



For Immediate Release

First Nation leaders affirm coordinated plans of action to support First Nation governments

UOI OFFICES, Nipissing First Nation (November 3, 2011) - Coordination of effort was high on the list of priorities today as the Assembly of First Nations National Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo met with Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Chief Patrick Madahbee and Ontario Regional Chief Angus Toulouse. The meeting was an opportunity to profile Anishinabek Nation priorities in health, governance, education and economic development and confirm linkages to broader regional and national efforts.

National Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo was very supportive of the Anishinabek Nation process to reaffirm its nationhood. "I am very pleased with the National Chief's appreciation of our Anishinaabe Chi-Naaknigewin. Our intention is that our constitution will provide a solid basis to reset the Nation-to-Nation relationship - the relationship our ancestors intended," said Anishinabek Grand Council Chief Patrick Madahbee.

Both Atleo and Madahbee are long-time proponents of resetting the relationship between First Nations and the Crown. "The Indian Act has to go. Look what it has done to divide our nations and pit us against each other over piecemeal funding," Madahbee stated. "But first and foremost, our constitution is for us: to unify and inspire us, especially our youth," Madahbee continued. "We must continue to move forward to establish our governments, implement our treaties, and exercise our inherent rights and jurisdictions."

"Our job at the national level is to stand shoulder to shoulder with First Nation governments advancing their rights and responsibilities based on the Treaties and First Nation jurisdiction," said AFN National Chief Shawn Atleo. "This means opening the doors for direct discussion between governments and Chiefs and intense advocacy efforts with all sectors of Canadian society. It is critical that we work together to support one another and increase the rate and pace of change for all First Nations peoples right across the country."

Ontario Regional Chief Angus Toulouse echoed the National Chief's sentiments, "here in Ontario, we have many diverse issues. We need to understand each others' roles and respectfully work together to advance each and every one of those issues. Whether it's the land and community development issues of the south or the particular challenges of the north and remote areas, we need coordinated action to make real progress."

National Chief Atleo added, "With so many competing priorities and issues, it's critical that we have a plan of coordinated action and attention on all issues from our land and treaty rights, to housing, to youth suicide and violence against women and girls. All of these issues are critical and matters of life and death in many of our communities."

All three First Nation leaders acknowledged the importance of today's meeting. "I think we need to send a



strong message to our citizens that we are trying to find ways of working together- to strengthen our ties in advancing priorities on behalf of all our citizens, ” concluded Grand Chief Madahbee.

The Anishinabek Nation established the Union of Ontario Indians as its secretariat in 1949. The UOI is a political advocate for 39 member communities across Ontario, representing approximately 55,000 people. The Union of Ontario Indians is the oldest political organization in Ontario and can trace its roots back to the Confederacy of Three Fires, which existed long before European contact.

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