

Joint 2015 Gathering

November 16-18, 2015

The Pinnacle Hotel Vancouver Harbourfront
Vancouver, BC

Summary Report



First Nations Summit



Union of BC Indian Chiefs



BC Assembly of First Nations



Indigenous and
Northern Affairs Canada

Affaires autochtones
et du Nord Canada

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Executive Summary

Joint Gathering 2015 held November 16 to 18, 2015 in Vancouver, British Columbia was the fourth annual gathering of BC First Nation Chiefs and Administrators with Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) senior officials. The event was co-hosted by INAC and the First Nations Leadership Council, comprised of representatives from the BC Assembly of First Nations, the First Nations Summit and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs.

“Working Together” was the theme of this year’s *Gathering*. Building on that theme, the Honourable Minister Carolyn Bennett stated, in her opening remarks:

“It is time for a renewed, nation-to-nation relationship, based on recognition of rights, respect, cooperation and partnership. My overarching goal will be to focus on renewing that relationship. With your partnership, I expect to make real progress on the issues most important to First Nations. Issues like housing, employment, health and mental health care, community safety and policing, child welfare and education.”

Her message resonated with the crowd and left participants with a sense of hope and optimism which carried on throughout the conference.

More than 300 First Nations participants, representing 78 per cent of British Columbia’s 198 First Nations communities, attended the three-day event. Through a survey prior to the conference, First Nations were able to suggest agenda items which focused on housing, child and family services and economic development. There were four plenary sessions, nine interactive dialogue sessions and an open-floor discussion. Keynote speakers included: Chief Dr. Robert Joseph; Grand Chief Edward John; Grand Chief Doug Kelly; Regional Chief Shane Gottfriedson; and, Grand Chief Stewart Phillip. Additionally, a reception was held on the first evening.

New this year was the focus on nation-to-nation teachings. Many of the panelists and presenters spoke on behalf of their First Nations: sharing successes, best practices and encouraging a sense of opportunity for present and future generations. Comprehensive Community Planning was identified by First Nations throughout the conference as a common foundation necessary to improving community wellbeing in all areas. This shift in focus also delivered on a commitment from *Joint Gathering 2014* to deliver “mentorship in action” and provide further mentoring opportunities between nations.

The purpose of this Summary Report is to:

- Provide a concise summary of what was heard from the speakers, presenters, community leaders and participants;
- Share participant evaluations and feedback; and,
- Outline next steps and action items for the future.

This report has been prepared with the First Nations Leadership Council and will be shared with all First Nations in British Columbia, INAC, and other levels of government.



Evaluation Summary Highlights

Joint Gathering 2015 was attended by 313 First Nation participants, plus an additional 92 delegates representing national and provincial child and family services organizations, the First Nations Leadership Council, the Province of British Columbia, and other federal departments. Representation at *Joint Gathering 2015* from First Nation communities in British Columbia has increased by 26 per cent since 2012. In addition, more than 95 departmental staff were on-site to hear, present and support the event.

Participant evaluation and feedback was solicited through a short written questionnaire at the end of Day 3 (61 collected) as well as through a real-time survey system throughout the *Gathering*. The survey system was used in three plenary and two dialogue sessions, and reflected a high-level of participant satisfaction – 93 per cent of participants responded that *Joint Gathering 2015* was either ‘informative’ or ‘very informative’. Feedback also indicated that more time was needed for discussion during the plenary and dialogue sessions, and that participants wanted more opportunities to share their experiences, ask questions and hear responses.



