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PROSPERITY THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS: FRAMING THE FUTURE OF ABORIGINAL ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

OUTCOMES REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With labour market shortages and an aging population, increasing access to skills training and expanding economic opportunities for a rapidly growing Aboriginal population would benefit the Canadian economy as well as promote sustainable Aboriginal communities. To increase Aboriginal economic participation, however, the private sector needs to be engaged in the process as equal partners with Aboriginal communities to ensure mutual benefits. While government policies for Aboriginal human resource development have provided greater autonomy to Aboriginal organizations, barriers to economic participation still persist among Aboriginal peoples. Moreover, the lack of private sector awareness and engagement has resulted in ongoing struggles with Aboriginal recruitment and retention.

To bring together industry leaders and Aboriginal organizations to share best practices in partnership building and promote further engagement from both communities, the Public Policy Forum organized a national workshop at The Westin in Ottawa on June 4, 2009, with a private reception the evening before. Entitled *Prosperity through Partnerships: Framing the Future of Aboriginal Economic Participation*, the workshop was attended by over 75 participants representing government, the private sector, Aboriginal business and community organizations, various sector associations, as well as training and research institutes. This report summarizes the key themes and issues that were discussed, and provides recommendations for moving forward with a collaborative vision of sustainable economic development for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal stakeholders.

Attitudinal Issues and Practical Concerns

Based on the experiences and perspectives that were shared at the workshop, building effective partnerships between Aboriginal communities and the private sector will involve an adjustment in thinking as well as a commitment to address systemic obstacles within the public sector, industries, and Aboriginal communities.

- **Expectations of fiduciary responsibility** must be replaced with Aboriginal empowerment and a new perception of private sector partnerships; however, patience will be needed as such collaborative approaches to economic development involve long-term learning.
- To foster greater **trust between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal stakeholders**, the private sector must realize the value of establishing relationships with communities before entering into partnership agreements.
- Given the interdependency that exists between employers and Aboriginal communities, the private sector should avoid perceiving **partnerships as a one-way relationship** when they have as much to gain from collaboration as Aboriginal communities.
- While the competitive environment is linked to funding structures, Aboriginal communities must consider the varying levels of economic progress and avoid taking capacity and resources away from other communities that may need more support; therefore, to organize partnerships more effectively, strategies among stakeholders should be developed as the lack of coordination exacerbates **competition for funding**.
- Employment issues confronting **Aboriginal women and youth** should also be prioritized as the opportunities for developing the Aboriginal labour market have been largely focused on male-dominated industries.
- In terms of rural issues, access to **training in remote communities** may not correlate with the availability of employment, resulting in the departure of skilled workers for more economically promising areas.

- **Community politics** could undermine Aboriginal business and community economic development as Aboriginal leaders have the ability to monopolize capital and influence economic decisions.

Key Recommendations

The future of Aboriginal economic participation depends as much on attitudinal change as partnership building among and between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. Lasting change requires both Aboriginal and business leaders to increase awareness about their interdependency and share insights with their respective communities. Based on the discussions at the workshop, innovative approaches to facilitate partnership building are being considered. As a starting point for the development of creative tools and strategies for increasing Aboriginal economic participation through collaboration, the following ideas should be explored further:

Expanding curricula in public education

- Increase high school graduation rates among Aboriginal youth to ensure that they possess the basic skills to enter the workforce.
- Include courses in trades and entrepreneurship, and provide training in partnership-building with a focus on Aboriginal communities to engage non-Aboriginal business students.
- Invite industry leaders to speak about their partnerships to increase awareness and knowledge about working with Aboriginal peoples.
- Invest in entrepreneurship programs for Aboriginal youth to encourage business development.

Providing opportunities in remote areas

- Provide local training, which would also help to accommodate the needs of Aboriginal women with family obligations.
- Explore e-learning options to improve educational access while considering the differing levels of technological capacity and familiarity among Aboriginal communities.
- Promote employment opportunities in remote areas by using tax incentives to encourage business investments.
- Arrange for rural-urban employment exchanges through partnerships to expose Aboriginal workers to diverse opportunities and compensate for the departure of skilled workers from remote communities.

Developing online tools and services

- Share partnership information and tools with a wider range of communities, organizations, and businesses through a national or regional websites where users can contribute insights and learn from other experiences in partnership-building.
- Create online tools and services such as virtual libraries and online forums on business and community economic development.
- Organize an online registry for private and public sector contracts, as well as Aboriginal business and community partnership opportunities to facilitate two-way engagement.

Experimenting with alternative models of ownership

- Work in partnership with the private sector to explore opportunities for Aboriginal communities and enable the development of an entrepreneurial culture among Aboriginal peoples.

