



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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AFN Regional Chief Cindy Woodhouse urges Prince Charles and Great Britain to Renew the Treaty Relationship with First Nations

May 20, 2022, Treaty One Territory, Winnipeg, Regional Chief Cindy Woodhouse of the Assembly of First Nations, Manitoba Region, acknowledges the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall's tour of Canada to mark the platinum jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II.

On this occasion, Regional Chief Woodhouse urgently brings to the attention of His Royal Highness the importance of the sacred Treaty relationship and the importance of renewing the sacred Treaty relationship with the First Nations in Manitoba and across the country as an act of reconciliation, to honour the promises of the Monarchy, and to build on the reconciliation efforts of the Canadian government over the last few years.

Reconciliation with First Nations peoples was indicated as a priority on this 2022 Royal visit to Canada. Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall made their final stop in the Northwest Territories yesterday.

"Beginning in 1871, our Treaties in Manitoba were signed on a Nation-to-Nation basis with the Crown of Great Britain," said Regional Chief Woodhouse. These were not cede-and-surrender agreements but were critical foundations for Confederation and Nation-to-Nation agreements for the country Canada has become today. First Nations fought to have Aboriginal and Treaty Rights recognized and affirmed in Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution, and AFN Chiefs in Assembly endorsed the current joint process to have the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) reflected in Canadian common law. First Nations are resolute in their efforts to continue this important work, to see the fulfillment of the UNDRIP in Bill C-15 and the implementation of Section 35 Rights in Canada."

"Since 2015," continued Regional Chief Woodhouse, "this federal government has demonstrated a significant commitment to renewing and resetting the relationship, including the Treaty relationship, with First Nations in Manitoba. The work of reconciliation is difficult and there is still a long road to travel to achieve meaningful reconciliation with First Nations peoples in this country, including healing and restitution for the unmarked graves of our children who died while forced to attend the Indian Residential Schools. Meaningful economic reconciliation and a just and righteous share of the wealth generated from First Nations' lands and resources, as promised in the spirit and intent of the Treaty, must also be considered as part of reconciliation not only with Canada but with Great Britain, also."

"However, the Treaty Nations in Manitoba are determined to redouble efforts and continue this work, to build on the progress achieved, and to reset and renew the relationship with the Crown in Right of Canada. This means that the British Monarchy must be a part of this process for First Nations to find an equal place at the

Confederation table, including First Ministers' conferences, and a meaningful place in this country as envisioned by our leaders and Chiefs who signed our sacred Treaties.”

Regional Chief Cindy Woodhouse concluded, “A critical piece of the reconciliation work overall, would be an official acknowledgement from the British Crown of our Treaties and the obligations contained therein that were signed 150 plus years ago. Prince Charles has said on this tour that, ‘the Honour of the Crown has not always been kept’ with the First Nations in Canada. Now would be an opportune time for the Prince to reflect on his visit and take a strong message to the Queen and to Great Britain on the need to reinvigorate and renew the Treaty relationship with First Nations while at the same time ensuring the principle of the Honour of the Crown is affirmed for as long as the sun shines, the rivers flow, and the grass grows.”

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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.

About the Assembly of Manitoba First Nations

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) is a national advocacy organization that works to advance the collective aspirations of First Nations individuals and communities across Canada on matters of national or international nature and concern. The AFN hosts two Assemblies a year where mandates and directives for the organization are established through resolutions directed and supported by the First Nations in Assembly (elected Chiefs or proxies from member First Nations).

In addition to the direction provided by Chiefs of each member First Nation, the AFN is guided by an Executive Committee consisting of an elected National Chief and Regional Chiefs from each province and territory. Representatives from five national councils (Knowledge Keepers, Youth, Veterans, 2SLGBTQIA+ and Women) support and guide the decisions of the Executive Committee.