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FIRST NATION CROWN GATHERING NEEDS TO FOCUS ON THE ROOT PROBLEM

London, ON –The meeting with Prime Minister Harper and First Nations leadership on January 24, 2012 should be used to re-establish a foundational relationship that has become entirely flawed. The opportunity to restore an equitable and balanced relationship is the key to solving long-term issues such as housing, education, and health which now plague First Nation citizens.

The formation and consolidation of Canada was made possible through the cooperation and goodwill of First Nations. However, the creation of the Indian Act marked the beginning of an era of sustained, systematic oppression and subjugation of Indigenous nations and peoples. The time has come to bring this era to an end and return the relationship back to its proper foundations.

Hopefully, the Prime Minister is not simply looking at this meeting as a photo opportunity and a means to distract First Nations and the general public from the recently publicized crisis in Attawapiskat. It is expected that this gathering of minds will pave the way for establishing and scheduling on-going meetings with First Nations leadership and governments at the federal and provincial levels. "This government has a real opportunity to usher in a new epoch of First Nations relations and we sincerely hope they take advantage of it", stated Grand Chief Denise Stonefish.

Clearly, a one-time meeting will do little to address the many pressing issues that face First Nation citizens. Deputy Grand Chief Gord Peters contends, "A concerted and continued effort is required in order to begin to make appreciable progress in rectifying the relationship." Nevertheless, it is an effort that the AIAI will continue to make and one by which they have long stood.

Regular communications will be provided throughout the lead-up to this critical meeting as well as during and after on all of the AIAI's media outlets.

AIAI is mandated as a political territorial organization to defend and enhance the Aboriginal and Treaty rights of its eight member First Nations. Visit them online at www.aiai.on.ca , www.facebook.com/aiai.pto , http://twitter.com/#!/AIAI_Comms , www.youtube.com/user/AIAIAdmin .

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**Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians
First Nations' Position First Nation-Crown Gathering
24 January 2012**

Background

Recent high-level public opinion about the plight of Indigenous peoples maintained throughout the media has prompted Canada to convene a one-day session with First Nation leadership. It is speculated that one of Canada's underlying intentions is to attempt to regain control over public opinion. Canada needs to diffuse the tension created by the coverage and portray that not only can they respond to First Nations directly through meetings, but they will also demonstrate what has been "jointly" accomplished to date.

Our responsibility is to ensure that we provide clear solutions that will put the relationship back on its proper foundations. This document lays out how this goal may be accomplished.

Foundations of Indigenous Nations' Position

Indigenous Nations come to this gathering mindful of significant foundational concepts that are the basis for establishing a respectful political relationship with the Canadian governments. These concepts are neither negotiable nor debatable.

- 1) Indigenous peoples have full jurisdiction over their Home Lands, Turtle Island, the resources, and their citizens through comprehensive governance systems.
- 2) Treaties and other agreements were entered into as living relationships, establishing peace, friendship, and economic stability with other Indigenous Nations and settler governments.
- 3) Indigenous nations and peoples possess the inherent right of self-determination by which they freely choose and pursue their political, economic, social, cultural and spiritual growth and development.
- 4) The formation and consolidation of Canada was made possible through the cooperation and goodwill of First Nations.

Primary Goal: Clearing the Path to Peace

As the balance of power shifted in North America the relationship moved away from the original intent of living in coexistence to one of the Crown's assumed domination over First Nations and their citizens. The creation of the Indian Act in 1876 marks the beginning of an era of sustained, systematic oppression and subjugation of Indigenous nations and peoples.

The repatriation of the Canadian Constitution, and section 35 in particular opened a new chapter and signalled the opportunity to begin the process of Clearing the Path to Peace. Within its own legal system Canada has affirmed that the inherent rights of First Nations are pre-existing and that the Honour of the Crown must be upheld.

Thus, there remains an obligation for First Nations and the federal government to come together to clear the path for an equitable and balanced relationship.

Fundamental to clearing the path to peace, the Crown must:

- Abandon its efforts to terminate and assimilate Indigenous peoples.
- No longer utilize the tools of colonization, including extinguishment, delegated authority, legislation and policy.
- Take concrete steps with clear milestones for accomplishing the dismantling of the colonial system, including the phasing out of the Indian Act, the creation of government-to-government mechanisms, and the clear acknowledgement of the inherent and treaty rights of Indigenous nations and peoples.

