



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 9, 2021

AMC marks International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples (by calling on all levels of government to recognize the impacts of colonization on the First Nations in Manitoba)

Treaty One Territory, Manitoba – Today marks International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples under the theme, *'leaving no one behind: Indigenous peoples and the call for a new social contract.'* To commemorate this important day, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) issues this statement.

Grand Chief Arlen Dumas stated, "There is much to celebrate on this International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples: First Nations here in the Treaty territories in Manitoba have been resilient in the face of injustices. They have worked in collaboration and partnership in many instances to build this province and First Nations have welcomed newcomers from all parts of the world to our territories and lands where they have prospered. At the same time, however, this year's International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples is particularly crucial for First Nations and for Canadians as we all struggle to reconcile the atrocities of the past committed against First Nations peoples in the name of colonization, with the need for a new way forward and a new social contract, as the United Nations refers to."

Grand Chief Arlen Dumas added, "I recognize the federal efforts over the last several years to provide reparations and policy reforms aimed at righting past and ongoing wrongs committed against First Nations and other Indigenous peoples. I also recognize the recent announced investments in infrastructure for broadband and for rail and port authorities in northern Manitoba which benefits First Nations."

"These are good first steps; however, much more needs to be done over and above a simple tinkering with policy and program reforms. Flowery rhetoric of reconciliation is not enough. A Nation-to-Nation relationship and a partnership based on respect to truly reflect the magnitude of the genocide committed against First Nations in order to clear the land for settlers and access First Nations' lands is necessary and far past due. The Treaty Nations in Manitoba have been inundated with an onslaught of federal domestic legislative measures, including Bill C-15, that do not recognize in binding terms the original spirit and intent of our international agreements with the British Crown. We have recently celebrated the 150th anniversary of the signing of Treaty No. 1, where I reminded elected officials and all in attendance that the Treaties are the central building blocks of Canadian confederation and are the key documents that have supported the development of this country."

"What is needed, are real reforms that fulfill the spirit and intent of our solemn agreements that recognize First Nations' legal traditions, recognize First Nations as the original collective title holders of these lands, recognize that this title has not been extinguished, and acknowledge that First Nations are not simply 'Indigenous communities' as we are continually referred to as by settler governments. Referring to us in these paternalistic ways is not reconciliation. There must be more accelerated efforts and more Nation-to-Nation discussions. One such request is a seat at the table at the upcoming First Ministers Conference, to consult on and weigh in on many of these issues, including constitutional reform, reconciling the Crown's assumed sovereignty - and the racist doctrines on which it is based - with First Nations inherent rights, and on giving more meaning to Section 35 of Constitution Act, 1982."

Grand Chief Dumas concluded, “while there is much to celebrate on this International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples for the First Nations in Manitoba, more intensive efforts and reforms, such as the ones mentioned, are needed if Canada is to fully come to terms with its colonial past and address the current climate change disaster in a meaningful way in full partnership with First Nations. Coming to terms with the past wrongs and addressing the run-away global warming catastrophe will help all Canadians achieve a new social contract with Indigenous peoples in this country, leave no one behind, and prepare for a true nation-to-nation relationship with the Treaty Nations in Manitoba in a post-COVID world.”

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About the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs

The AMC was formed in 1988 by the Chiefs in Manitoba to advocate on issues that commonly affect First Nations in Manitoba. AMC is an authorized representative of 62 of the 63 First Nations in Manitoba with a total of more than 151,000 First Nation citizens in the province, accounting for approximately 12 percent of the provincial population. AMC represents a diversity of Anishinaabe (Ojibway), Nehetho / Inineu (Cree), Anishinew (Ojibwe-Cree), Denesuline (Dene) and Dakota Oyate (Dakota) people.