underfunded First Nations child welfare system (ER-02), the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Draft National Action Plan (ER-03), Distinctions-Based Indigenous Health Legislation (DR-27) and the Vatican Statement on Doctrine of Discovery (ER-04) and many more resolutions.

“This week, we achieved a historic victory for our children. We hold up Regional Chief Cindy Woodhouse, Cindy Blackstock, and all the leaders who never wavered from seeking justice for the discriminatory approaches Canada imposed on our children again,” said Regional Chief Terry Teegee. “While no amount of money will bring back our cultures and languages, nor erase the pain and loss imposed by this colonial system, this historical settlement will contribute to First Nations’ collective healing. Canada needs to end its continued discrimination against our First Nations children.”

The AFN brought several guests to speak and take questions and comments from Chiefs, including Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada Minister David Lametti, who provided an initial briefing by the Department of Justice on Canada’s UNDA Action Plan, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations Marc Miller, and Minister of Indigenous Services Canada Patty Hajdu. Opposition party leaders Jagmeet Singh, NDP, and Pierre Poilievre, Conservative Party of Canada, also spoke. Mr. Singh joined the assembly online and took questions from Chiefs while Mr. Poilievre provided a pre-recorded address.

#honouringourancestors



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In addition, at the Monday BC Caucus session, Chief Jerry Jack, representing his community Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation, honoured Kukpi7 Rosanne Casimir “Golden Day Woman,” from Tk’emlúps te Secwépemc, with a handmade shawl and name “Neeputulth” (pillar of her community). BCAFN Regional Chief Terry Teegee, representatives, staff, and invited guests were moved and honoured to witness this ceremony. The beautiful shawl gifted to Kukpi7 Casimir was created by Elder Marge Amos of Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation.

First Nations Chiefs and leaders will gather again at the Assembly of First Nations’s 44th Annual General Meeting from July 11th to 13th, 2023, in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) is a national advocacy organization that works to advance the collective aspirations of First Nations individuals and communities across Canada on matters of national or international nature and concern. The AFN hosts two Assemblies a year where mandates and directives for the organization are established through resolutions directed and supported by the First Nations in Assembly (elected Chiefs or proxies from member First Nations).

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