



# ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS BULLETIN ASSEMBLÉE DES PREMIÈRES NATIONS

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March 3, 2010

## **AFN NATIONAL CHIEF ENCOURAGED BY CANADA'S COMMITMENT IN SPEECH FROM THE THRONE TO ENDORSE UN DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

(Ottawa, ON) – Assembly of First Nations National Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo said he is encouraged by Canada's commitment to endorse the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as stated in today's Speech from the Throne.

"First Nations leaders and citizens across the country have been united in our call for Canada to sign-on to the United Nations Declaration," National Chief Atleo said. "We have taken this message to every audience throughout Canada and around the world, and today we are encouraged that Canada has listened. This commitment offers the potential for real, transformational change in the relationship between First Nations and Canada."

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, passed in 2007, is an expression of the fundamental principles that should guide the relationship between governments and indigenous peoples.

National Chief Atleo stated: "The UN Declaration and its principles of reconciliation and partnership can guide all the other important work referenced in the Speech from the Throne. It will set the parameters for full respectful engagement and mutually acceptable resolution on the matters of citizenship, land, property and water rights and regulation," National Chief Atleo said. "The commitment to work with us hand-in-hand to reform and strengthen education responds to our call to work together to generate hope and opportunity for our youth. The Government has also made a very important commitment to taking action on the critical issue of missing and murdered women in our communities."

The National Chief noted that First Nations across the country will be watching the federal budget tomorrow to see whether there will be additional detail and investments referenced to turn commitments into action. First Nations are concerned about possible cutbacks to existing programs and services and want to ensure there is opportunity to build on the momentum from today's positive Speech from the Throne.

"The Winter Olympics demonstrated that the principles of recognition and respect create the right foundation for real partnerships that produce innovation and shared benefits for everyone involved," the National Chief said. "This is the way forward. This is consistent with our Treaties and our original relationship. This indeed could lead to a stronger Canada. Today, we take the next step forward on the long journey to reconciliation and opportunity for our people, and for Canada to fulfill its tremendous potential."

The Assembly of First Nations is the national organization representing First Nations citizens in Canada.

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