



January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2012  
First Nations Meeting with the Government of Canada

# Day of Action & Rally A Resource Guide

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## **What is the First Nations - 'Crown' Gathering?**

In the 2011 Speech from the Throne, the government of Canada signaled a willingness to meet with First Nations leadership. These types of meetings do not happen often. When Canada fails to listen to First Nations it serves to perpetuate the circumstances that lead to crisis situations for many First Nations communities.

We have a direct relationship with the Crown that is embodied within the Treaties. The Crown at present is Queen Elizabeth II. Within Canada, she is represented by the Governor General of Canada, David Johnston who is also confirmed to attend the First Nations - 'Crown' Gathering which will take place in Ottawa on January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Though these distinctions may seem trivial, they are crucial to returning us to the original relationships envisioned by our Treaty signatories. Therefore, we will refer to the meeting using the most accurate terms possible - the First Nations meeting with the Government of Canada.

## **What is the importance of this meeting?**

This meeting is an important opportunity for the First Nations leadership to meet with the Prime Minister of Canada and senior and junior Cabinet Ministers. We hope that the meeting will be an opportunity to reaffirm the Treaty relationship which should be the foundation to address our issues and eventually improve our overall quality of life and ensure our survival as Indigenous Peoples.

## **Reasons for the Day of Action:**

In an effort to maximize public awareness opportunities on January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012, First Nations leadership in Ontario have asked the Chiefs of Ontario to assist in coordinating grassroots activities both on First Nation territories as well as a rally in Ottawa. These events will run concurrently and key messages have been developed (below) to assist First Nations citizens in their activities. These messages are meant to be supportive of the messages First Nations leadership will deliver to the government of Canada.

"Honour the Treaties" has been a foundational theme for First Nations in Ontario when direct action has been initiated by First Nation citizens. This theme is flexible so that communities can develop their key messages around Treaties, Treaty implementation and assertion of First Nation jurisdiction.

Communities are being asked to consider the bolded messaging below and incorporate into any sign, flags banners and placards for the day of the rally.

### **Supportive Messaging for Rally and Community Activities:**

- **Respect our children's' futures, Respect our basic human rights.**
- This meeting must not be a photo opportunity – there must be a solid commitment for a **continuous relationship** that is regularly confirmed and renewed, as was agreed upon by the **Two Row Wampum and the Silver Covenant Chain**.
- This meeting must be the start of **reaffirming the Treaty relationship** and the **implementation of treaty rights**.
- The Conservative government must be convinced and put on notice that if there is not a commitment to **dealing with land rights matters, the economic future of Canada is in jeopardy**.
- 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.
- There is a need to address several matters – the fiscal relationship, equity in resource development, compensation for the use of our resources, issues of consultation and accommodation and **free, prior and informed consent**. These matters can be addressed as part of the ongoing discussions.
- **Indigenous peoples have full jurisdiction over their Home Lands**, Turtle Island, the resources, and their citizens through comprehensive governance systems.
- **Treaties and other agreements were entered into as living relationships**, establishing peace, friendship, and economic stability with other Indigenous Nations and settler governments.
- **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.
- The formation and consolidation of **Canada was made possible through the cooperation and goodwill of First Nations**.

### **A Checklist for Community Activities:**

#### Pre-planning

- Determine your event or activities such as:
  - Sacred Fires, Protocols and Ceremonies on the Land
  - Community Gatherings, Marches
  - Traditional Harvesting
  - Information Sessions
- Send out flyer to all First Nation communities

- Contact surrounding First Nation groups, i.e. friendship centers and other service organizations

### Event

- Choose a time for your event
- Choose a location or start and finish point
- Choose a venue
- Obtain permits, usually from the municipal authority, for the site(s) chosen for the gathering or route (if necessary)
- Distribute banners, placard and other education material at the location
- Liaise with local or provincial police as needed in your area (if necessary)
- Ensure first aid services are available
- Provide facilities for participants i.e. portable washrooms, food and beverages (water)

### Communications/Promotions

- Prepare a flyer for distribution using the key messages inviting all First Nations and supports to participate in the event
- Distribute flyer at local events and venues prior to the event
- Invite local organizations that may be sympathetic such as unions, human rights and NGO's
- Invite your local Member of Parliament and provincial or territorial representative and local political party to participate
- Post information on the web
- Develop a speakers list
- Prepare speaking points (suggests provided above)
- Prepare a sound system and stage or platform
- Decide whether you will have music or other entertainment and make the necessary arrangements for those
- Create banners and placards for the event, using key themes
- Contact local media, print, radio and television and inform them of your plans
- Provide your own photography/recording services

### **Contact Information:**

For more information, please contact Nathan Wright, [nathan@coo.org](mailto:nathan@coo.org)