



Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council

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For Immediate Release
PRESS RELEASE

NTC frustrated with lack of immediate action from the province of BC for First Nations Child and Family Services

First Nations leaders in Vancouver demand commitment, not talk

(June 1, 2016 – Port Alberni, BC) This week in Vancouver, over 400 First Nations leaders, front line workers and representatives from Aboriginal children and family organizations gathered to meet with the **Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD)** at the BC First Nations Child and Family Gathering.

Meetings held this week have shown little progress and the **Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council (NTC)** is frustrated with the lack of committed action from the Ministry and the province of BC.

“We will call upon our partners and allies to ensure that British Columbians are aware of the province’s continued inaction for the benefit of First Nations children. A premier who ran on a *Families First* platform has not put our children first, but last on the provinces’ priorities,” stated Deb Foxcroft, NTC President. “We call upon Minister Stephanie Cadieux to meet with the First Nations Leadership Council as soon as possible and develop a joint action plan. It appears that MCFD is only interested in investing internally in their Ministry by way of the Plecas Report and through the Ministry’s newly established advisory council, while ignoring almost all previous reports done by Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond.”

On the heels of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s calls to action, Canada’s \$8 billion budget committed to First Nations services and Canada’s full support of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)*, there is no excuse for the lack of tangible action seen from the province and MCFD.

On **May 30th, 2016** at the BC First Nations Child and Family Gathering, Deb Foxcroft, stated (with edits):

We as Nuuchahnulth did not come here to simply talk. We do not want to waste our time, and more importantly our children’s time. Our chiefs didn’t travel from the West Coast of Vancouver Island to simply talk without action.

We call upon the province of BC to commit to following:

1. **Develop a BC First Nations Child and Family Action Plan and Strategy** (in partnership with First Nations) to address the overrepresentation of the number of Indigenous children in care and work to prevent our children from going into care in the first place (with resources for implementation). The plan would include, but not be limited to items such as:
 - a. **Increased funding** for First Nations in terms of child and family services.
 - b. **A policy and legislation review** in partnership with First Nations with recommendations for amendments for action.
 - c. Develop an implementation working group in partnership with First Nations to create an action plan for the implementation of **ALL The TRC Calls to Action in terms Child Welfare.**
 - d. Commitment to fund **Aboriginal Family Court Workers across BC** OR **family court training** for First Nations people across BC.
 - e. Work with First Nations Leadership Council on **all future appointments of the Assistant Deputy Minister position in MCFD** who is responsible for the Aboriginal Child and Family Services.

- f. **Develop an “aging out” strategy** (in partnership with First Nations) for First Nations children in care so that they are provided with the proper supports, programs and services before they age out.
- g. Develop a joint action plan on **implementing Jordan’s Principle in the Province of BC.**
- h. Create a working group, in partnership with First Nations, to begin **jurisdiction** preliminary discussions with BC, Canada and BC First Nations.

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