



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AMC statement on opening of COP26 climate conference

Treaty One Territory, Manitoba – The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) issues this statement to mark the opening of the annual Conference of Parties (COP) in Glasgow, Scotland. The global decision-making body has met each year since the early 90s to implement the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* and follow-up to the *Paris Accord* signed in 2015. This year is the 26th such meeting, hence *COP26*.

Grand Chief Arlen Dumas said, “On the opening of *COP26*, and consistent with demands of our Elders and Knowledge Keepers, the AMC calls on Canada, all governments, all members of the United Nations, and on all participants at *COP26* to include First Nations’ beliefs, values and worldviews into humanity’s common struggle against climate change and run-away global warming. The Elders and Knowledge Keepers of the Turtle Lodge International Centre for Indigenous Education and Wellness hosted their own summit on our Treaty homelands in southern Manitoba in 2017, in ceremony and with the spiritual guidance of Knowledge Keepers from 14 Nations, to discuss the existential threat and First Nations’ – led solutions to climate change.”

The outcome from the gathering was overwhelming agreement on a need for a new approach to engaging with Indigenous knowledge in climate research, which acknowledges it not only as a source of environmental observations, but a wealth of values, philosophies, and worldviews which can inform and guide action and research more broadly.

Grand Chief Dumas said, “People from around the world are calling this conference critical to the future of the planet and perhaps humanity’s last best chance to ensure a positive and sustainable world for the children yet unborn. First Nations Elders and Knowledge Keepers, First Nations leaders, young climate experts representing First Nations at *COP26*, along with Indigenous peoples from around the world also feel that the world is at a tipping point, and that if greenhouse gases produced by the burning of fossil fuels are not reduced and eliminated then the future of the planet is at stake.”

“First Nations in Manitoba stand with Indigenous peoples from around the world in demanding climate justice and an end to the unsustainable exploitation of our sacred lands and territories, which degrades the lands and waters, leads to species extinction, and is a direct cause of global warming and CO2 emissions,” stated Grand Chief Dumas. “AMC member First Nations call on all leaders at the *COP26* World Leader’s Summit, scheduled for November 1 – 2, to ensure climate justice for First Nations citizens as they disproportionately feel the effects of climate change. Our forests are on fire every summer, our winter road season is a fraction of what it once was, our hunting and fishing customs have been severely affected and our rivers and lakes continue to be polluted by industry. First Nations, however, continue to fulfil their sacred responsibilities as stewards of their lands and waters, working with governments to reach climate goals, while ensuring that our cultures, customs and languages are preserved and protected. First Nations have been criminalized for simply protecting their land and fulfilling their duty. We all need to do more to ensure climate justice, end the criminalization, and address this imminent threat to our ways of life.”

“It is interesting that at the World Leader’s Summit, Prime Minister Trudeau announced new caps and measures for the tar sands and for the coal, oil, and gas sectors to reach net-zero emissions by 2050,” continued Grand Chief Dumas. “The Prime Minister made several commitments for Canada’s transition away from the fossil fuel industry towards clean renewable energy sources. However, it seems he neglected to mention at COP26 that Canada bought a pipeline and that the government and RCMP are actively intimidating First Nations peoples in this country as they protect their ancestral lands and waters.”

“I believe Canada can and should do its part as a country to reduce emissions, but this is not climate justice and not walking the climate change talk. While Canada is not one of the world’s largest emitters of greenhouse gases, I believe it should still set a good example and be a leader on the international stage in the fight against climate change. It can do this by completely divesting from fossil fuel and pipelines and work with First Nations in a united front in the battle against climate change and a transition to a clean energy economy,” Grand Chief Dumas concluded.

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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 / Ininew (Cree), Anishininew (Ojibwe-Cree), Denesuline (Dene) and Dakota Oyate (Dakota) people.