



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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On International Youth Day 2021, the AMC calls for more systemic supports for First Nations youth in Manitoba

Treaty One Territory, Manitoba – Today is recognized as International Youth Day under the theme of, “*Transforming Food Systems: Youth Innovation for Human and Planetary Health.*” Coinciding with International Youth Day, Canadian Heritage and Diversity, Inclusion and Youth Minister Bardish Chagger also released the first ever report on *The State of Canada’s Youth*. The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) issues this statement to acknowledge and mark International Youth Day, while calling for more Manitoba representation on the federal youth advisory council and more involvement of Manitoba First Nations youth in leading the implementation of the recommendations of the new report on the *State of Canada’s Youth* with respect to its extensive reference to reconciliation and the needs of First Nations youth.

“On International Youth Day 2021, the AMC first and foremost wants to give a shout-out and heartfelt appreciation to our First Nations youth and social media influencers who have assisted with the AMC COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign,” stated Grand Chief Arlen Dumas. “These youth and influencers have played a critical role in making the campaign a success and for increasing rates of vaccinations within our on and off reserve populations. All First Nations youth no matter where they reside or what their circumstance happen to be, are loved and appreciated for who they are, and are to be celebrated and honoured every day and especially on International Youth Day 2021.”

Grand Chief Dumas went on to say, “While we can celebrate First Nations youth involvement in the struggle for justice and for their successes in education, there remains many troubling circumstances and a long list of challenges facing our youth including: severe mental health and wellness challenges exacerbated by the pandemic, a lack of health and education opportunities and, most troubling of all, gross overrepresentation within the child welfare and youth criminal justice systems of Manitoba. First Nations youth, most significantly First Nations girls and young women, continue to be underserved and under protected by the police and Manitoba’s justice system, who are more interested in prosecuting First Nations girls and young women for alleged misdemeanors than in pursuing those who seek to harm them through violence and exploitation.”

Grand Chief Dumas added, “In a very timely manner, Minister Chagger yesterday released the first ever Report on the State of Canada’s Youth. For this report youth from across the country shared their views based on the six priority areas identified in Canada’s youth policy: Truth and Reconciliation; Environment and Climate Action; Health and Wellness; Leadership and Impact; Employment; and Innovation, Skills and Learning.”

“I thank Minister Chagger for this very timely report. The AMC will be conducting a full review of the *State of Canada’s Youth* for its relevance and implications for the specific challenges faced by First Nations youth in Manitoba. We will seek to identify appropriate First Nations’ representation within this report, and follow up with Minister Chagger in the not too distant future to ensure that our First Nations youth are always leading and are always represented in national reports and advisory councils. Given the recent specific challenges within Manitoba, I will nevertheless call on the federal government and urge all stakeholders to consider and support a specific report on the state of Manitoba’s First Nations youth,” concluded Grand Chief Dumas.

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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.