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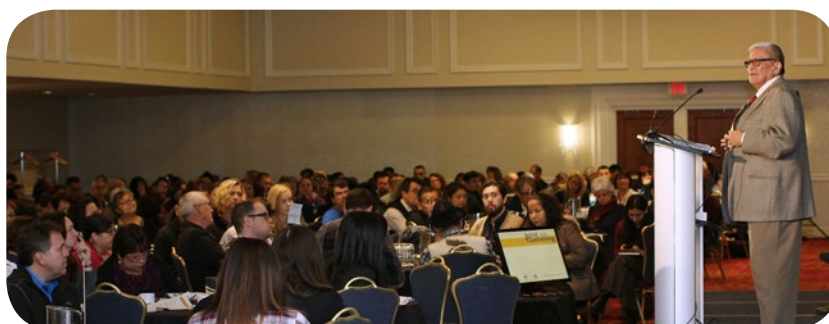
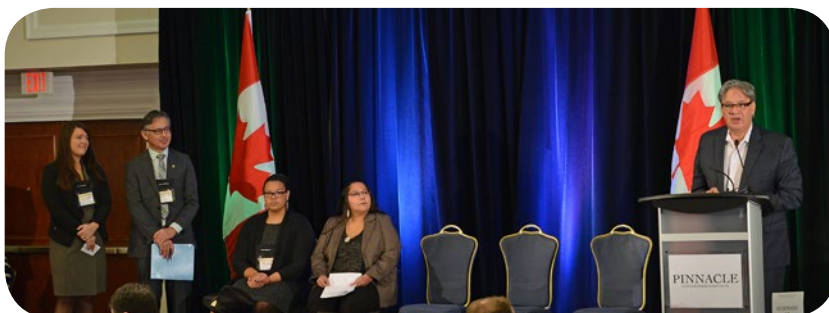


Speakers

Joint Gathering 2015 proceedings opened with an acknowledgement of the shared ancestral territory of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, a cultural welcome to Elders, Chiefs and other dignitaries, and an opening prayer. Following this, the Honourable Minister Carolyn Bennett gave an opening address via live video feed, including a question and answer session. The three representatives from the First Nations Leadership Council: Grand Chief Edward John, Kukpi7 Judy Wilson, and Kalila George-Wilson, then welcomed participants. Co-moderators Harold Tarbell and Jessie Hemphill provided an overview of the *Joint Gathering 2015* program.

There were four keynote speakers at *Joint Gathering 2015*. Day 1 featured Chief Dr. Robert Joseph from Reconciliation Canada, who spoke about the important role of reconciliation and the need to build meaningful relationships amongst Aboriginal people and all Canadians. Grand Chief Edward John was the keynote speaker on Day 2, speaking about his new role as Senior Advisor on Aboriginal Child Welfare for the British Columbia Ministry of Children and Family Development. He discussed the priority area of Aboriginal Child Welfare and highlighted the need to find permanent homes for children and youth in-care. The keynote speakers on Day 3 were: Regional Chief Shane Gottfriedson of the BC Assembly of First Nations and Grand Chief Stewart Phillip of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs. Regional Chief Gottfriedson shared his thoughts on improving the quality of life through a community-driven, nation-based economic strategy. Grand Chief Phillip provided final thoughts on the three-day event as well as an inspirational closing that outlined the positive tone of the event and a sense of optimism for the future.

In addition to these keynote speakers, *Joint Gathering 2015* featured many panelists and presenters who represented First Nations and related organizations. Speakers covered three main themes: housing; child and family services; and, economic development as well as the following additional subjects: the Tripartite Education Framework Agreement; Comprehensive Community Planning; Treaty Related Measures; and First Nations Public Service Capacity Development.



Exhibitors Fair

- Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of BC
- Public Services & Procurement Canada
- Reconciliation Canada
- Statistics Canada
- Employment & Social Development Canada
- First Nations Summit
- Fraser Basin Council



“Ask Me” Booth

New this year, INAC staff members were available on-site at an “Ask Me” booth. Staff members answered questions and facilitated meetings between conference participants and INAC staff on topics ranging from funding services to economic development opportunities. Questions requiring follow-up were responded to in a timely fashion and all levels of staff were available to address participant concerns either through in-person meetings or via email and phone calls. The “Ask Me” booth was also the source for conference notes and presentations, along with guides, toolkits, and success stories on a wide range of subjects.

Summary for Housing

The theme on Day 1 of *Joint Gathering 2015* was housing. The following includes a summary of key points and action items raised by panelists, presenters, and participants, for both plenary and dialogue sessions.

