



ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS  
SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY

ACKNOWLEDGING OUR CHALLENGES, SUCCESSES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

EXECUTIVE REPORT

DECEMBER 2018





The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) is the national body representing First Nations governments and approximately one million people living on reserve and in urban and rural areas. The National Chief is elected every three years and receives direction from the Chiefs-in-Assembly. The AFN is dedicated to advancing the priorities and aspirations of First Nations through review, study, response and advocacy on a broad range of issues and policy matters.

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AFN 2018 Annual General Assembly artwork:  
*Chiefs Sun by Darlene Gait, Esquimalt Nation*



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## National Chief Perry Bellegarde

*Assembly of First Nations*

Tansi Chiefs and First Nation delegates:

Tawaw kahkiyaw, okimâwak, nâpewak, iskwewak, kêhtêak, oskâyak. Okimaw piyisiw awasis nitisihkason. Miyo kisikaw anoch.

On behalf of the Executive Committee and the staff of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), I welcome you to the 2018 AFN Winter Assembly and thank and acknowledge the Algonquin Nation for hosting us on unceded Algonquin territory. Whether your journey here has been short or long, we greatly appreciate your valuable time, counsel and for joining us.

I am deeply honoured by my re-election for a second term as National Chief. I will return that trust by working as hard as I can to serve and to advocate for the priorities of all First Nations. I look forward to working with all of you.

Since our Annual General Assembly this past July, it has been a busy few months. I have had the honour of welcoming several new members of the AFN Executive Committee and much work to implement the direction of Chiefs-in-Assembly has taken place already. Each of the Regional Chiefs has taken on national portfolio responsibilities and will be a focal point to hear the voices and priorities of Chiefs in their region.

Work is advancing on co-development of federal legislation to support the revitalization and protection of our First Nations languages and the push for co-development of child welfare legislation. This work is mandated by several resolutions and will realize some key Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. All of our languages are under threat. While nearly 40% of First Nations seniors can speak an Indigenous language, according to the 2016

Census, only 16% of First Nations children under the age of 14 can do so. To reverse language loss, First Nations languages must be spoken in the home, among families, in educational institutions and in our governments. The child welfare crisis is urgent and requires immediate action. The status quo continues to harm our children. First Nations children are grossly over-represented in apprehensions by child welfare agencies all across this country. It is time to end this approach and ensure our children are safe, cared for and enjoy the opportunities available to other children in this land.

With the return of Parliament, we also have been busy with Parliamentary advocacy on other Bills of interest to First Nations. These include Bill C-262, the proposed United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (*UN Declaration*) Act. Bill C-262 will advance respect of our right to self-determination. Canada will be required to work with First Nations and develop a national action plan to ensure implementation of the *UN Declaration*.

Introduced by MP Romeo Saganash, Bill C-262 was passed by the House of Commons in May 2018, with the support of both Liberal and NDP MPs. It is now before the Senate. The AFN is actively continuing our advocacy efforts to ensure its speedy passage by the Senate of Canada as soon as possible.

We are stronger together when standing up for our right to self-determination, our Treaty rights and inherent rights, title and jurisdiction. I will be working with you to ensure there are mechanisms and supports to honour these rights in processes that are First Nations-led and mandated.



# National Chief Perry Bellegarde

*Assembly of First Nations*

Acknowledging and respecting Treaties is vital to ensuring First Nations rights are honoured and implemented, and it is essential to closing the gap. It requires that all Canadians understand the Treaty relationship with the Crown, and fully respect our rights as Nations and peoples.

For Treaty Nations, Treaty implementation has been pushed aside for too long by our Treaty partner. I look forward to discussing with you over the coming months options for supporting Treaty implementation—such as establishing a Treaty Consulate or Treaty Commissioner Office with responsibilities to monitor, report on, and encourage Treaty implementation. The sacred promises of peace and friendship must be restored. And sharing the land means truly sharing its wealth while sharing the responsibility to care for Mother Earth.

We will also focus efforts to update the Four Policies currently based on termination of our rights—not recognition. Those Four Policies are the policies defining Comprehensive Claims, Specific Claims, Additions to Reserves and Inherent Rights. These need to be amended to better reflect the *UN Declaration* and the rights, title and jurisdiction of First Nations peoples across the country.

We are constantly examining ways to make our strong organization even stronger. We will seek independent sources of revenue for the AFN and look at restructuring to ensure work is underway to support Chiefs in areas like restorative justice. I am working with the AFN Executive Committee to examine how the AFN Secretariat can be restructured to better serve all First Nations in the most effective and responsive way possible. An organizational review is being planned as well as a Task Force to hear from leadership on priority amendments to the *AFN Charter*. We appreciate your service on Chiefs Committees and participation in AFN forums. We value the efforts of the AFN Elders, Youth and Women's Councils. These opportunities to listen and learn from you are vital to my work as your National Chief.

Our budget advocacy for 2019 was launched in August and we continue to press for much-needed investments to close the gap, investments that will benefit everyone.

Over the past four years, the AFN's budget advocacy has generated significant increases in investments in First Nations by the federal government. Through our collective work with First Nations, we have made some significant gains.

- We have secured \$17 billion in federal funding, over three consecutive budgets, directed to critical First Nations priorities, such as education, infrastructure, housing and health and child welfare.
- We have opened up opportunities for new fiscal relations that will support long term funding and planning directed by First Nations governments.
- First Nations now can carry over funding from one year to the next.

But this progress does not equal parity!

There are still funding gaps of real significance and the huge gap in living standards between First Nations people and Canadians. They are the result of decades upon decades of violations of First Nations rights and human rights and chronic underfunding of essential services like water, sanitation, education, child welfare, and health care including mental health.

We will pursue new initiatives such as opening up opportunities to acknowledge First Nations gaming jurisdiction. We have been working on the first steps to advance Canada's commitment respecting a space dedicated to honour Indigenous peoples (the 100 Wellington Street building and related properties). This includes working with the Algonquin Common Table.

Throughout the past year I have had the pleasure of meeting many of you in your territories—in meetings, gatherings and in ceremony. Everywhere I go, I see First Nations resolving to break through the

# National Chief Perry Bellegarde

*Assembly of First Nations*

challenges facing their people and Nations. I know each of you work every day to secure a better future for our children and the generations to come. We are active—revitalizing our languages, taking control of the education and well-being of our children, and restoring our own laws and systems of governance.

In all of this, we are guided by the teachings and protocols of our Elders and ancestors.





## Regional Chief Kluane Adamek

Yukon

Dànnch'e,

On behalf of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Yukon Region, I offer a warm greeting to all the Elders, Veterans, Chiefs, Leaders, Youth and delegates attending the Special Chiefs Assembly. Thank you to the Algonquin Nation for welcoming us on their traditional territory, and to the AFN National Office for hosting us this year.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Yukon First Nations, Elders and Youth for the support I have received over the last year. It is with their knowledge and guidance that our region can move forward and be successful. It is so important that we ensure that our Women, Youth and Elders' voices are included in all the work we do, and I will continue to press for meaningful and active participation of these voices in our work as a member of the AFN National Executive Committee and within our AFN Yukon Regional Office.

Through unity, we find strength.

### Regional Update

I am currently responsible for the following AFN Portfolios:

- Co-chair, Advisory Committee on Climate Action and the Environment
- Management Committee
- Mental Wellness
- Modern Treaties
- National Youth Council

### KEY ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In June 2018, I was acclaimed as Regional Chief and sworn-in to a three-year term. Since then, I have been working closely with the Yukon First Nations to support the advancement of the Yukon First Nation interests at a national level, at their direction.

To complement these ongoing efforts and ensure the Yukon First Nations receive timely information on federal legislative issues that impact them, the AFN Yukon Regional Office has been utilizing our website, information bulletins and social media to keep First Nations and citizens informed of our work, as well as national initiatives. A number of key resources, including our language and rights recognition framework discussion papers, are available on our website at: <http://afnyukon.ca/resources>.

Over the last five months, the Yukon First Nations leadership has participated in, and contributed to, a number of strategic planning sessions. These sessions have been focused on engagement for a number of federal legislation initiatives and the AFN National Office updates for our Yukon Chiefs.

### Indigenous Languages Act Engagements

Canadian Heritage hosted nationwide engagements on their proposed Indigenous Languages Act this summer and early fall. By way of resolution, our office was directed to support the Yukon First Nations in preparation for the Yukon engagement session, and liaise with the federal government to ensure the session was reflective of our unique regional context.

Part of the preparation for our region included the completion of a languages survey and the development

of a discussion paper including legal considerations regarding the proposed federal Indigenous Languages Act. Going into the federal engagement session it became clear that languages are in a critical state and immediate resources are needed at the First Nations level to revitalize languages. On August 22, 2018, we hosted a pre-engagement session for the Yukon First Nations, at which a number of key considerations were identified:

- Languages funding should be at *minimum* comparable to resources Canada provides for the French language.
- Investments should flow to First Nations directly.
- Support for ongoing analyses of this legislation may be needed.
- Legislation must be compatible with self-government agreements and existing fiscal relationships.
- Participation in the engagement should not be misconstrued as consultation.

These messages were well articulated and reiterated by participants in the September 5, 2018, engagement session with the federal government.

The discussion papers we developed, leading up to the engagement session, can be found on our website at: <http://afnyukon.ca/resources/indigenous-languages-act/>.

## Energy, Mines and Resources, Ministerial Meeting

On August 12 and 13, 2018, I attended the Energy and Mines Minister's Conference (EMMC) on behalf of the AFN. The conference centered on the theme of connecting First Nations to resources: clean, reliable, and affordable energy in northern, remote, isolated First Nations; northern women and youth in natural resource development; and partnerships with Indigenous peoples. In my message to the ministers, I called for First Nations rights to be fully respected,

and for First Nations to be full partners in energy and natural resources planning.

## Pre-Budget Consultation Hearings, Budget 2019

On October 17, 2018, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance was in Whitehorse leading pre-budget consultations. The committee holds pre-budget consultations every year to inform a report on budget priorities, which Canada's finance department takes into account when finalizing the budget. Four Yukon First Nations Chiefs presented before the committee.

Key priorities raised included:

- Confirming a process and timeline for Treaty loan forgiveness and reimbursement.
- Immediate and adequate funding to support First Nations in language revitalization.
- Moving forward on tax sharing agreements.
- Ensuring Budget 2019 is compatible with new principles established at fiscal policy tables.

## Status of Women Ministers Meeting

The Yukon welcomed the Status of Women Federal, Provincial and Territorial ministers from across the country the week of October 15, 2018. National Indigenous Organization leaders met with the ministers to discuss the safety of Indigenous women and girls. I was honoured to speak on behalf of the AFN and was pleased to join our federal counterparts in my home region of the Yukon Territory. I urged ministers to work collaboratively with First Nations to create conditions that ensure every First Nations woman and girl feels safe and secure. Doing so will create the foundation for our First Nations to be safe and for our First Nations to thrive and grow.

## 2018 AFN National Housing and Infrastructure Forum

This AFN forum provided First Nations with the opportunity to learn more about the AFN's proposed national housing and infrastructure strategy, gain an



understanding of the housing situation across the country, and share best practices.

