



LAND CLAIM AGREEMENTS COALITION

For Immediate Release

Land Claims Agreements Leaders Adopt Political Declaration

(December 6, 2006, Ottawa) The Leaders and Representatives of the Land Claim Agreements Coalition starting with James Bay and Northern Quebec (1975) and including Nunavut (1993), Nisga'a Nation (2000) and Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement (2005) -- are assembled in Ottawa to discuss how Canada is doing in honouring the modern treaty undertakings it made to Aboriginal peoples over the past thirty years.

Through these modern treaty agreements, Ottawa made important and solemn constitutionalized treaty promises in return for reconciling Crown and aboriginal sovereignties and clearing the way for development in more than half of Canada's land mass and the immense resources they contain.

More than three years ago, the signatories of all major modern treaties wrote to the Government of Canada. We called for the mutual development of a new federal Policy to fully implement the fundamental objectives of these important agreements. No meaningful progress has yet been made, and the federal Crown has essentially rebuffed efforts to engage constructively.

The Land Claim Agreements Coalition today adopted a "Four-Ten" Declaration of Dedication and Commitment, to guide and support its efforts in the future. The Declaration embodies 14 points on which the Land Claim Agreements Coalition members agree must form the foundation of an honourable and mutually beneficial relationship between their peoples and the federal Crown.

COUNCIL OF YUKON FIRST NATIONS • GRAND COUNCIL OF THE CREES (EYYOU ISTCHEE)
GWICH'IN TRIBAL COUNCIL • INUVIALUIT REGIONAL CORPORATION
MAKIVIK CORPORATION • NISGA'A NATION • NUNATSIAVUT GOVERNMENT
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c/o Consilium, 488 Gladstone Ave., Ottawa ON, K1R 5N8, (613) 237-3613



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Importantly, the federal Auditor-General just reported that the treaty process in British Columbia is stalled, and stated that federal policies and approaches may be fundamentally at fault. In 2003, Ms Fraser concluded that the federal government should significantly improve its implementation of modern treaties.

In response to these well-documented challenges, the Inuit of Nunavut have today filed a major -- one billion dollar -- court case in the Nunavut Court of Justice concerning a litany of federal failures to respect the Nunavut Agreement of 1993. The Land Claim Agreements Coalition leaders regret the circumstances that have forced NTI into mounting this litigation.

The Land Claim Agreements Coalition organizations call upon Canada to honour the spirit, intent and broad socio-economic objectives of all modern land agreements -- and thereby ensure the development and inclusion of Aboriginal peoples in this modern, thriving country called Canada.

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