



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ten First Nation Organizations and Institutions Sign Protocol on Cooperation and Communication

(Coast Salish Territory, Vancouver, British Columbia) Today, ten First Nation organizations and institutions gathered in Vancouver to sign a Protocol on Cooperation and Communication. The signatories commit to coordinating their efforts to support capacity development in governance and governance administration in First Nation communities in British Columbia.

The protocol voices the pressing need to assist all First Nations in BC in moving beyond the existing fiscal relationship with the Crown and the delivery of delegated programs services. The protocol also addresses the need for relevant and effective information sharing to support First Nations in key fiscal issues, capacity development, and exercising their inherent right of self-determination, self-government, including authorities and jurisdictions. The protocol will help support First Nations to drive fiscal discussions and develop capacity in a manner that supports the work of their respective First Nation governments.

The signatory organizations affirm their intentions to work together in a cooperative manner and to provide support for one another's efforts to advance the recognition, respect and accommodation of Aboriginal Title and Rights, Treaty Rights and to improve the lives of First Nations people in British Columbia.

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The Signatories include:

- British Columbia Assembly of First Nations
- The First Nations Summit
- The Union of BC Indian Chiefs
- The First Nations Financial Management Board
- The First Nations Tax Commission
- The First Nations Finance Authority
- The Lands Advisory Board
- The Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of BC
- The First Nations Public Service Secretariat
- The New Relationship Trust

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QUOTES

British Columbia Assembly of First Nations

“I am pleased that BC AFN is joining this group of organizations committing to work together in support of increasing First Nations’ capacity in exercising their inherent rights of self-determination and self-government. As Chair of the Assembly of First Nations Chiefs Committee on Economic Development, one of my main priorities is supporting national and regional First Nations economic development organizations. I believe that we are stronger when we work together to advocate for inclusion of the inescapable economic component of Aboriginal Title.”

- Regional Chief Terry Teegee, BC Assembly of First Nations

First Nations Summit

“The First Nations Summit is pleased to sign this protocol committing to working together with our partner First Nation Leadership Council members, institutions and organizations. First Nations in BC have shown leadership in establishing many of these organizations, and we have a responsibility to collaborate to provide the best possible support for our First Nation communities. Capacity building is critical to our communities’ success – whether in pursuing self-government, economic development ventures, claiming their inherent rights to their lands and resources, or whatever else we want to achieve – and by working together, these institutions and organizations will better help them on their paths.”

- Robert Phillips, Political Executive, First Nations Summit

Union of BC Indian Chiefs

“The Protocol on Cooperation and Communication will help establish a unified, powerful network of Indigenous support and governance in British Columbia. With the recent introduction of legislation to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, it is paramount that we continue to build upon the momentum to advance Indigenous self-determination and capacity development. “

- Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President, Union of BC Indian Chiefs

First Nations Financial Management Board

“We appreciate the spirit of cooperation and communication this action symbolizes. More so, we recognize our responsibility to provide support to one another’s efforts and join this movement to advance the recognition, respect and accommodation of Aboriginal Title and Rights, and Treaty Rights. Fueled by our resilient aspirations, this is a time for our people to persevere until we have discharged our duties, not only to our communities, but to the many generations yet to come.”

- Harold Calla, Executive Chair, First Nations Financial Management Board

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First Nations Tax Commission

“This protocol demonstrates that we are collectively committed to sharing best practices and successes and helping First Nations achieve greater environmental, economic and fiscal sustainability. Together we will make a fundamental change for our people, a change towards greater jurisdiction and greater independence.”

- C.T Manny Jules, Chief Commissioner, First Nations Tax Commission

First Nations Finance Authority

“FNFA is please to be a party to this agreement and look forward to working with our partners to move the needle for our communities. Through better cooperation and communication we can make positive impacts to help our communities achieve sustainable success.”

- Ernie Daniels, President & CEO, First Nations Finance Authority

First Nations Lands Advisory Board

“The Lands Advisory Board is pleased to work with other First Nation Support agencies to coordinate efforts to maximize much needed professional services, advocacy and resources to First Nation governments. The process of decolonization has to be undertaken on the terms of, and at a pace determined by First Nations. We have to be ready to respond in a coordinated and efficient manner.”

- Robert Louie, Chair, Lands Advisory Board

Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of BC

“Support from Indigenous institutions is a critical component of self-determination for Indigenous peoples. Given the current agendas of both the federal and provincial governments, this is an important time for Indigenous institutional development in order to support what First Nations communities have been working to reclaim for generations. AFOA BC is pleased to be entering into this protocol agreement with its partner organizations and institutions and commits to continuing to deliver capacity support based on the needs of communities, as we have done for more than 20 years.”