On Tuesday, October 30, 2018, all regions provided an overview and current status on housing. Naa Sháade Háni (Chief) Richard Sidney, with the Teslin Tlingit Council, provided the Yukon regional update and highlighted statistics, the unique realities of housing in the North, key considerations from the region for addressing current challenges with housing programs, and examples of community-led solutions. A copy of the presentation is available on our website at: <http://afnyukon.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/2018-10-30-PPT-National-Housing-Forum-Yukon-Update.pdf>.

The Yukon and the NWT delegation caucused on October 31, 2018, to draw out priority issues specifically around the proposed First Nations housing strategy that the AFN is developing, and improvements needed for national housing programs. Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Chief Roberta Joseph, Tlicho Grand Chief George Mackenzie, and Sahtu Grand Chief Wilfred McNeely participated on a panel sharing our unique northern perspectives on housing at the forum on November 1, 2018.

## AFN Yukon Chiefs Summits

We held a brief AFN Yukon Chiefs Summit on September 27, 2018, to share updates from the Indigenous Languages Act pre-engagement sessions and the September 5, 2018, federal engagement session. Updates were also shared on the federal government's Recognition and Implementation of Indigenous Rights Framework (RIIRF) including the discussion paper the AFN Yukon Region developed providing a Yukon and self-government perspective to the proposed RIIRF, available on our website at: <http://afnyukon.ca/resources/rights-recognition-framework>.

On November 20, 2018, we hosted a Yukon Chiefs Information Summit which focused on the proposed National Housing Strategy and data collection project, the proposed federal Child Welfare legislation and Indigenous Languages Act, Early Learning and Child Care funding, and updates on the AFN Special Chiefs

Assembly. We look forward to our upcoming regional events including a regional climate change roundtable, and health engagement session to take place in the New Year.

## LOOKING AHEAD

The Yukon First Nations continue to be supportive of advancing our interests nationally. We will continue to advocate and address issues impacting those off-reserve and in our northern regions. Federal policies, processes and the AFN activities must reflect the unique needs of northerners and respect land claims and self-government agreements. With 11 First Nations governments in the Yukon, we represent one of the largest modern Treaty regions. We have a lot to share about the modern Treaty process, and our experiences with implementing our agreements.

Moving forward, the AFN Yukon Regional Office will continue to support the Yukon First Nations by continuing to advocate for equitable funding and programming for the north to ensure the health and well-being of our people. With the support of the National Chief, National Executive Committee and the Assembly of First Nations, these issues can continue to be supported, addressed and acknowledged on a national level, at the direction of the Yukon First Nations.

While much work remains to be done, I am proud of our recent accomplishments and contributions to the AFN national table. I look forward to my continued work with the Yukon First Nations and with the First Nations from coast-to-coast-to-coast, continuing to advance the interests of our peoples, at their direction.

I look forward to a successful and productive Special Chiefs Assembly. Wishing you and yours a safe and happy holiday season.

Gunalchéesh, Shawníthan, Mussi Cho

Kluane Adamek

"Aagé"

AFN Yukon Regional Chief



## Regional Chief RoseAnne Archibald

Ontario

Wahcheeyay, Aanii. On behalf of the Chiefs in the Ontario region, I am pleased to provide an update on my activities since my election.

On June 27, 2018, I began my three-year term as Ontario Regional Chief (ORC), and I'm honoured to represent the Chiefs from 133 First Nations Territories within the boundaries of Ontario. Ours is a diverse region with many Nations at our table which include the Anishinabek, Mushkwogowuk, Onkwehonne and Lenape Peoples. We have four Political Territorial Organizations (PTOs) who represent First Nations with both pre-Confederation Treaties and numbered Treaties. We also have 17 Tribal Councils, a number of Independent First Nations (IFN) and many First Nation related organizations that serve our people. It takes a great team to manage the issues of our region and I want to acknowledge the Chiefs of Ontario (COO) staff who assist me in fulfilling my duties.

Over the past five months, work has been done on a number of priority items including: an interim distribution formula for disbursing the Child Welfare Immediate Relief Prevention funding; assisting First Nations prepare for the implementation of Cannabis Legislation; the federal Recognition and Implementation of Indigenous Rights Framework Legislation; the Coroner's Report on Deaths of Children in Care; and initiating a strategic direction with the Political Confederacy.

In the current atmosphere, I have focused myself on a heart-centered approach to my responsibilities and have worked at embodying leadership that is grounded in love and care, as well as holding a space for respect in all of my interactions.

### Organizational Stability

As most of you know, this is a time of great transition and transformation in the Ontario Region. I inherited a large deficit and many human resource complications. First, let me say I commend the Board of Directors (Grand Chiefs of the PTOs) who have been very active and attentive to their duties, as well as the Senior Management Committee (Executive Directors of the PTOs and IFN) who have helped us adjust to the changes in front of us now and the shifts that are still to come.

My goal, once I assessed the state of the organization, was to stabilize and fix problems that were within my control as the ORC. Together with our Acting Chief Operating Officer, I worked closely with the Board and the Senior Management Committee to implement recommendations that would help us to rebuild our finances and meet our ongoing human resource needs. I acknowledge our main funding partners, Indigenous Services Canada and the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs who worked cooperatively with us to release all committed funding for this fiscal year. I'm grateful for their efforts as this helped us to keep moving forward so we could begin to restore credibility to the Chiefs of Ontario. As the ORC, I am leading by example as I operate my political office from a balanced budget position and we are in the midst of finalizing a longer-term debt recovery plan.

### Federal and Provincial Government Engagement

Since I have taken on my role as Ontario Regional Chief, we have seen a large political shift in the Ontario Region. In June 2018, the Progressive Conservatives took 76 seats in the Legislature, resulting in a sizeable majority. A summer legislative session was called and

many Bills were passed to demonstrate that their campaign promises were not just promises, but would become the priorities of their provincial governance. During this time, First Nations leadership were left with much uncertainty as offices were left insufficiently staffed for quite some time, resulting in a halt of business, in addition to the uncertainty left by Ontario's dire fiscal circumstances.

During this time, I have taken the approach of understanding the landscape, aligning regional priorities with mutual priorities, and infusing principle based approaches to relationship building. I truly believe we have to remember this is a marathon, not a sprint—we have four years ahead of us with the Progressive Conservatives, potentially longer if another election is won. During all of my meetings and phone calls with the newly elected government I have made it clear that I will be a partner in coming to mutually beneficial solutions to common concerns based on a recognition of Treaty rights as the First Peoples of this land, and the moment that relationship is not respected, I will be clear in letting them know our opposition. However, I have made close relationships with many Ministers, both federally and provincially. In particular, I have spoken on the phone and texted with Minister Rickford, Minister Philpott, Minister Bennett and Premier Ford on multiple occasions, in addition to the chart below.

Overall, we are at the very beginning of engaging the Ontario Progressive Conservative government and I am hopeful that we can transform the traditional relationship between First Nations and Progressive Conservatives into one that is constructive and mutually beneficial.

## Highlights of Meetings

The chart below represents only a portion of the meetings that I've attended since my election. I chose to highlight these meetings as they represent the priorities that I've set as ORC, particularly with my focus on strengthening First Nations.

### Chiefs, First Nations and Related Organizations

Date	Event/Meeting	Purpose/Agenda Items
July 9	Conference Call Chief Duncan Michano, Biigtigong	Justice
July 11	Sioux Lookout Area Aboriginal Management Board (SLAAMB) Chiefs meeting, Sioux Lookout	Employment and Training
July 18	Political Confederacy (PC) Conference Call	Child Welfare Immediate Relief Prevention formula
July 18	Youth Chief – Lance Copegog	Ontario First Nations Young Peoples Council (OFNYPC)
July 22	AFN Executive Committee Meeting	Annual General Assembly Agenda/Financial
July 24	Meeting with Robinson Huron Treaty (RHT)	Briefing on RHT Court Case
Aug 2	Anishinabek Deputy Grand Council Chief Joe Miskokomon	Economic Development Update
Aug 2	AFN Executive Conference Call	Financial
Aug 9	Wiikwemkoong Youth Conference	Keynote Address to Youth and Elders
Aug 9	Mnidoo Mnising Tribal Council Meeting	Listen to Priorities and Concerns /Update
Aug 9	Call with Chief Clifford Bull, Lac Seul First Nation	Provincial Government Engagement

# Regional Chief RoseAnne Archibald

Ontario

Date	Event/Meeting	Purpose/Agenda Items
Aug 10	Chief Valerie Richer, Atikameksheng Anishnawbek First Nation	Community Visit
Aug 13	Missanabie Cree First Nation	Land Claim Settlement Celebration
Aug 14	Chief Dean Sayers, Batchewana First Nation	Community Visit
Aug 14	Chief Paul Syrette, Garden River First Nation	Community Visit
Aug 15	Chief Ed Boulrice, Thessalon First Nation	Community Visit
Aug 16	Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Keeywaywin Conference	Update to Chiefs
Aug 23	Call with Deputy Grand Chief Gord Peters	OI Leasing update
Aug 28	Chief Scott McLeod, Nipissing First Nation	Health
Aug 28	Elder Dot Beaucage	Elder concern meeting
Aug 30	Call with Chief Pamadjiwan, Shawanaga First Nation	Minister Rickford
Sept 6	Political Confederacy Conference Call with Minister Caroline Mulroney, Minister Vic Fideli, Minister Greg Rickford	Cannabis Legislation
Sept 10	Lake Huron Fisheries Governance Forum	Opening Address
Sept 10	AFN Executive Committee Conference Call	Federal Minister update/Financial
Sept 11	Political Confederacy Conference Call	Prepare for Retreat
Sept 11-12	AFN Rights Recognition Framework (RRF) Forum	Hold National Discussion on the RRF
Sept 13	Lunch with National Chief Perry Bellegarde, Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler, Chief Harper, Chief Monague	Community Concerns
Sept 19	Call with Pat Mahdahbee	New sports body
Sept 19-20	AFN Executive Committee Meeting	Meetings with Federal Ministers
Sept 26	Chief Scott McLeod, Nipissing First Nation	ACE/JCCA
Sept 28	Chief Rudy Turtle, Grassy Narrows First Nation	Mercury Disability Fund Announcement
Sept 28	Chief Lorraine Copenace, Dalles First Nation	Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation Announcement
Oct 1	Political Confederacy Conference Call	Preparatory Call on Child Welfare
Oct 2	Meeting with Ogimaa Duke Peltier	Challenge4Change
Oct 10	Call with Chief Elaine Johnston, Serpent River First Nation	Child Mental Health
Oct 12	Conference call with Independent First Nations	Update on my Activities
Oct 15-16	COO PC retreat	Strategic Direction
Oct 17	Meeting with Chief Janice Henderson, Minister Greg Rickford, Minister Jeff Yurek	Community Concerns
Oct 19	Jason Batise, Wabun Tribal Council	Tribal Council concerns
Oct 23	Native Child Family Services Conference	Keynote Address
Oct 23	Chief Linda Debassige, Wes Bova meeting	Defining Roles and Responsibilities
Oct 24	Meeting Ontario First Nations Technical Services Corporation with Kent Elson	Ontario First Nations Policing Agreement (OFNPA)
Oct 25	Meeting with Chief Myeengun Henry, Chippewas of the Thames First Nation	Aboriginal Sport Wellness Circle Ontario (ASWCO)
Oct 25	Vigil for Steve Fobister Sr.	Acknowledging Steve's Life and Work