PLENARY SESSION	WHAT WAS HEARD	ACTION ITEMS
Housing: Sharing Successes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » In order to have sustainable housing, leadership in communities must support fair and equitable housing policies that administration can implement. » First Nations must engage community members with developing housing policies and priorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » BC Region will explore opportunities for the facilitation of networking at the leadership/ governance level to share best practices on roles and responsibilities for housing. » BC Region will continue to promote and deliver New Approach for Housing Support information sessions to encourage effective policy development within First Nations.
DIALOGUE SESSION	WHAT WAS HEARD	ACTION ITEMS
Challenge Discussion Groups: <i>Planning and implementation of First Nation's Housing Policies; Financially viable housing projects; and, Governance roles and responsibilities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » This First Nation-to-First Nation networking session facilitated the sharing of information and best practices such as: arrears, skills training and employment, energy efficiency cost savings, maintenance and planning. Sharing best practices will support cost efficiencies and solutions that are designed by First Nations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » BC Region will engage with First Nations and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to support delivery of housing symposiums throughout the Province of BC, tailored to the specific housing administration and delivery capacity needs of participants. » BC Region will continue to promote networking and the sharing of best practices among First Nations.



Summary for Child and Family Services

The theme on Day 2 of *Joint Gathering 2015* was child and family services. The following includes a summary of key points and action items raised by panelists, presenters, and participants, for both plenary and dialogue sessions.

PLENARY SESSIONS	WHAT WAS HEARD	ACTION ITEMS
Child and Family Services: Creating Conditions for Well-Being in Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » There is a need for preventive solutions to address trauma and promote healing in First Nations communities. Solutions need to draw on teachings, culture, identity and cultural traditions of Indigenous people. » Indigenous youth who are aging out of care often require the basic life skills and resources necessary to successfully transition into the adult world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » BC Region will discuss opportunities with federal, provincial and First Nations representatives to help move towards holistic wellbeing strategies for First Nations children and families in BC. » BC Region will continue to work with First Nations and the Province in preparation for the eventual transition to a prevention-based funding approach to First Nations Child and Family Services. » BC Region will look for opportunities to support First Nations communities, Delegated Aboriginal Agencies, the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development, and other partners in developing strategies that will address issues of youth aging out of care.
Child and Family Services: Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » There is a need to clarify roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders – the Department, the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development, Delegated Aboriginal Agencies, and First Nations. » There is a need for all parties to improve the speed of information sharing and to focus on prevention. » First Nations need clear communication and accountability regarding supports and services available from the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development, and/or Delegated Aboriginal Agencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » BC region will continue to work with the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development on a bilateral accountability framework to clarify roles/ responsibilities and accountabilities and improve service delivery. BC Region will share this work with First Nation leadership to explore whether a similar agreement may be useful to set out a tripartite relationship. » BC region will engage with First Nations to determine how it can support improved communications and governance between the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development, Delegated Aboriginal Agencies, and communities regarding child and family issues.

DIALOGUE SESSION	WHAT WAS HEARD	ACTION ITEMS
Promising Practices on Child and Family Services - Panel Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Within BC and across other regions in Canada, promising practices in child and family services are emerging. Such practices include, but are not limited to, prevention-focused intervention, and a focus on the whole family and community. » Recognition that there needs to be more open communication between First Nations and the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development/ Delegated Aboriginal Agencies regarding all aspects of children-in-care from their communities. Promising practices both in BC and other regions note that open communication is key to ensuring success. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » BC Region will make the presentations made at the <i>Joint Gathering</i> available to conference participants. » BC Region will encourage and facilitate the communication and sharing of knowledge and best practices. BC Region could also invite some of the key presenters from other jurisdictions back to the region for more in-depth discussions on child and family services.



Summary for Economic Development

The theme on Day 3 of *Joint Gathering 2015* was economic development. The following includes a summary of key points and action items raised by panelists, presenters, and participants, for both plenary and dialogue sessions.

PLENARY SESSION	WHAT WAS HEARD	ACTION ITEMS
Economic Development: Visioning Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » INAC's economic development programs need to move at the speed of business. » Partnerships with industry are necessary to achieve economic development success. » Successful First Nation economic development visions should be based on and reflect First Nations community engagement. » Achieving successful economic development requires the right people for the job, a vision, and clear focus. Rather than relying on consultants, the focus should be on hiring local people who are committed. » A survey showed that 30 per cent of participants believe human resource capacity is both a key goal and challenge for economic development. 35 per cent of First Nations surveyed see forestry as their main economic driver. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » BC Region will adjust the priority and ranking of economic development projects to highlight the development of human resources as a priority. » BC Region will continue to work with the Province of BC and the BC Aboriginal Business Council on developing a comprehensive federal-provincial strategy that will focus on community readiness and engagement, and resource industries, in particular liquefied natural gas (LNG). » BC Region will continue to work with Natural Resources Canada to promote and drive economic support for First Nation forestry related activities.
DIALOGUE SESSIONS	WHAT WAS HEARD	ACTION ITEMS
Successful Land and Economic Development Projects on Reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » First Nations valued having a Land Use Plan that identified their zones for community uses. » First Nations need more information on funding programs that support Land Use Planning. » Communication amongst First Nations, developers, the Department, and other stakeholders is a valuable aspect of developing projects on-reserve. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » BC Region will work with First Nations to assess capacity needs and assist those ready to start Land Use Planning and Economic Development Planning. » BC Region will provide the First Nations Communications Toolkit to First Nations that are starting economic development projects.