Steps to Clear the Path to Peace:

- 1) A mutually agreed upon process with Indigenous Nations and the federal government to achieve a staged withdrawal of federal jurisdiction and the implementation of Indigenous inherent jurisdiction.
- 2) The provision of resources, including financial, technical, and time to support the development of the capacity and capability of First Nations to fully assume their role as governments.
- 3) Jointly establish an independent tribunal/mechanism with the full capacity to compel, facilitate, mediate and arbitrate all the parties in the process.
- 4) Each of the parties report to their respective governing bodies on the progress of negotiations.

Good Faith

If there is real commitment to the process the Federal government should provide an immediate good faith action to alleviate the burden in First Nations.

- The Immediate removal of the 2 percent cap on funding to an increase of 5 percent in year one, and an additional 5 percent in each successive year until a new fiscal relationship is developed.
- Placement of a moratorium on all legislation and policies that have not been agreed to by First Nations governments.

AIAI ELECTED OFFICIALS

Grand Chief Denise Stonefish

Grand Chief Stonefish is a citizen of the Delaware First Nation near Chatham, Ontario. As Grand Chief her primary role is to support the AIAI Chiefs Council and Deputy Grand Chief in specific



political areas as identified by our member Nations.

Grand Chief Stonefish is also the Chair of the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians Chiefs Council. The Chiefs Council meets on a quarterly basis and consists of the elected Chiefs or representatives from each of AIAI's member Nations.

Deputy Grand Chief Gord Peters

Deputy Grand Chief Peters is a citizen of the Delaware First Nation near Chatham, Ontario. As Deputy Grand Chief his primary role is to support the AIAI Chiefs Council and Grand Chief in specific political areas as identified by our member Nations.





About Us

The Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians (AIAI) is a non-profit organization which advocates for the political interests of eight member Nations in Ontario. It was established in 1969, which was an era in Canadian politics where integration and assimilation of First Nations was a matter of public policy. The AIAI is unique among provincial territorial organizations in Canada, because it is an association of several different member Nations; the Oneida, the Mohawk, the Delaware, the Potawatomi and the Ojibway. Each of these Nations has different languages, cultural practises and territories, which span much of the province. However, at AIAI, they form an alliance on political lines to protect their collective Aboriginal and Treaty rights.

Over the years, AIAI has become a leader among First Nation provincial territorial organizations. It has not only represented its member Nations' interests in talks with Ontario and Canada, but also the World. The United Nations assembly has welcomed AIAI leadership on two occasions to learn more about First Nations' substandard living conditions and problems resolving land claims.

AIAI provides political representation and policy analysis in the following areas of mutual concern:

Health, Social Development, Education, Intergovernmental Affairs, Treaty Research and Tax Immunity.

AIAI member Nations represent about 20,000 First Nations citizens from the following communities: the Batchewana First Nation of Ojibways, near Sault Ste. Marie; the Delaware Nation, near Chatham; the Caldwell First Nation, near Leamington; the Mississauga's of New Credit First Nation, near Hagersville; Wahta Mohawks near Parry Sound; the Oneida Nation of the Thames, near London; the Hiawatha First Nation near Peterborough and Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte, near Belleville.



Vision

The Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians is committed to protect, defend and enhance the inherent rights of the Member Nations while creating mutual respect and understanding among and between the Member Nations.

The Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians will build trust, acceptance of responsibility of all citizens of the Member Nations to ensure strength of unity.

The Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians will utilize the knowledge and wisdom of our past to empower our peoples to create a better future to allow the full expression of our right of self determination in the reestablishment of our Nations.

Mission

The Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians will assist Member Nations to meet their goals and aspirations and will be an advocate and a lobbyist with external governments.

The Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians will ensure that they have well-trained staff to carry out the goals and objectives that have been established by the Member Nations.

The Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians will complete this work by lobbying external governments; participating in national and regional assemblies; and by creating any processes that communities require for the resolution of their issues.