# Regional Chief RoseAnne Archibald

Ontario

Date	Event/Meeting	Purpose/Agenda Items
Nov 2	Conference call Robinson Huron Treaty	Update, Briefing and Request for Action
Oct 29	AFN Executive Committee Meeting	Portfolios and Committees
Nov 9	Speak at Omushkegowuk Mamaowheetoowin	Update Chiefs on Activities
Nov 11	Remembrance Day Ceremony in Cochrane	Laying Wreath on Behalf of COO
Nov 13	NAN Assembly	Update Chiefs on activities
Nov 13	Meeting with Chief Theresa Nelson, Animbiigoo Zaagi'igan Anishinaabek	Community concerns
Nov 15	Anishinabek Assembly	Update Chiefs on activities
Nov 16	Indigenous Women's Leadership	Chiefs Panel

## Federal and Provincial Government Relations

Date	Event/Meeting	Purpose/Agenda Items
June 29	Premier Ford's Swearing-in Ceremony	Provincial Government Engagement
July 9	Meeting with Minister of Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) Jane Philpott	Federal engagement - Child Welfare
July 12	Ontario Government Throne Speech and Meeting with Lieutenant Governor Elizabeth Dowdeswell (ON)	Provincial Government Engagement & Introductory Meeting with Lieutenant Governor
July 18	Call from Minister of Indigenous Affairs Ontario (IAO) Greg Rickford	Relationship Building - Initial Call
Aug 2	Meeting with Regional Director General (RDG) Anne Scotten (ISC)	Financial Stability
Aug 7	Call with Ontario Minister of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) Lisa MacLeod	Introduction/Social Assistance Reform
Aug 7	Call with Ontario Minister of Education Lisa Thompson	Introduction/Indigenous Curriculum Writing Sessions
Aug 8	Meeting with Deputy Minister (DM) Deborah Richardson (IAO)	Overall Health of Organization
Aug 21	Association of Municipalities of Ontario Conference	Keynote Address
Aug 22	Meeting with DM Richardson (IAO)	Follow-up to Initial Meeting
Aug 27	Meeting with RDG Anne Scotton (ISC)	Follow-up to Initial Meeting
Aug 30	Meeting with Deputy Premier Christine Elliot, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC ON)	Relationship Building - Health Issues
Sept 18	Call with Minister Rickford (IAO)	Relationship Building - Preparatory call for Community Visits to GCT3 Area
Sept 19	Meeting with Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations (CIR) Carolyn Bennett	Relationship Building - Ontario's Position on Rights Recognition Framework
Sept 26	Dinner Meeting with Paul Martin	His Foundation's Work in Education
Oct 1	Lunch Meeting with Minister of Government and Consumer Services (GSC ON) Todd Smith and Chief Government Whip Bill Walker	Relationship Building / Caucus Advocacy Strategies

# Regional Chief RoseAnne Archibald

Ontario

Date	Event/Meeting	Purpose/Agenda Items
Oct 1	Meeting with Ontario Minister of Finance Vic Fedeli	Relationship Building – Infrastructure, Resource Revenue Sharing
Oct 1	Meeting with Ontario Minister of Transportation John Yakabuski	Relationship Building – Procurement
Oct 1	Meeting with Ontario Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry Jeff Yurek	Relationship Building – First Nation Concerns re: MNRF (Ogimaa Peltier)
Oct 1	Meeting with Ontario Education Minister Lisa Thompson	Curriculum Writing Sessions
Oct 1	Meeting with Ontario Premier Doug Ford	Relationship Building - Economy Building
Oct 1	Meeting with Minister Lisa MacLeod (MCCSS) and Political Confederacy	Coroner's Report / Recommendations on Deaths of Children in Child Welfare System
Oct 11	Call from Ontario Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks Rod Philips	Relationship building – EA Process
Oct 11	Call from Minister Philpott (ISC)	Child Welfare Funding Formula/Legislation
Oct 23	Her Majesty's Official Opposition Leader Andrea Horwath, MPP Sol Mamakwa and MPP Michael Mantha (NDP)	Relationship building – Discussion on Potential areas of Collaboration
Oct 25	Green Party Leader Mike Schreiner	Relationship Building – Discussion on Potential Areas of Collaboration
Oct 25	Meeting with Anne Scotton and Garry Best (SC)	Relationship building – Health and other Ongoing Discussions with RDG
Nov 1	Call from Minister Philpott (ISC)	Child Welfare Legislation
Nov 16	Conversation with Minister Bennett (CIR)	Follow-up to our Initial Meeting/Rights Recognition Framework
Nov 16	Conversation with Minister MacLeod (MCCSS)	Follow-up to our October Meeting
Nov 18	Call with Premier Doug Ford	Creating Positive Relations with First Nations, Prosperity and Wealth Building for First Nations

## Conclusion

The last five months have been very busy and productive. With the assistance of a great team and the support of all of the leadership in Ontario, we've stabilized the Chiefs of Ontario organization—yet there is still much work to do as we undertake the restructuring process.

I'm looking forward to my new AFN duties under housing/infrastructure/water, education, the AFN Women's Council and the Management Committee. On national issues, my aim will be to ensure that Ontario's views are expressed while building positive relations with my fellow Regional Chiefs. Through this method, we will find ways that we can support each other and move forward together in a good way.

Ninaskamon!

Wishing you Peace beyond all understanding.

Ontario Regional Chief RoseAnne Archibald



## Regional Chief Roger Augustine

*New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island*

On behalf of the Mi'gmaq and Wolastoqey First Nations of New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, I would like to welcome all of you to the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Special Chiefs Assembly.

As Chair of the Management Committee and Co-Chair of the Fisheries Committee, I am constantly reminded of the tireless efforts of our leadership both nationally and regionally and wish to express my sincere appreciation to those behind the scenes who selflessly and tirelessly ensure a smooth and transparent operation.

### **Fisheries**

Regionally, we are experiencing an ever-increasing cohesiveness between First Nations as our inherent Treaty rights gain recognition and respect at all levels. The Aboriginal Aquatic Resource and Oceans Management (AAROM) program is making efforts to incorporate "Indigenous Knowledge" into all of its programs and research. This is a key point for our fight for inclusiveness and possible future funding, and is important given that it is identified in proposed legislation (Bill C-68 Fisheries Act and Bill C-69 Impact Assessment Act).

Other issues at the forefront include the Treaty right to earn a moderate livelihood, oceans management, invasive species and species at risk. These are key priorities as identified by our leadership. We must be included in all working groups with provincial and federal governments to facilitate more meaningful and trusting relationships.

Salmon populations are a concern in the Atlantic region. Our First Nations partners are willing to work with concerned departments to address this urgent

matter. As we are the true guardians of the lands and waters, we believe our knowledge and respect for future generations are vital in working towards a resolution. Too much emphasis is being placed on the more lucrative shellfish industry. If we do not address problem areas simultaneously, this resource will end up in jeopardy as well. Our local partners (Anqotom Resource Management) have been playing an integral role and are a key resource for outside agencies.

### **Economic Development**

The AFN regional office is fostering a relationship with the provincial Joint Economic Development Initiative (JEDI) which is dedicated to working with partners to foster Indigenous economic development in New Brunswick. This program has grown in leaps and bounds and promises a hopeful future for those who participate. Training, counselling and skills development with a culturally-based mandate are very unique and foster a keen interest from our young people. It is anticipated that we will be partnering with New Brunswick Community College to determine the feasibility of an Aboriginal college.

### **Mental Wellness**

Gitpo Spirit Lodge is a concept by AFN Regional Chief Roger Augustine. The plan is to develop a national men's wellness facility with locations serving the Atlantic, Western and Pacific regions.

Many of our men (young and old) have lived with various issues that affect their ability to function in their own First Nations. We have members nationwide that work, or have served, in the armed forces, corrections, policing, and social work, etc. Customarily, a man is seen as a strong role model and it is frowned upon

# Regional Chief Roger Augustine

*New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island*

to seek assistance for illnesses/issues that have developed over prolonged exposure to violence, death, divorce, prejudice or even having to enforce laws and policy against your own people. As a result, men have turned to drugs and alcohol as a vice to cope with the stressors. Treatment centres have been developed over the years but are limited to addressing the use and abuse of drugs and alcohol. Gitpo Spirit Lodge will strive to help the individual regain pride in his language and culture and see how it is the foundation from which we gather our strength, first as an individual and as a First Nations member.

The program will address the needs of First Nations men in our regions who are dealing with issues varying from personal family matters (relationships, finances, etc.) to mental health issues (post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression, etc.). The aim is to focus on the need of the individual and develop a custom program to assist them in becoming productive members of their First Nations and families. Regardless of which program they participate in, culture and language are a main priority. Men will be exposed daily to sweat lodge ceremonies, smudging, drumming and language under the guidance of an Elder.

It is based on these principles that this concept gained the full support of the AFN Chiefs-in-Assembly at an Assembly in Gatineau, Quebec in 2018. Understanding, of course, that women are the backbone of our First Nations and families, many of their issues stem from unresolved and unaddressed matters amongst the male population. The rates of suicide and substance abuse among our youth (18-35) are staggering and need to be addressed before our youth are forced into the judicial system and removed from their families and First Nations, many never to return.

We have assembled a team of professionals in the fields of psychology, mental health, law enforcement, sports and nutrition, life skills, and language and culture. Through the unmeasurable combined experience of this team, we will be able to address these issues and

prevent our youth from ever experiencing the trauma of a system unprepared to effectively deal with our people. Subsequently, through these wellness facilities we will see our youth gain the skills and confidence to return to the work force or school and to be looked at as role models by their children and families while passing on their newly revived respect for their language and culture.

## **Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls**

Recently, this issue has hit close to home. Historically, our people have been affected in the western part of the country. A couple of instances that have occurred in our region bring great attention to the fact that the justice system and perhaps our own systems are lacking in addressing issues that force our young people to look outside of our First Nations for support and comfort. The regional office is currently in discussions with local police forces and the RCMP not only to ensure the dignity of the victims and families are respected, but to address issues in our region to ensure this will not be an ongoing concern.

I believe the aforementioned programs will assist in our efforts and increase opportunities to deal with matters that lead to these unfortunate circumstances. Support at the national level for our continued efforts to address these priorities will go a long way.

Thank you all for the support to the national leadership, for your support to each other and your support of me. We have seen what we can accomplish when we soar in unity. We are excited about where our rejuvenated energy is leading us and look forward to many great things to come.

Best wishes from our family to yours for a safe and happy holiday season.

In peace and friendship,

Regional Chief Roger Augustine





## Regional Chief Bobby Cameron

*Saskatchewan*

As a member of Witchehan Lake First Nation in Saskatchewan, I've spent many years advocating for the exercise, implementation and protection of First Nations culture, language and identity. These things matter to our people and are integral to the health of our First Nations. In the same way, our youth and children matter; they are invaluable. As First Nations people, we must always be mindful that we speak for those future generations. As well, we must remember that the voice of our ancestors runs through us.

Relationship building and partnerships—through intergovernmental affairs and communication throughout our traditional and ancestral lands and in Ottawa—are fundamental to achieving a mandate that is inclusive to all. First Nations leadership has an important role: advocacy, building a foundation of mutual respect, and remembering that Inherent and Treaty rights are first and foremost.