DIALOGUE SESSIONS	WHAT WAS HEARD	ACTION ITEMS
<p>Lands Management Readiness</p> <p><i>Preparation and capacity development in the planning for success under the First Nation Land Management Act</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » The Stz'uminus First Nation shared best practices on community building and economic development planning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Engage with youth and community members through youth meetings and community outreach activities. » Best practices of successful First Nations show that municipal-type organizational structures need to reflect a community's cultural values and should be informed by their existing Land Code. » Best practices also show that separate political and business processes are key to achieving sustainable economic development. » Operational funding is provided to First Nations upon the effective date of the Land Code. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » BC Region and/or the Lands Advisory Board will follow-up with interested participants to provide more information on the First Nations Land Management Initiative through community information sessions (www.labrc.com). » BC Region will follow-up with First Nations who are in the process of submitting Land Use Planning proposals. » BC Region will work with the Lands Advisory Board to identify First Nation-to-First Nation land management mentoring opportunities. » The Department will be renegotiating the operational funding formula with the Lands Advisory Board.
<p>Accessing Capital for Economic Growth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Access to capital is a critical ingredient for stimulating economic development. » There is a need to continue to provide capital for new entrepreneurs, especially those without a long credit history. » Funding programs available for First Nation communities and Aboriginal entrepreneurs include the First Citizens Fund loan and the Business Equity Fund. » Aboriginal financial institutions continue to play a key role in making capital available to Aboriginal entrepreneurs. » There is a full spectrum of capital available ranging from non-repayable funding sources to alternative forms of capital such as bonds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » BC Region will work with Aboriginal financial institutions to support better coordination of funding for aspiring Aboriginal entrepreneurs. » BC Region will also work with Aboriginal financial institutions to provide additional funding information to First Nation Chiefs and Council members and Aboriginal entrepreneurs.



Summary on Additional Dialogue Sessions

Throughout *Joint Gathering 2015* there were additional dialogue sessions on various issues of importance to First Nations leaders.

DIALOGUE SESSIONS	WHAT WAS HEARD	ACTION ITEMS
Treaty Related Measures to Advance Economic Development and Build Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Treaty Related Measures are a useful tool for removing barriers to Treaty as First Nations move toward self-government. » Treaty Related Measures can be helpful for building governance capacity and supporting economic development. » It is important for First Nations to consider what projects will be most beneficial for their community, based on where they are in the treaty process and what capacity gaps their community needs to address before Treaty implementation. » Although specialists from outside the community may be brought in to complete some elements of a Treaty Related Measures project, it is important that community members are heavily involved in the project, so that the community remains connected, and the capacity of community members is developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Treaties and Aboriginal Government-Negotiations West staff will provide assistance to First Nations in the treaty process who request support in developing Treaty Related Measures proposals. » Treaties and Aboriginal Government-Negotiations West staff will work to make information on Treaty Related Measures more widely available to First Nations and will continue to provide assistance to First Nations in the treaty process that are interested in developing Treaty Related Measures proposals.



