



**OPEN LETTER ON BEHALF OF THE FIRST NATIONS LEADERS TO THE RIGHT
HONOURABLE GOVERNOR GENERAL DAVID JOHNSTON AND THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA STEPHEN HARPER**

On behalf of the National Executive of the Assembly of First Nations, we write today regarding an urgent matter requiring immediate attention. As First Nations leaders from coast-to-coast-to coast, those with inherent rights and title and those with whom the Crown has entered into Treaty, we collectively raise our voices about the critical situation facing First Nations.

On December 11th, 2012, Chief Teresa Spence commenced a hunger strike to call attention to the dire conditions which many First Nations communities and peoples face, and to protest the disrespect and shameful treatment of First Nations by the Government of Canada. She has stated that she will remain on this hunger strike until a meeting is achieved between the Crown (including provincial Crown representatives where the provincial Crown is involved as in Treaty 9) and all Treaty First Nations to discuss the Treaty relationship and our respective obligations and outstanding issues. This situation creates an urgency that is foremost in our minds and is a direct correlation to the humanitarian crises being faced in many First Nations communities today

The Government of Canada has not upheld nor fulfilled its responsibilities to First Nations, as committed to by the Crown including at the Crown-First Nations Gathering January 2012. Canada has not upheld the Honour of the Crown in its dealings with First Nations, as evidenced in its inadequate and inequitable funding relationships with our Nations and its ongoing actions in bringing forward legislative and policy changes that will directly impact on the Inherent and Treaty Rights of First Nations. Treaties are international in nature and further indigenous rights are human rights, both collective and individual and must be honoured and respected.

We seek an immediate commitment to a meeting with you as the representative of the Crown, together with the Prime Minister of Canada, to demonstrate respect and attention to the priorities set by First Nations. All First Nations across Canada stand united and in solidarity in advancing this urgent call for action and attention.

Respectfully,

**National Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo
on behalf of the National Executive of the Assembly of First Nations**