On behalf of the 74 Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN) Chiefs-in-Assembly and the FSIN Executive, it is my honour to contribute to the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) 2018 Special Chiefs Assembly Executive Report. I was recently re-elected by the FSIN Chiefs in Assembly on October 25, 2018, to represent the First Nations and citizens as Chief of FSIN and the AFN Regional Chief. As this is my second term as Chief of the FSIN, I have a strong understanding and awareness of the challenges facing First Nations leaders as we address the needs of our membership and continue to exercise our sovereignty.

The following highlights key issues and activities since the July 2018 AFN Annual General Assembly in Vancouver (the report includes some earlier highlights but excludes the latter half of September–October due to the FSIN Elections and Legislative Assembly in October).

## KEY ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### Community/Grassroots Engagement

Throughout the year, the FSIN Executive makes First Nations visits throughout the Treaty territories. In keeping with relationship building and maintaining strong ties to each of our First Nations, the FSIN Executive is currently working on communication protocols that will enhance the voices of the Dene, Saulteaux, Nakota, Dakota, Lakota, and Cree people that we serve.

In the Treaty 6 and Treaty 8 territories we had the opportunity to honour the grassroots people including their leadership. Red Earth Cree Nation, Pelican Lake First Nation, Thunderchild First Nation and Beardsy's & Okemasis all held cultural gatherings—keeping with their cultural and traditional practices—bringing together community membership and sharing their respective traditional knowledge. The Treaty 10 gathering in English River Dene Nation raised their flag for the first time in late July with the FSIN in attendance, and second day activities focused on land and resources.

The Annual Woodland Cree Gathering was hosted by Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation in early August in the First Nation of Pelican Narrows, the second largest First Nation in Saskatchewan.

In August 2018, the Montreal Lake Cree Nation holds their Molonosa Cultural Days. At this event, First Nations citizens have an opportunity to be part of traditional knowledge practices, and to remember the collective history of those that have since come and gone. It is a chance to engage in these important activities—to share our history, stories, language and ways of knowing—so we do not lose what makes each

and every First Nation unique. By practicing our culture and speaking our languages, we are asserting our Inherent rights and we are living Treaty.

This does not represent a complete list of Saskatchewan First Nations gatherings; we attend and celebrate events whenever scheduling permits.

### **Child Welfare**

FSIN is hosting a Special Chiefs Assembly on Child Welfare Legislation on November 28, 2018, in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. The Saskatchewan position paper will be presented at this Special Chiefs Assembly on Child Welfare in order to have a collective voice from First Nations in Saskatchewan. The Saskatchewan position intends to support a unified form of legislation for First Nations child welfare services that involve prevention that is case specific and community-based, land-based programming and programs where service delivery needs are identified and provided to First Nations living on- and off-reserve.

The FSIN Health and Social Development Commission (HSDC) passed a motion to be taken to the Special Chiefs Assembly, in December 2018, on Child Welfare that highlighted critical tools for First Nations Child Welfare Legislation including: placement priority in kinship, full faith/credit for First Nations laws and policies, First Nations children should remain in First Nations systems, birth alerts to be avoided and tools and guiding principles to be built on existing self-government agreements that affirm treaties.

Having a clear and collective Saskatchewan position is even more vital as the number of children in care in Saskatchewan continues to grow—this year there are 5,227 children and the rate continues to increase by 3% each year.

### **Education Events/Accomplishments**

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the FSIN, the Saskatchewan School Boards Association, the Saskatchewan Indigenous Cultural Centre and the

Office of the Treaty Commissioner: “Reconciliation through Treaty Education”. This is an important milestone that “can be a vehicle to overcome obstacles that affect Treaty relations” and recognizes the need to bring Treaty awareness education to the province. Signed in February 2018, this creates the opportunity for meaningful dialogue for younger generations that need to be cognizant of Inherent and Treaty rights for First Nations people in this province.

After a long 20-year wait, the Fishing Lake First Nation and the FSIN had a sod-turning ceremony in May 2018; an important highlight as the original application for a school was submitted in 1998. The Fishing Lake First Nation exercised extraordinary perseverance to ensure that their children received a school. I was honoured to have been part of this historic celebration.

### **National Education Portfolio**

The AFN Education portfolio has seen great movement in the past two years, all of this work has been guided by the fundamental knowledge that First Nations have jurisdiction over education and lifelong learning is an Inherent and Treaty Right.

The two major areas we have been focused on include the Transformation of First Nations Education and Post-Secondary Education (PSE) Funding.

On February 28, 2018, the Memorandum to Cabinet (MC) on the Transformation of First Nations Education Funding (K-12) was presented and approved by Cabinet. Following a year long engagement process that began with AFN Resolution 16/2016, which mandated the development of a Joint Honourable Process to develop Recommendations to support First Nations Education Reform this process resulted in an intensive year long engagement through Joint Task Teams on education, Regional Engagements and Leadership Dialogues, before the co-developed draft policy went to the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Chiefs-in-Assembly via Resolution 26/2017. These federal funds under the MC set aside in the 2016 federal budget were earmarked

for “Transforming First Nations Education,” to the amount of approximately \$665 million. The MC provides the opportunity for First Nations to develop their own regional funding agreement on education. The First Nations have stated that this funding must be Treaty and Inherent-based and amounts must be based on need. There are two ways First Nations can access these funds: 1) Regional Education Agreements (REAs), and 2) Interim Funding Formula. If a First Nation does not develop an REA, funding will flow through the Interim Funding Formula. We have had Education Engagements to inform First Nations of the MC and what is required of them to receive their funding.

The FSIN Education & Training Secretariat will not be involved in discussions and negotiations on REAs (unless requested by First Nations leadership). The FSIN Education & Training Secretariat will continue to support Saskatchewan First Nations in pursuing their vision of First Nations control of First Nations Education, and we will continue to advocate for secure, fair funding for First Nations children and students.

In November 2017, January 2018, and March 2018, the Post-Secondary Review Group met to discuss recommendations to reform First Nations Post-Secondary Education. First Nations facilitators lead the review process and developed a report. Once the review concluded, the Chiefs-in-Assembly passed a resolution to accept the PSE Review Interim Report. The resolution further mandated the AFN Education Sector, the Chiefs Committee on Education (CCOE) and the National Indian Education Council (NIEC) to work in partnership with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) to develop a joint process that would enable the development of PSE funding models. The co-development work is being done by the NIEC representatives, the AFN and ISC to develop a draft PSE policy. The draft PSE policy proposal has been distributed widely to First Nations for feedback and will go through the AFN approval process, including the CCOE, and the AFN Executive Committee before finally going to the AFN Chiefs-in Assembly via Resolution. The FSIN Education & Training Secretariat

will distribute the draft Policy Proposal and timelines across the First Nations for their feedback.

### First Nation Inherent and Treaty Rights

On November 8, 2018, the Supreme Court of Canada dismissed an appeal by the Government of Saskatchewan which sought to apply *Wildlife Act* charges against Kristjan Pierone for hunting without a license and hunting outside of the moose hunting season. Mr. Pierone is originally from Treaty 5 territory in Manitoba. Mr. Pierone’s charges were dismissed by the Provincial Court. The Saskatchewan Court of Queen’s Bench reinstated the charge and entered a conviction against Mr. Pierone, which was later overturned by the Saskatchewan’s Court of Appeal.

The Supreme Court then declined to hear the appeal; as I have maintained throughout my leadership, we as First Nations people have known all along, since time immemorial that our Inherent and Treaty rights are of international law, and trump provincial law. Kisiskatchewanipi has a long, complicated, difficult history with respect to Treaty relations and has fought numerous battles during this time to ensure that our Inherent and Treaty rights are recognized.

This is a historic win for our Inherent and Treaty Right holders; not just for our region but across Turtle Island.

### Housing

On September 28 and 29, 2017, the FSIN held a Housing Engagement Forum to begin the process of researching alternative models of housing programs and service delivery on-reserve with the goal of increasing First Nations control of housing. The Chiefs-in-Assembly passed a resolution in 2017 directing the Portfolio Holder to develop a strategy implementing the Treaty right to shelter. This political strategy and plan would utilize existing resources to give First Nations in Saskatchewan control over the design, delivery and control of First Nations Housing.

## **Natural Resource Transfer Agreement**

The AFN hosted a meeting with representatives from all the Prairie Provinces to talk about a strategy to challenge the Natural Resources Transfer Agreement (NRTA) in April 2018, in Winnipeg. A follow-up meeting was organized by the FSIN on May 5, 2018, in Gatineau. Representatives from all the Prairie Provinces agree that they must work together on a legal and political strategy and recommended that Saskatchewan host the next NRTA forum. The FSIN Lands and Resources Commission passed a resolution that the Prince Albert Grand Council (PAGC) would take the lead in organizing and hosting the NRTA Forum. PAGC has held planning sessions and is working with FSIN on setting a date for the forum. The goal of the forum is to bring together legal experts and representatives to develop a strategy moving forward.

Our leaders and our First Nations look to our Assembly of First Nations to advocate and facilitate when they are needed; it is through our leaders that we take direction as the AFN Executive Committee. I look forward to continuing to come together, to share concerns, address issues and in unity to be effective in our work for our Nations, our communities and our future generations.

We extend our sincere best wishes to all Chiefs and Councils, Elders, Veterans, Youth and citizens of our First Nations for better times ahead of us all.

Hiy Hiy,

Regional Chief Bobby Cameron, FSIN  
Witchehen First Nation, Treaty No. 6 Territory





## Regional Chief Morley Googoo

*Nova Scotia and Newfoundland*

Welcome to the December Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Special Chiefs Assembly! I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all Chiefs and delegates to this event. The past few months have been a transitional time for my regional office.

I am pleased to announce that Rhonda Knockwood has joined my team as Chief of Staff. Rhonda is Cree from the Thunderchild First Nation. She was the former Chief of Staff for the BCAFN between 2003 and 2009 and has a long career working with First Nations organizations in British Columbia. She was the Director of Operations, Chief Negotiator and Political Advisor to the Yuułuꞵitꞵath Government (Ucluelet First Nation), a modern treaty government for the past three years. Rhonda just completed her MBA in Indigenous Business and Leadership at Simon Fraser University and is excited to rejoin her husband and grandchildren in Miꞵkmaq territory after three years away.

Shannon Monk has also joined my team as Senior Projects Advisor. Shannon is of Miꞵkmaq and European descent, and a member of the St. Theresa Point First Nation. Her academic accreditation includes a Bachelor of Arts in Native Studies and Bachelor of Education from Brandon University, and a Professional Masters in Public Administration with a focus on Indigenous Policy and Governance from Queen's University. Shannon's professional background is in education, working primarily with First Nations. She also worked with the AFN for six years as a First Nations Education Policy and Research Analyst and Community Liaison for Residential School Survivors (Alberta, Ontario, Manitoba, Northwest Territories, and Yukon). Shannon led the development of the AFN's *It's Our Time* First Nations Tool Kit and continues to support the work with Apple Canada to implement the Tool Kit into all schools.

Lastly, I would like to mention that Cheryl Gehue-Copage has moved on to a new exciting career opportunity with the Halifax Regional Municipality as the Advisor, Indigenous Community Engagement, Diversity and Inclusion. I wish her success and am excited to continue working with Cheryl in her new capacity.

I am pleased to continue my work within the following national portfolios:

- Sport and Recreation: North American Indigenous Games
- Culture and Arts

Here is an overview of my portfolios and activities since the AFN Annual General Assembly in July.

