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‘Creating Canada’ symposium provides historical context to treaty making in Canada

(Ottawa, Ontario, October 8, 2013)

The Creating Canada symposium, hosted by the Land Claims Agreements Coalition, was held at the Museum of Civilization to a diverse crowd of more than 350 participants from across Canada. His Excellency David Johnson, the Governor General of Canada, and Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt addressed the attendees at the national symposium. Copies of the Royal Proclamation of 1763, which set out the basic rules for treaty making between the Crown and Aboriginal peoples following the Treaty of Paris, were on display.

Cathy Towtongie, President of Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., the Inuit organization implementing the 1993 Nunavut Land Claims Agreement and Co-Chair of the Coalition said: "The Government of Canada must fulfill its duties and obligations in our modern treaties. These agreements apply to almost half of Canada and the rights they define are protected by the Constitution. The Royal Proclamation showed the way 250 years ago. It spoke against frauds and abuses and upheld the honour of the Crown."

Coalition Co-Chair Mitchell Stevens, President of the Nisga'a Nation in British Columbia charged with implementing the 1998 Nisga'a Final Agreement, added: "Revisiting the Royal Proclamation reaffirms our basic treaty rights as first peoples in Canada. We must now continue to press the Government of Canada to honour these rights as we implement our modern treaties."

Both Presidents Towgongie and Stevens thanked the 350 participants in the national symposium and the speakers from across Canada and the United States.

The Land Claims Agreements Coalition (www.landclaimscoalition.ca) brings together all Aboriginal peoples in Canada with modern treaties. The Coalition works to ensure that modern treaties are respected, honoured and fully implemented in order to achieve their objectives. Proceedings from the Creating Canada symposium will be made available on the LCAC website.

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