DIALOGUE SESSIONS	WHAT WAS HEARD	ACTION ITEMS
Tripartite Education Framework Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » The Department was reminded that the Tripartite Education Framework Agreement (TEFA) was conceived as an interim step towards the establishment of First Nations education jurisdiction, and that education jurisdiction negotiations should be re-started in light of the Government of Canada's new fiscal approach for self-government arrangements. » TEFA provides more funding than the previous funding model, but it does not represent real funding comparability for First Nations. First Nations have additional needs in the area of language and culture, and with issues arising from the large number of small schools. » First Nations would like more information on the TEFA review process – what will it inform and who is leading it. » Community members want to be involved in providing input into the TEFA renewal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » INAC's Evaluation, Performance Measurement and Review Branch will assess the progress made in implementing TEFA since it was signed in 2012. » The First Nations Education Steering Committee will provide more information to First Nations about data collection and reporting in First Nation schools. » The First Nations Education Steering Committee, with the support of all other TEFA parties, is drafting a governance document for Chiefs and Councils, which will be used as a vehicle to better inform First Nations Leadership about what TEFA is and does. The TEFA parties will be piloting a public newsletter on TEFA accomplishments, which could also be used to inform First Nations on the outcomes of the TEFA review.
Comprehensive Community Planning and Mentorship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Comprehensive Community Planning is a holistic process that engages community members in planning and implementing a long-term vision for their community. » Once in place, an effective plan can empower the community, improve performance, and build teamwork and expertise. » First Nation-to-First Nation mentorship supports the transfer of capacity from one First Nation to another in the areas of training, planning, community engagement and communications. » Interest was expressed in accessing financial and mentoring support to develop comprehensive community plans. » To be successful, both Comprehensive Community Planning and mentorship must remain community driven and focused. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » BC Region will review requests and assess the needs of First Nations mentees in order to match them with mentors to support them in the Comprehensive Community Planning process. » BC Region will continue to provide information to First Nations interested in seeking funding support to develop comprehensive community plans.

DIALOGUE SESSIONS	WHAT WAS HEARD	ACTION ITEMS
First Nations Public Service Capacity Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Public service capacity is a shared challenge of many First Nations. » Increased capacity is most needed in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Human resource management › Finance management › Records and information management › Policy development » First Nations are not always aware of existing tools available to build capacity. » There is a need for better sharing of resources/tools so First Nations can build upon one another's work rather than starting from scratch. » A centralized organization that houses capacity development tools and resources on First Nations public service capacity development could be helpful. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » The Association of Records Managers and Administrators will make the Records and Information Management toolkit available to First Nations for download on the First Nations Summit website. (Completed November 30, 2015 and available at www.fns.bc.ca/fnps) » BC Region will consider and support Professional and Institutional Development Program proposals to carry out records and information management projects. » BC Region will support the First Nations Records and Information Management workshop on February 2, 2016. » BC Region will facilitate First Nation-to-First Nation mentoring for Records and Information Management.
Open Floor Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Questions were raised regarding goals of permanency planning for Indigenous children. Is the idea to reduce budgets, or can this targeted funding be reallocated? » Support was voiced for mentorship and its expansion, as well as a need to strengthen communications on the subject. » First Nations require regulatory reform, in their administration and reporting requirements, which hasn't happened. This message was also delivered at <i>Joint Gathering 2014's</i> open-floor discussions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » BC Region will share points raised with applicable departments, provincial ministries, and other stakeholders. » BC Region will increase the time for open dialogue at next year's <i>Joint Gathering</i>.



Next Steps

In Spring 2016 First Nations will receive a survey to inform the direction and discussion topics of the next *Joint Gathering*. Participants have clearly indicated their interest in greater First Nations' input into future *Joint Gathering* events and the desire to continue having a yearly event.

Participant feedback on each of the themes indicated that attendees are interested in learning more about:

- **Housing:**
 - Financially viable housing projects.
 - Access to financing/funding for housing.
 - Better access to information on housing from the Department.
- **Child and Family Services:**
 - Improving community wellness through healing and health services.
 - Structures and models that promote well-being from other parts of the country.
 - Engagement with First Nations communities on a prevention-based approach for more effective delivery of child and family services.
- **Economic Development:**
 - How to overcome limited availability of program funding from the Department.
 - Business planning and proposal writing training for Economic Development and Land Management Officers.
 - How to capitalize on partnership opportunities for reserve land development.
- **Considerations moving forward:**
 - Follow-up on identified action items (i.e. greater communication and engagement regarding child and family services, matching mentees with mentors).
 - Incorporate youth throughout *Joint Gathering* events by engaging them as presenters, mentees, etc.

The First Nations Leadership Council and INAC BC Region will continue to monitor progress on key issues. Together, we will collaborate on emerging opportunities and future actions to improve Indigenous social well-being and economic prosperity, to develop healthier and more self-sufficient communities.