### KEY ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

#### Engaging Nova Scotia

I have continued, in my capacity as Regional Chief, to work collaboratively with the Nova Scotia Tripartite Forum, Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs (APC), Kwiłmuꞵkw Maw-klusuaqn Negotiation Office (KMKNO), Miꞵkmaw Kinaꞵmatnewey (MK), Confederacy of Mainland Miꞵkmaq (CMM), and the Union of Nova Scotia Indians (UNSI) for the continued advancement of Miꞵkmaq rights and initiatives.

#### First Nations Self-Government Summit

In November, with financial contributions from Crown-Indigenous Relations Canada and Health Canada, the Regional Offices of Nova Scotia/Newfoundland and New Brunswick/Prince Edward Island hosted an Atlantic Region All Chiefs and Councils Summit to learn from leaders across the country about how they

# Regional Chief Morley Googoo

*Nova Scotia and Newfoundland*

are moving, or have moved, towards self-government. We were honoured to host the following distinguished speakers: National Chief Perry Bellegarde; former National Chiefs Georges Erasmus (NWT), Ovide Mercredi (Manitoba), and Matthew Coon Come (Quebec); former Premier Stephen Kakfwi (Northwest Territories); Chief Commissioner Celeste Haldane (BC Treaty Commission); Governance Toolkit Experts Tim Raybould and Kory Wilson (British Columbia); former Grand Chief Ruth Massie (Yukon); and John Jack and Les Doiron (Maa-nulth). Each provided their unique experience and words of wisdom regarding how to achieve self-determination. This event was a unique opportunity for Health Canada to facilitate a World Café event on the transformation of Health Canada into Indigenous Services Canada with the Atlantic Region's leadership. This session would be the building block for the region's strategic plan for community engagement.

## **Engaging Newfoundland**

I was pleased to attend the Qalipu Annual General Assembly and meet with the leadership. Congratulations to Chief Mitchell for his re-election. In our annual work plan, the regional office will be travelling quarterly to meet with the leadership throughout Newfoundland and develop a stronger relationship regionally and nationally.

## **Culture and Arts**

The Regional Office is working with Develop Nova Scotia, the crown corporation responsible for leading sustainable development of high potential property and infrastructure across Nova Scotia, with the view to drive inclusive economic growth in our province. Specifically, our office will provide advisory services for the integration of Mi'kmaq culture and arts on the waterfront. This is an exciting opportunity for our artists to showcase their work and I am excited to be part of this project.

## **Sport and Recreation: North American Indigenous Games**

The Regional Office supported Canada's Indigenous youth at the last North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) held in Toronto. During the event, Nova Scotia was selected as the site for the 2020 Games. As the AFN executive committee member appointed to NAIG, I will be assisting the regional committee in the planning, fundraising, and partnership development to make these Games a success.

## **Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Summer Games**

In August 2018, the Eskasoni First Nation hosted the Mi'kmaq Summer Games. These Games have been a tradition for the Mi'kmaw and support positive cultural identity for our youth and First Nations. Next year's Summer Games will be held in Waycobah First Nation and I look forward to working with my First Nation to host the event.

## **Regional Activities**

### **National Indigenous Drum and Dance Canadian Championship**

The Regional Office continues to work toward developing a national production that will capture the beauty, diversity and cultural pride of Indigenous Nations in Canada. The first-ever National Indigenous Drum and Dance Canadian Championship will be a premier showcase that will captivate and entertain while educating all people on the various cultures and traditions of Indigenous peoples in our beautiful country of Canada.

This period of reconciliation creates opportunities for partnerships for our Indigenous people and partners. Indigenous productions, films, broadcasters, performing arts, and First Nations can bring awareness, demonstrations, showcases, and premier performances to a space that has had a void for a very long time.

# Regional Chief Morley Googoo

*Nova Scotia and Newfoundland*

The National Indigenous Drum and Dance Canadian Championship will not only be a premier event, but a legacy piece for reconciliation as it brings tremendous pride, talent, awareness, and education to Indigenous peoples and Canadians of all ages, groups and backgrounds.

This championship event is planned to be hosted in Halifax, Nova Scotia, in December 2019. We will be working with drum and dance competitions across the country, so please stay tuned for local qualifiers and more information on this exciting event.

## **New Year's Eve Gala**

The Regional Office is working with colleagues to host a New Year's Eve Gala at the Membertou Trade and Convention Centre. This event will be a celebration in the spirit of reconciliation, peace, and friendship.

## **In Closing**

While my Regional Office and staff continue to develop our organizational capacity, I am excited for the many projects that we will work on, both regionally and nationally, and look forward to the year ahead.

Wela'lin (In the spirit of Peace and Friendship),

Regional Chief Morley Googoo  
Nova Scotia and Newfoundland



## Regional Chief Kevin Hart

*Manitoba*

Tansi. It is a privilege and honour to provide an update to you as Regional Chief of Manitoba for the Assembly of First Nations (AFN). I was re-elected in July 2018 as Regional Chief for the Manitoba Region with great support from our Manitoba Chiefs. The passion I show to my Chiefs is the same passion I use in my work each and every day to bring results and updates to the Chiefs-in-Assembly.

We have seen good solid investments in the region with health infrastructure projects being announced in Pimicikamak Cree Nation and Norway House Cree Nation and other related projects. Investments in infrastructure have included the recent announcement of much needed schools in northern and remote First Nations in the region.

New green energy projects have been announced and built in Fisher River Cree Nation with solar farms and other green projects being led by First Nations youth. By utilizing one of our most sacred gifts, the Sun, these First Nations are leading the way by example by participating in these green economies and having a direct positive impact on the environment as well.

One such example is the YouthBuild project on the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation that has given youth between the ages of 18-20 the opportunity to gain much needed skills development and training while obtaining high school credits and trades training. It has been so successful that this group of youth is now competing for requests for proposals and tenders in the northern region.

While more work needs to be done, I look forward to my continued work with Chiefs and leadership in the region on addressing the everyday bread and butter issues that affect First Nations.

## Housing

First Nations housing remains the most critical need in First Nations, as witnessed by leadership and delegates who attended the AFN National Housing and Infrastructure Forum & Trade Show that was held recently in Coast Salish territory in Vancouver, BC.

A special visitor from New Zealand, from our Maori relatives across the big waters, came and talked about Indigenous housing. Ms. Victoria King shared her stories and the struggles of Indigenous peoples from her traditional lands.

We heard from presenters with a wide range of expertise that helped expand our knowledge towards transitioning to First Nations control of housing and infrastructure. Participants shared their views on governance and delivery, current funding and financing, skills and capacity development, innovative solutions and the transition process.

During the three days, we worked on the task of improving the 'Draft 10-year First Nations National Housing and Related Infrastructure Strategy.' The draft strategy is the culmination of a lot of work involving input from First Nations across the country, from my colleagues on the AFN Executive Committee, AFN staff, and discussions with Indigenous housing experts.

As we chart our path forward together, I encourage each and every one of you to affirm and share the wisdom and culture of your ancestors. I ask this of you so that this Strategy reflects the knowledge, the culture, and the skills that enabled our ancestors to live and thrive across the numerous and varied environments that make up Turtle Island.



We know that what we live in, and how we live, are profoundly connected. Although First Nations across Canada will follow their own distinct paths to First Nations control of Housing and Infrastructure, it our collective voice on shared principles and values that will force the transformative change we know is needed.

My fellow Co-Chair of the AFN Chiefs Committee on Housing and Infrastructure, Chief Lance Haymond, will take the revised Strategy that came from the AFN Housing Forum to this Special Chiefs Assembly with a recommendation for its formal adoption.

### Habitat for Humanity

As First Nations advisor to the Board of Habitat for Humanity, I am proud to provide you with this update on Habitat for Humanity and its Indigenous Housing program. Having partnered with 34 Indigenous families both on- and off-reserve, Habitat for Humanity gave these families a life-changing opportunity to access affordable home ownership. An important part of their program is ensuring that home building and maintenance becomes a sustainable facet of Indigenous communities.

Habitat for Humanity's success to date has been built on respect and partnerships with First Nations across the country. They include the following milestones and projects;

1. Habitat for Humanity PEI signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Lennox Island First Nation. The first home will be built in 2019 with additional homes in 2020 and 2021.
2. Habitat Fredericton in partnership with Tobique First Nation is building their third home.
3. Habitat Moncton and Habitat Canada initiated discussions with three First Nations in New Brunswick to explore collaboration to build homes to provide affordable home ownership, while also providing skills training to women and youth.
4. Habitat affiliates in Ontario are working on three First Nations: Chippewa of Nawash (4 homes), Tyendinaga First Nation (2 homes), and Curve Lake First Nation (2 homes).
5. Habitat for Humanity Mid-Vancouver Island signed an MOU with Snuneymuxw First Nation and are exploring the building of multiple unit projects over three phases.
6. Habitat Manitoba has initiated discussions with several First Nations including Brokenhead Ojibway Nation and Peguis First Nation.
7. Habitat Regina is currently in discussions with First Nations in the region.
8. 100 women and youth received skills training in home building and home maintenance through Habitat.
9. Curve Lake First Nation youth travelled to Warsaw, Poland with Habitat to help frame homes.

### Water

I am happy to announce that I will be sharing the Water portfolio with Regional Chief RoseAnne Archibald and value the opportunity to gain input from our lifegivers and protectors of our circles. In moving forward I welcome the opportunity to share expertise and knowledge as we continue to ensure all First Nations have adequate safe drinking water.

On December 7, 2017, the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO) released the report "Budget Sufficiency for First Nations Water and Wastewater Infrastructure." The report stated that the "PBO has constructed a range of estimates of the cost of improving water and wastewater (W&WW) systems on First Nations to the point where residents can enjoy drinking water and wastewater services comparable to non-First Nations of comparable size, and which would eliminate long-term boil water advisories by 2020."

The important conclusion from the PBO report is that the "estimated capital and operating and maintenance (O&M) cost are considerably more than the actual and planned Aboriginal governments' funding for First

Nations W&WW infrastructure.” With respect to the O&M funding the government has also committed to review its O&M Policy with support from the AFN.

Looking ahead we remain hopeful that significant changes and appropriate resources will start to be realized as the plans to address Drinking Water Advisories are implemented and First Nations-led processes for safe water begins. First Nations have, for far too long, suffered from lack of safe drinking water and proper sanitation. It is time to reconcile this injustice and set the path forward and deliver on the commitment for provision of safe water for the next seven generations.

### **Infrastructure**

First Nations are witnessing the announcement of Infrastructure projects across the country, including health centres, schools and other much needed infrastructure, as we slowly play a game of catching up to Canada’s standards.

As First Nations, we are striving to work on systems that will improve access to infrastructure financing capital, encourage and promote innovations, develop standards, support local and regional capacity development, increase revenues available for all parts of the infrastructure cycle and provide insurance options to manage risks.

This better First Nations infrastructure system would reduce time and costs of infrastructure development, increase durability, improve health and social outcomes and support the growth of First Nations economies and revenues to build sustainable Nations.

I look forward to continued input from leadership sharing their concerns and best practices for what works and what doesn’t work in their First Nations.

### **Emergency Measures/Management**

This is a new portfolio that has been given to me by the National Chief. I look forward to the opportunity for dialogue with Chiefs, technicians and experts in the field.