- Barbara Joe, Board Director, Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of BC

First Nations Public Service Secretariat

“The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which the Government of Canada has endorsed, and the Province of BC has recently introduced legislation to implement, provides for Indigenous peoples right to self-determination and to the right to the improvement of their economic and social conditions. This cannot be achieved without First Nation-driven organizations and institutions working together to support strong governance and investments in capacity in our communities.”

- Jehan Casey, Director, First Nations Public Service Secretariat

New Relationship Trust

“The New Relationship Trust (NRT) recognizes the importance of the Protocol on Cooperation and Communication to our organization. The NRT was created to provide capacity development support to First Nations in BC, and we do so without duplicating or replacing existing government or First Nations programs. As a signatory to the Protocol, we will remain committed to working with our partners to develop initiatives and services that meet the needs of our communities.”

- Chief David Jimmie, Vice-Chair, New Relationship Trust

BACKGROUND - ABOUT THE SIGNATORY ORGANIZATIONS

British Columbia Assembly of First Nations

The BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) works to advance the interests of BC First Nations by advocating for and implementing Aboriginal Title, Rights and Treaty Rights through the exercise of inherent laws and jurisdiction. The BCAFN works to promote policies and resources for the benefit of all First Nations. Further information on the BCAFN may be found at <https://bcafn.ca>

First Nations Summit

The First Nations Summit (FNS) is comprised of a majority of First Nations and Tribal Councils in BC and provides a forum for First Nations in BC to address issues related to Treaty negotiations, Title and Rights issues, and other issues of common concern. The FNS is also an NGO in Special Consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Further information on the FNS may be found at www.fns.bc.ca

Union of BC Indian Chiefs

The Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) is an advocacy and research organization that is working towards the recognition, implementation and exercise of Indigenous Title, Rights and Treaty rights. Further information on the UBCIC may be found at <https://www.ubcic.bc.ca>

First Nations Tax Commission

The First Nations Tax Commission (FNTC) is a shared governance institution under the First Nations Fiscal Management Act. The FNTC is responsible for maintaining the integrity of First Nations taxation in Canada. The FNTC has an advisory function for the development of regulations under the Financial Management Act and it also monitors regulatory impacts. Further information on the FNTC may be found at <https://fntc.ca>

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First Nations Financial Management Board

The First Nations Financial Management Board (FNFMB) operates as a shared governance institution under the First Nations Fiscal Management Act. The FNFMB offers advice and workshops to First Nations who are bringing in a Financial Administration Law. The organization also sets standards for financial administration laws and reviews and audits First Nations' finance practices. Further information on the FNFMB may be found at <https://fnfmb.com>

First Nations Finance Authority

The First Nations Finance Authority (FNFA) operates under the authority of the First Nations Fiscal Management Act. The FNFA provides financing, investment and advisory services for First Nations. The FNFA provides First Nations Governments with investment options, advice and access to long-term loans. Further information on the FNFA may be found at <https://fnfa.ca>

First Nations Lands Advisory Board

The LAB was established by the originating *First Nations of the Framework Agreement on First Nation Land Management (Framework Agreement)*. The LAB is comprised of an elected Chairman and regionally elected Directors, determined by the Councils of the Operational signatory First Nations to the *Framework Agreement*. The LAB is the political body supporting signatories to the *Framework Agreement* in the implementation of their own land governance codes.

Among its roles, the LAB provides strategic direction to the First Nation Land Management Resource Centre, proposes amendments to the *Framework Agreement* and Federal Legislation as necessary, advocates for and negotiates funding with Canada on behalf of the signatory First Nations, and performs whatever political functions or services are agreed to between the LAB and First Nations. More info may be found at landsadvisoryboard.ca

Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of BC

The Aboriginal Financial Officers Association is dedicated to helping Indigenous people better manage and govern their communities through enhanced financial and management practices. The BC Aboriginal Financial Officers Association (AFOABC) works with First Nations to offer training in the areas of financial management. Further information on the AFOABC may be found at <https://www.afoabc.org>

First Nations Public Service Secretariat

The First Nation Public Service Secretariat (FNPSS) is an initiative of the First Nations Summit, with the support of the First Nations Leadership Council, mandated to support First Nation administrations in BC. The FNPSS provides resources, tools, networking, and other support to strengthen and enhance capacity in BC First Nations communities and organizations on an individual, organization, and Nation level. Further information may be found at: www.fnps.ca

The New Relationship Trust

The New Relationship Trust (NRT) is a non-profit organization dedicated to strengthening First Nations in BC through capacity building. The NRT funds projects from a trust in the areas of: governance capacity; education; language and culture; youth and elders; and, economic development. Further information on the NRT may be found at <https://www.newrelationshiptrust.ca>