Provision of emergency services to First Nations continues to be an ongoing issue. First Nations are affected by emergency events to a greater extent due to their remoteness, lack of critical security infrastructure, resources and capacity. There is a substantial disparity for First Nations under the four pillars of emergency management: mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery between First Nations and that of communities of similar size and circumstance throughout Canada.

### **Social Development**

#### **Child Welfare**

On January 25 and 26, 2018, the National Chief, the AFN Executive Committee and regional First Nations leadership, attended the Emergency Meeting on First Nations, Inuit and Métis Child and Family Services alongside Inuit and Métis partners. The leaders were joined by the Minister of Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) Jane Philpott, the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations Canada (CIRC) Carolyn Bennett, and provincial and territorial Ministers and Deputy Ministers of health, social services, children’s services, and Indigenous relations. Experts, practitioners, leaders, youth, Elders and grandmothers shared their experiences working with and being part of the child and family services system.

National Chief Perry Bellegarde and regional First Nations leadership called for reform of the child and family services system across all provinces and territories, with a focus on prevention, adequate funding, and acknowledging the inherent right and

jurisdiction of First Nations to provide care and protection for their children. The Interim Report of the National Advisory Committee on First Nations Child and Family Services (NAC) Program Reform informed part of the discussion on recommendations to forge the path towards these necessary changes. At the Emergency Meeting, Minister Philpott announced Canada's commitment to six points of action to address the overrepresentation of Indigenous children in care.

1. Continuing to implement the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT) orders, including Jordan's Principle, and reforming child and family services funding to a flexible funding model.
2. Working with partners to shift program focus to culturally-appropriate prevention, early intervention, and family reunification.
3. Working with partners to support communities to "draw down" jurisdiction over child and family services (including exploring the possibility of co-developing federal legislation).
4. Participating and accelerating the work of tripartite and technical tables.
5. Supporting Inuit and Métis leadership to advance reform on child and family services.
6. Creating a data strategy with provinces/territories and Indigenous partners.

There will be an update at this Special Chiefs Assembly regarding introducing Child Welfare legislation in the House of Commons that has been developed with input from Indigenous leadership from First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

## Jordan's Principle

Close to 900 leaders, delegates, experts and presenters gathered on Treaty 1 Territory in Winnipeg, Manitoba in September for the national Jordan's Principle Summit to discuss and honour the legacy that Jordan River Anderson left on this world.

Cindy Blackstock was our keynote speaker and through panels and breakout sessions delegates heard first-

hand from families who shared their experiences of navigating the health care system and various service delivery agencies.

The clear message was Jordan's Principle needs to remain a First Nations Principle because of the racist and discriminatory policies that led to Jordan River Anderson falling through jurisdictional gaps as governments fought over the cost and care of Jordan. I honour and lift up this warrior for all he gave and the legacy that is left behind for so many First Nations children.

The AFN fought for nearly nine years to advocate for First Nations children at the CHRT, and continues to do so in filing noncompliance rulings due to inaction on behalf of the federal government. The CHRT has issued four compliance rulings—one on April 26, 2016, a second on September 26, 2016, a third on May 26, 2017, and a fourth on February 1, 2018. The April 2016 ruling required Canada to immediately take measures to address a number of its findings and articulated a clear definition of Jordan's Principle to apply to all First Nations children and all jurisdictional disputes.

The September 2016 ruling set out additional measures that ISC was to take to comply with the CHRT's findings. The May 2017 ruling reaffirmed the CHRT's findings and again set out the measures needed for ISC to comply with the CHRT's findings. The February 2018 ruling set out further measures for ISC to comply with the CHRT's findings, and ordered Canada to enter into a Consultation Protocol with the Parties.

The AFN continues to advocate for a complete overhaul of the First Nations Child and Family Services program, which must be informed by the work of the NAC. The Jordan's Principle Action Table operates under the structure of the NAC, and is active in advancing the implementation of Jordan's Principle. The Jordan's Principle Action Table is oriented towards proposing policy options for the extension of federal program authorities, support for service delivery models, and funding to fully implement Jordan's Principle. Further,

the membership of the Jordan's Principle Action Table is set to expand to achieve full regional representation. The AFN has requested support from the Regional Chiefs to identify regional representatives to achieve this.

## Early Learning and Child Care

The National Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework (NIELCC) was released on September 17, 2018. This framework takes a distinctions-based approach to consider the difficult needs and realities of First Nations and it is part of a Treasury Board process to direct spending of new investments in this recent announcement. \$1.02B is specifically dedicated to First Nations Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) over 10 years, with years 1 to 4 seeing investments of \$72.5 million and a ramp up in years 5 to 10.

This new commitment of \$1.02B over 10 years was earmarked specifically to support First Nations ELCC, over and above existing annual program funding. For that very reason it has been noted that in order to be as flexible as possible, and to permit First Nations-led decision-making, First Nations direct input and guidance on the regional allocation is needed rather than the regular Treasury Board processes.

Again, these funds are over and above existing investments in programs such as Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve (AHSOR), Aboriginal Head Start Urban and Northern Communities (AHSUNC), and the First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative (FNICCI). Existing agreements remain unchanged and funds will continue to flow to these agreement holders.

I would like to commend the work of the National Expert Working Group of the ELCC that has been tasked by the Chiefs-in-Assembly to support the implementation of the NIELCC framework, and continues to do so by creating options for the regional split of funding in the immediate term.

## In Closing

With the change of the seasons and holidays upon us, I ask my brothers and sisters to keep those less fortunate in your prayers in the coming weeks as the weather becomes colder and winter sets in.

May the Creator bless you, your families and your Nations over the coming holidays and in the New Year.

Yours in Brotherhood,

Regional Chief Kevin Hart



## Regional Chief Ghislain Picard

*Quebec and Labrador*

The Chiefs of the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL) are particularly concerned about a combination of issues that will have major impacts on First Nations people. On the one hand, the set of reforms undertaken by the Trudeau Government represent significant challenges and require continued attention by First Nations, tribal councils, regional commissions and organizations which are accountable to the Chiefs. On the other hand, at the provincial level, the arrival of a new government whose knowledge of Indigenous issues is at the least deficient, shows signs of “shifting to the right”, as is now the case in a majority of Canadian provinces. The combination of these two factors can compromise the socioeconomic situation of First Nations people as well as the defence of Aboriginal and Treaty rights and title.

The AFNQL intends to keep this new provincial government under strict surveillance. The new Premier describes himself as a businessman who promotes economic growth. He will have to quickly understand that this development cannot be built on the backs of First Nations.

The provincial government has created a Commission of Inquiry on the relationship between Indigenous peoples and certain public services in Quebec—the Viens Commission, named after the presiding judge. This was the province’s reaction to the denunciation by Indigenous women of unacceptable behaviour on the part of Sûreté du Québec officers.

The AFNQL closely monitors the Commission proceedings and a legal advisor is closely following the case. In particular, the AFNQL has brought to the Commission’s attention the very serious situation of police services and public safety which First Nations people should be entitled to receive, and which have

been sorely lacking for a number of years now. The reinstatement of First Nations police forces which had to cease their operations because of serious funding shortfalls is the subject of special emphasis by AFNQL. The report of the Viens Commission is due in 2019.

The AFNQL also maintained its presence and attention on the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, whose proceedings are coming to an end shortly, and whose conclusions and findings are awaited with great interest by the Chiefs.

Amongst the Chiefs of the AFNQL, a group of elected women has been established which devotes itself to specific issues, including First Nations women’s economic autonomy.

Over the next few weeks and months, and looking toward the next federal election, the AFNQL will intensify its efforts to support First Nations Chiefs and Councils in their responses to the federal agendas of “transformation” and “recognition”.

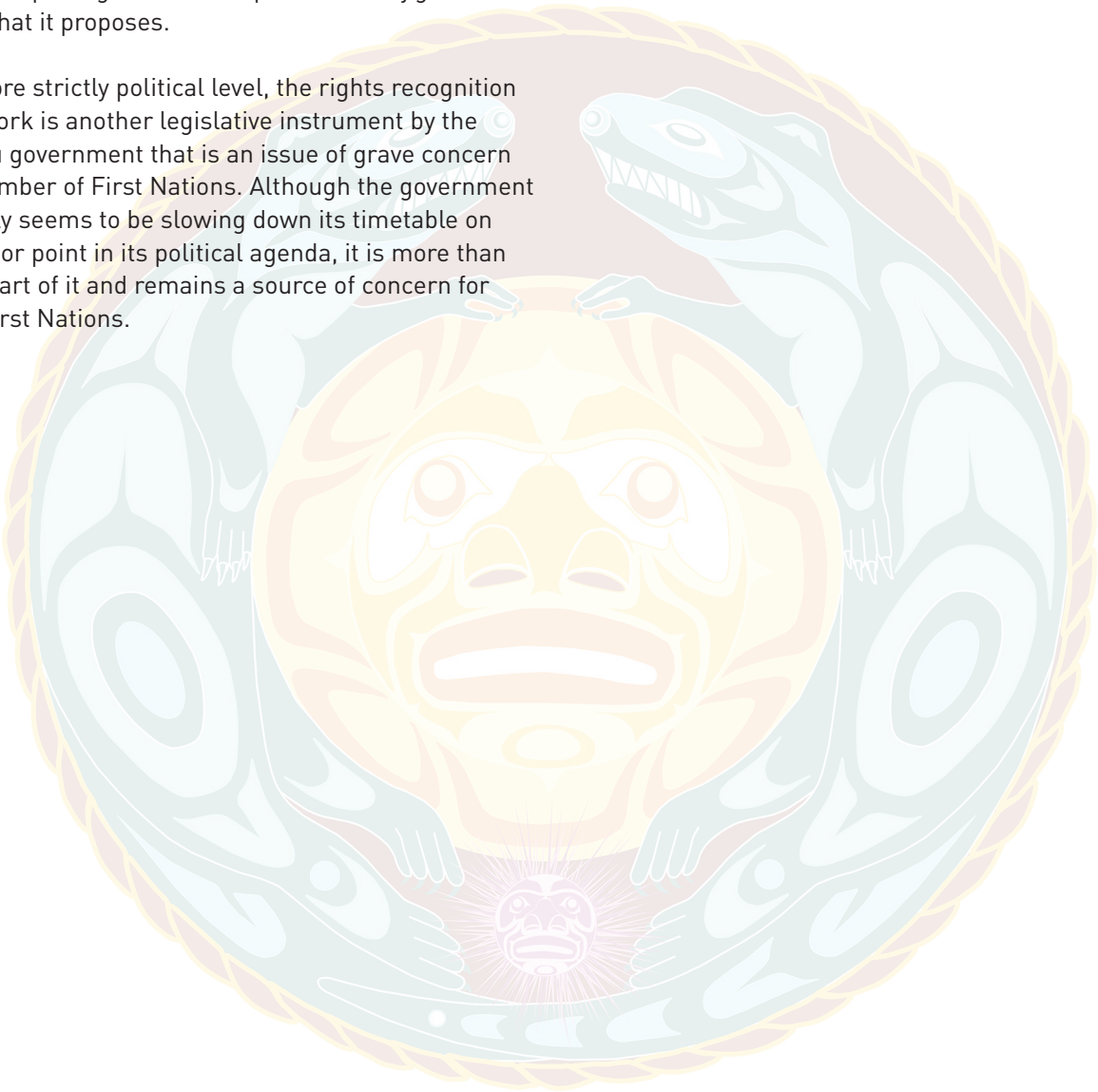
The AFNQL regional commissions and organizations, and the tribal councils, are also involved in this process. The federal government simultaneously proposes a complex set of reforms—new legislation, new policies, the dismantling of the department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada and the creation of two ministerial entities whose mandates do not always seem clear, even internally. First Nations governments note that these measures are important and that they will have a major impact on their populations, both in First Nations and in urban centres, but they have a hard time making sense of it all.

If this federal approach is a strategy to create confusion, we can say that it has achieved its purpose.



By not suggesting all of these reforms in one document, the federal government is forcing First Nations to put together all the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle that it proposes.

On a more strictly political level, the rights recognition framework is another legislative instrument by the Trudeau government that is an issue of grave concern for a number of First Nations. Although the government currently seems to be slowing down its timetable on this major point in its political agenda, it is more than ever a part of it and remains a source of concern for many First Nations.





## Regional Chief Marlene Poitras

Alberta

Tansi and Greetings.

It is my pleasure to contribute to the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Executive Report for the 2018 Special Chiefs Assembly.

I am very pleased to continue as portfolio Chair for Specific Claims, Comprehensive Claims, Additions to Reserve (ATR) and Inherent Rights. I would like to take a moment to remember my co-Chair on this Committee, the late Chief Harry St. Denis of Wolf Lake First Nation. Chief St. Denis passed suddenly in mid-November. My thoughts and prayers are with his family and Nation, where he served his First Nation tirelessly for over 30 years as Chief. His presence will be greatly missed in our Committee. He was a strong guiding force and was very knowledgeable in these very important policy areas.

I have also been appointed to Treaties (Lands, Territories and Resources) and the Management Committee. Treaties is a new portfolio and I look forward to establishing our Terms of Reference and supporting the leaders from the numbered Treaties in moving forward their positions on Treaty implementation. I look forward to joining my colleagues Regional Chief Roger Augustine, Regional Chief RoseAnne Archibald and Regional Chief Kluane Adamek on the Management Committee to oversee the work of the AFN Secretariat.

I am pleased to announce that the AFN Alberta has opened an urban office in Edmonton to help me better serve the needs of the First Nations in Alberta.

Improving communication and information sharing is one of my priorities. In addition to emails and direct telephone calls to reach out to Chiefs directly,

I use social media to share important information and provide updates on my activities. We will also be launching the AFN Alberta website soon, which will complement the AFN Alberta app. (The app is available for download on both iOS and Android devices).

### KEY ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In early October, I attended the *TINKU/Informal Meeting of Indigenous Peoples and Friendly States on the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Framework* in Cochabamba, Bolivia. A clear message from the meetings is that there is an urgency to deal with climate change as it is happening worldwide and you can guarantee it will impact us no matter where we reside.

Linda Duncan, MP for Edmonton Strathcona and NDP Critic for Environment and Climate Change reached out to her colleague MP Peter Julian, NDP Finance Critic, to recommend that I be invited to testify in Edmonton this October at a Standing Committee on Finance consultation on federal budget priorities. The budget is the strongest concrete signal to First Nations of Canada's commitment to a new relationship.

On October 17, 2018, I made a presentation to the Standing Committee, highlighting the Alberta Chiefs' position that for Canada to reach its full economic potential there first must be recognition of where the wealth of this country comes from. When our peoples entered into Treaties with the newcomers we agreed to share the land to the "depth of a plow," nothing underneath. Yet, we have not seen the sharing of the lands and resources in our traditional territories to the extent we had hoped. I highlighted the need to rebuild trust and foster partnerships with First Nations

in economic development across the country. Much of Canada's wealth comes from the resources of this land; wealth that has not been equitably shared despite many promises to do so. First Nations are Canada's youngest and fastest growing demographic and there is an urgent need to invest in this generation to close the socio-economic gap and begin to realize First Nations potential. I also reminded them of Canada's commitments to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), including the commitment to end poverty. Budget 2019 is an opportunity to keep up sustained, major funding in core "on-the-ground" investments like housing, infrastructure and education. Post-secondary education is going to require significant investment in 2019 and the government should be prepared for that request. This year, the AFN and Heritage Canada have been co-developing an Indigenous Languages Act, which is expected to be introduced this fall. Revitalizing and preserving our Indigenous languages will require an estimated \$1.157 billion investment over three years.

On November 1, 2018, I provided testimony via video conference to the Senate Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs on Bill C-58, *An Act to amend the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act*. Also providing testimony were Peter Di Gangi (National Claims Research Directors) and Bruce McIvor (Indigenous Bar Association). Bill C-58 is currently in second reading at the Senate. The National Claims Research Directors (NCRD), a body comprised of First Nations specific claims researchers, has been actively advocating for changes to Bill C-58. Their efforts have been largely ignored. The AFN's Resolution 102/2017 calls on the Government of Canada to withdraw Bill C-58 and for Canada to recognize First Nations' rights to access information and to consult with First Nations on any legislation, future or otherwise, that could impact their rights. Bill C-58 has the potential to significantly impact the ability of First Nations to access necessary historical documentation required for claims research. In addition, the legislation fails to protect the

privacy of most First Nations governments that have given documents to the Crown in confidence.

My guiding principle when I meet with the AFN Executive Committee, government officials and others is that the basis for all relations with the Crown is 'Treaty' and the true path towards reconciliation must include the implementation of Treaties made with the Crown, according to their 'true spirit and intent.'

Treaty No. 6, No. 7 and No. 8 First Nations in Alberta continue to assert their Treaty rights and jurisdiction in many areas such as, but not limited to: health, education, children and families, livelihood, hunting, fishing, trapping, medicine and berry gathering, and as stewards of the environment.

I was pleased to provide a brief report on my activities to the Chiefs in attendance at the Assembly of Treaty Chiefs meeting held November 13–15, 2018, in Edmonton, Alberta. Key discussion items included the First Nations–Crown relationship, specifically the Recognition and Implementation of Indigenous Rights Framework, the Memorandum of Understanding on First Nations Education in Alberta, Post-Secondary Education, and Child and Family Wellbeing. Minister Carolyn Bennett attended the meeting to address Chiefs' concerns with respect to the Rights and Recognition Framework. Minister Philpott attended the meeting on the final day to hear the Chiefs' positions in these important areas.

Treaty No. 6, No. 7 and No. 8 (Alberta) Chiefs in attendance soundly rejected the federal government's approach to the Rights and Recognition Framework, as well as any intended legislation. As Canada has supported the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples without qualification, Canada must also recognize our fundamental right to self-determination. Grand Chief Wilton Littlechild cautioned that any position advanced shall not be interpreted as a domestication of our Treaty, and Canada must

recognize the international character of Treaties No. 6, No. 7, and No. 8.

The Minister responded to Chiefs that she understood that Treaties are profoundly the core of this country and she was aware of the significance and vital importance to respect and honour them. She also stated that no legislation was being drafted (repeated several times when questioned by the Chiefs) and advised “they are listening and adapting their processes”.

There were several youth in attendance that made a statement rejecting rights and recognition legislation and committed to supporting Chiefs at the AFN Special Chiefs Assembly.

I issued media responses and statements on the Trans Mountain Pipeline, racist reporting in the media, the Government of Alberta’s recent changes to Indigenous child welfare, and the Minister’s comments on the Rights and Recognition Framework.

In my statement on the Trans Mountain Pipeline decision, I noted that there remain outstanding questions on how this will change employment and investment opportunities for First Nations in Alberta, including the potential for equity ownership partnership sought by First Nations in both British Columbia and Alberta, and the decision highlighted the importance of the federal government’s need to reassess how it consults with First Nations on major projects, and how it considers impacts on marine life.

I responded to the racist depiction of an Indigenous teen who was alleged to have stabbed a bus driver and highlighted how both the child welfare and mental health systems in Alberta had failed him and his family.

I commented on Bill 22, Alberta’s law to address deficiencies in their child welfare legislation stating that reform of the child welfare system needs to be First Nations-led and needs to respect First Nations jurisdiction over First Nations children.

In response to Minister Bennett’s comments that the legislation will go ahead, I stated that the federal government is not listening. Chiefs have called for a halt to the current Indigenous Rights and Recognition Framework process and I hear consistently from First Nations in Alberta that we need a Treaty-based approach. Adequate resources must also be provided so First Nations have the capacity to develop their own path forward—a path that follows our Treaty teachings and allows First Nations to set their own path toward self-determination.

We will be hosting a follow-up to our Chiefs Strategic Planning session in late January 2019. We will also be discussing a strategy to prepare for the upcoming federal and provincial elections. Plans are being undertaken to host a First Nations Climate Change and Environmental Education Conference. Once funding is confirmed, planning will begin in earnest.

### Conclusion

I am looking forward to meeting once again with the Chiefs-in-Assembly, as well as my counterparts within the AFN, at the Special Chiefs Assembly.

On behalf of my family, I would like to wish everyone a safe and happy holiday! Merry Christmas!



## Regional Chief Terry Teegee

*British Columbia*

Welcome to Chiefs, Leaders, Elders, Women, Youth, and community members to the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Special Chiefs Assembly taking place on Algonquin Territory in Ottawa, Ontario.

I am from Takla Lake First Nation and am from the Lax Gibuu clan and I carry the hereditary name of Maxweem Tsimghee. I have been married for 13 years to my wife, Rena Zatorski, and we have two children, our daughter Rylie and son Rowan. We live on the Lheidli T'enneh reserve, located 22 kilometers from the city of Prince George.

As the Regional Chief for the BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) and on behalf of the BCAFN First Nations and Board of Directors, it is my pleasure to provide you with this regional report from BC.

### KEY ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

I have committed myself to work tirelessly for First Nations in BC, and have prioritized four areas of my mandate to include:

1. The BCAFN: Establish Relationships
2. Education: Securing our Future Generations
3. Economic Development
4. Children and Families Matters

At the recent BCAFN 15th Annual Chiefs Assembly Meeting in X<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm, Musqueam Territory, Vancouver, BC, held from October 22 to 24, 2018, 15 resolutions were passed that will inform the ongoing work and mandate for the BCAFN.

NUMBER	NAME
SPECIAL/2018	ADOPTION OF REVISED BCAFN CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS AND BCAFN GOVERNANCE MANUAL
08/2018	RECOGNITION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF INDIGENOUS RIGHTS: SUPPORT FOR ROLLING DRAFT AND CONCEPTUAL DRAFTING INSTRUCTIONS
09/2018	BC FIRST NATIONS GAMING REVENUE SHARING APPROVALS
10/2018	ADOPTION OF THE 2017-18 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
11/2018	APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR
12/2018	SUPPORT FOR OPTION ONE SET OUT IN THE OPTIONS PAPER ON FIRST NATIONS, INUIT AND MÉTIS CHILD WELFARE AND CHILD AND FAMILY WELLNESS LEGISLATIVE OPTIONS
13/2018	SUPPORT FOR INTERVENTION IN AHOUSAHT NATION V. CANADA
14/2018	SUPPORT FOR THE FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL (FNLC) WILD SALMON SUMMIT RECOMMENDATIONS



15/2018	SUPPORT FOR INDIGENOUS TOURISM BC
16/2018	BCAFN SUPPORT FOR THE MOOSE HIDE CAMPAIGN
17/2018	SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MEMORANDUM OF COOPERATION BETWEEN THE BCAFN AND FIRST NATIONS MAJOR PROJECTS COALITION
18/2018	PROCESS FOR BCAFN APPOINTMENT TO NEW RELATIONSHIP TRUST
19/2018	SUPPORT-IN-PRINCIPLE FOR TRIPARTITE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE FNLC, INDIGENOUS SERVICES CANADA, AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT BC/BC WILDFIRE SERVICE
20/2018	TSILHQOT'IN NATION WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AND FIRST NATIONS JURISDICTION
21/2018	SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DELIVERABLES OF THE BCAFN SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND FISCAL RELATIONS STRATEGY

I would like to acknowledge the acclamation of the following BC Chiefs to the BCAFN Board of Directors: Chief Harvey McLeod, Chief Marilyn Slett, Chief Councillor Charles Morvan and Chief Willie Blackwater. I would also like to acknowledge the acclamation of Councillor Louisa-Housty Jones, Heitsuk First Nation, as the BC Women's Representative on the AFN Women's Council. I want to recognize the commitment and contribution of former BCAFN Board Directors Chief Rebecca David, Chief Maureen Chapman and Susan Miller.

We continue to advocate strongly for legislative changes in the Provincial legal and legislative landscape including strong reform under the new provincial *Environmental Assessment Act*, and moving forward on developing legislation that will recognize and implement the standards and principles of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

## Federal Legislation

There have been a number of key legislative initiatives that BC has taken a strong position on including the proposed federal Recognition and Implementation of Indigenous Rights Framework (RIIRF). BCAFN has been working with our partner organizations (Union of BC Indian Chiefs and the First Nations Summit), First Nations Chiefs and leadership to solidify 18 Principles to inform our position with respect to the proposed federal RIIRF. Each organization had their respective meetings this fall and passed similar resolutions regarding the work, which calls for the support for rolling draft and conceptual drafting instructions which was prepared following a number of BC Chiefs meetings/engagements throughout the summer and into the fall. The BC region continues to advocate for an approach that respects, recognizes and is reflective of true self-determination and jurisdiction which carries and meets or exceeds the minimum standards articulated in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

### Federal Child Welfare Legislation

In BC, we continue to advocate and pursue our interests in jurisdiction and self-determination with respect to child welfare. We have made a number of strides with the BC First Nations Tripartite Working group and we continue to support the work of national committees and working groups to advance enabling federal legislation which seeks to recognize First Nations inherent right of self-determination to care for and establish law, policies and practices to protect and support children, youth and families. We continue to work with Canada and others to ensure any development of instructions or development of language for legislation is co-developed and designed.

### Priority Areas

#### Fisheries

Currently working as co-chair alongside Regional Chief Roger Augustine on the National Fisheries Committee (NFC), the AFN has established a committed Fisheries policy sector at the AFN and a focused approach to the work based on our inherent Aboriginal and Treaty rights related to fishing, for Food, Social and Ceremonial, including commercial and economic fisheries. The NFC has been directed by AFN Resolution 76/2017, to *Establish a National Secretariat for the Negotiation and Implementation of the Supreme Court Decisions regarding Fisheries*, which include but are not limited to the *Ahousaht, Delgamuukw, Gladstone, Haida, Marshall and Sparrow* cases.

Several AFN National Fisheries Committee meetings have been held this year to discuss changes to federal legislation and regulations, as well as regional fisheries issues that persist including racism and mistreatment by federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) officials towards First Nations fishers; staffing changes at the AFN (we welcome Ken Paul as the new Fisheries Director); and advocating to the new federal Minister Jonathan Wilkinson on the need for recognition and implementation of First Nations inherent and Treaty rights to fisheries resources.

### Economic Development

I continue to sit as Chair of the AFN Chiefs Committee on Economic Development. Priorities that we have established include Indigenous trade (intertribal, national and international), supporting national and regional First Nations economic development organizations, as well as follow through on various resolutions passed by the Chiefs-in-Assembly (i.e., Resolution 55/2017, *First Nations Energy Strategy*). This year has been dominated by trade agreement discussions and the importance of having First Nations chapters included in all new trade agreements; trade is a cornerstone of our economies and an age-old practice by First Nations since time immemorial.

In the BCAFN region, we have been working on our BCAFN Sustainable Economic Development and Fiscal Strategy that includes the release of our Blackbooks – a toolkit for First Nations economic development. It can be found on our website ([www.bcafn.ca](http://www.bcafn.ca)) and we encourage First Nations from across Canada to review it and provide us feedback. It is a work in progress and we will continue to improve this tool and advocate for inclusion of the inescapable economic component of Aboriginal title; First Nations are more than an untapped labour force—our lands and resources are the cornerstone of the Canadian economy and the best projects are done with our consent and full partnership, including equity.

### Conclusion

With the upcoming federal election less than a year away now is the time to push for change. We have identified our priorities and we shall hold the government to these priorities. Reflecting on this year's theme for the Special Chiefs Assembly, "Acknowledging our Challenges, Successes and Opportunities", I am optimistic that the AFN Executive Committee and the re-elected National Chief will create the opportunities the Chiefs in Canada have been seeking.



## Regional Chief Norman Yakeleya

*Northwest Territories*

As the newly elected Dene National Chief and the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Regional Chief since August 22, 2018, it has been an honour to be the voice for the Dene People of the Northwest Territories.

We come from the Treaty 8 and 11 ancestral lands right holders within Canada. We have since worked our way to modern treaties through the land claims policy and asserted our right to negotiate the self-government agreements with Canada and the Territorial government. We still maintain the Nation-to-Nation relationship with Canada.

I am excited to join the Executive Committee at the AFN and work with other Regional Chiefs and achieve milestones within their portfolios and do the greater good for all who we represent.

Before I write my own priorities as Regional Chief, I want to express my appreciation to Mr. Bill Erasmus for his years of service and support to the Dene people and the people of Canada, especially the First Nations. I am now beginning to fully comprehend and understand that the Regional Chief's time and commitments were no easy task. We wish Mr. Erasmus a much deserved rest.

As Regional Chief, I look forward to the assigned portfolios with much anticipation, as well as the positive working relationships that will come while implementing the tasks as mandated by the National Chief's leadership and the Executive Committee.

I have been tasked with the following portfolios:

1. Charter renewal
2. Elders Council
3. Residential Schools
4. Veterans

Since being voted into the office as Dene National Chief and taking a seat with the AFN Executive Committee, it has been a steep learning curve for me, our new Chief Executive Officer and our new Executive Assistant. All three are senior level staff and it is no easy task for anyone to jump into and keep the wheels of programs and goals of both the Dene Nation and the AFN moving.

We have set the Dene Nation goals and are working towards them as per our mandates. We are working towards Unity amongst the Dene Nation, strengthening our Executive Council of Grand Chiefs and lastly working on our constitutional renewal of the Dene Nation.

In addition, we are reviewing our AFN Chiefs Committee representatives and setting an accountability system to measure our progress in matching the goals we set out with the Dene Nation and the AFN's goals. The Grand Chiefs of the Northwest Territories want to be part of the AFN Chiefs Committees and we have added a selection process for their respective members through an "expression of interest". We will select members in the New Year.

We attended the AFN's National Forum on Affirming First Nations Rights, Title and Jurisdiction on September 11 and 12, 2018, in Ottawa, and we concluded that the Dene Nation needs to formulate its own position on the Recognition and Implementation of Indigenous Rights Framework and deliver a clear message to the federal government.

We submitted our request for support for the Nation Building initiative and are awaiting a response from the funders. This is a crucial component to the Nation Building exercise with the Dene Nation as it fits well within the Charter renewal of the AFN.

# Regional Chief Norman Yakeleya

*Northwest Territories*

We participated in the AFN National Housing and Infrastructure Forum held in Vancouver in October, which provided the Dene Nation with an opportunity to present our views and, along with the Yukon delegates, a snap shot of the housing issues faced North of 60. We thank Regional Chief Kevin Hart for this opportunity and look forward to a Territorial Housing Forum in the Northwest Territories in the New Year.

As we move forward to work together and accommodate each other with our regional views on the many immediate needs for our people, we seek to always stay together and give our people hope that life will get better.

In my short introduction to the AFN world of politics and the Dene Nation world of Dene people, it is good that our cultural ways are still held closely by our Elders.

We can survive as witnesses by our residential school survivors who carry the burden of someone else's opinions of who we are. We continue to support the treatment of many families who need help with the impacts of residential schools.

We have seen the wrongs done to many of our Veterans and have seen the need for us to assist in many areas of their life; this too has caused some difficulty with our warriors who serve their country. I am fortunate that we have truly gifted people to make us proud as First Nations in these times.

This is the era where we can make a difference in Canada and it needs to get done now. We are ready. Is Canada prepared to step up?

Regional Chief Norman Yakeleya



## A Message from the Chief Executive Officer

Sekon (Hello) – Greetings to All!

It is that time of year where we all gather to move First Nations matters of utmost importance forward; it is with deep respect that I welcome you to the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) 2018 Special Chiefs Assembly.

It has been an extraordinary year of activity for the AFN. Eight national gatherings have been held:

- April 11, 2018 – Lands and Resources National Forum;
- May 1 & 2, 2018 – Special Chiefs Assembly on Federal Legislation;
- July 24–26, 2018 – Annual General Assembly with the Election of the National Chief;
- September 11 & 12, 2018 – National Forum on Rights and Title Framework;
- September 12 & 13, 2018 – Jordan’s Principle Summit;
- September 13 & 14, 2018 – Federal Labour Market Meeting;
- October 30, November 1, 2018 – National Forum on Housing and Infrastructure; and
- November 5–7, 2018 – Federal Labour Market Meeting.

The Executive Committee conducted a total of 7 in-person meetings and teleconference calls this fiscal period on the following dates in 2018: April 29, July 22, August 2, September 10, September 19 & 20, October 29 and December 2. In addition, on-going advocacy meetings have been conducted by the National Chief, Chief of Staff, Chief Executive Officer, and staff throughout the year with Chiefs, Ministers, Deputy Ministers, senior federal government bureaucrats, provincial and territorial officials, and elected leaders and staff of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and the Métis National Council.

Throughout the fiscal period, the AFN has focused and continues to focus on the following key priority areas: Indigenous Languages Legislation; Child Welfare Legislation; Bill C-262 on the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*; Treaty Implementation and support for a First Nations Treaty Commissioner; the Indigenous Peoples House; the AFN Charter Renewal; four policy areas including Specific Claims, Comprehensive Claims, Additions to Reserve and Inherent Rights; Post-Secondary Education; Housing and Infrastructure; Water; Early Child Learning and Day Care; Jordan’s Principle; and others.

As ever, I continue to feel honoured to work under the positive, productive, and visionary leadership of the National Chief, the Executive Committee, and the Chiefs across Canada. And I am thankful for the dedication and commitment of the AFN staff and hold them up for their outstanding work and their tireless professionalism in providing services to our peoples.

I invite you and encourage you to attend the different information and dialogue sessions being conducted at this year’s Special Chiefs Assembly. I hope to see you there! Wishing you safe travels and all the best during the holiday season and throughout the New Year.

Nia:wen (Thank You).

Dr. Paulette Tremblay, Ph.D, ICD.D, CAPA  
Chief Executive Officer





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