- Consider options such as individual ownership, private shareholding, exit strategies, and building equity to provide incentives for more creative business ventures and generate greater interest among non-Aboriginal investors.

Encouraging collaboration among Aboriginal communities, businesses, and organizations

- Address capacity differences and challenge competitive approaches by combining assets and skills to increase economic, social, and political influence relative to corporate Canada and the government.
- Establish formal mechanisms to ensure community-wide benefits rather than just business profits from partnerships with other Aboriginal groups.
- Establish Aboriginal business and professional networks in urban centres to link job seekers with business leaders.

SOMMAIRE EXÉCUTIF

Dans le contexte de la pénurie de main d'œuvre et du vieillissement de la population, un accès accru à la formation professionnelle et des débouchés économiques plus nombreux pour la population autochtone en rapide expansion seraient bénéfiques pour l'économie canadienne, en plus de favoriser la viabilité des collectivités autochtones. S'il veut augmenter la participation des Autochtones à l'économie, cependant, le secteur privé doit s'engager dans le processus avec les collectivités autochtones, en tant que partenaires égaux, pour que tout le monde y gagne. Si les politiques gouvernementales pour le développement des ressources humaines autochtones ont conféré une plus grande autonomie aux organisations autochtones, les autochtones continuent de se heurter à des obstacles lorsqu'ils tentent de participer à l'économie.

Dans le but de réunir des chefs de file de l'industrie et des organisations autochtones pour mettre en commun les meilleures pratiques en matière de constitution de partenariats et pour favoriser un engagement plus poussé des deux collectivités, le Forum des politiques publiques a organisé un atelier national à l'hôtel Westin à Ottawa le 4 juin 2009, précédé par une réception privée la veille au soir. Intitulé **Partenariats pour la prospérité : l'avenir de la participation économique des Autochtones**, l'atelier réunissait plus de 75 participants du gouvernement, du secteur privé, d'entreprises autochtones et d'organisations communautaires, de diverses associations sectorielles ainsi que d'instituts de formation et de recherche. Le présent rapport résume les grands thèmes et enjeux abordés dans les discussions et propose des recommandations pour aller de l'avant avec une vision collaborative du développement économique durable pour les parties concernées, les Autochtones comme les non-Autochtones.

Enjeux relatifs aux attitudes et questions pratiques

Il ressort de l'expérience et des points de vue partagés à l'atelier que, pour bâtir des partenariats efficaces entre les collectivités autochtones et le secteur privé, il faudra revoir les façons de penser et la volonté de s'attaquer aux obstacles systémiques au sein du secteur public, de l'industrie et des collectivités autochtones.

- **Les attentes de responsabilité fiduciaire** doivent faire place au renforcement de l'autonomie autochtone et à une nouvelle perception des partenariats avec le secteur privé; il faudra cependant de la patience car ces approches du développement économique axées sur la collaboration nécessitent un apprentissage à long terme.
- Pour favoriser une plus grande **confiance entre les intervenants autochtones et non-autochtones**, le secteur privé doit comprendre l'intérêt de tisser des liens avec les collectivités avant de conclure des accords de partenariat.
- Étant donnée l'interdépendance qui existe entre les employeurs et les collectivités autochtones, le secteur privé devrait éviter de voir **les partenariats comme une relation à sens unique** puisqu'il a autant à gagner en collaborant que les collectivités autochtones.
- Si le contexte concurrentiel est lié aux structures de financement, les collectivités autochtones doivent néanmoins tenir compte des divers niveaux de progrès économique et éviter de priver d'autres collectivités qui pourraient avoir besoin de plus de soutien d'une partie de leur capacité et de leurs ressources. Par conséquent, pour accroître l'efficacité des partenariats, des stratégies devraient être conçues pour favoriser la collaboration entre les parties prenantes car l'absence de coordination exacerbe la **compétition pour obtenir un financement**.

- Les problèmes d'emploi auxquels sont confrontés **les femmes et les jeunes autochtones** devraient également être mis au premier rang des priorités car les possibilités de développement du marché du travail autochtone ont été pour une large part concentrées dans les industries dominées par les hommes.
- En ce qui concerne les enjeux concernant les collectivités rurales, il n'y a pas forcément corrélation entre l'accès à **la formation dans les collectivités isolées** et la disponibilité d'emplois, ce qui entraîne le départ des travailleurs qualifiés vers les endroits plus prometteurs sur le plan économique.
- **La vie politique dans les collectivités** pourrait être un obstacle pour les entreprises autochtones et pour le développement économique de ces collectivités, les dirigeants autochtones ayant des moyens de monopoliser le capital et d'influer sur les décisions concernant l'économie.

Principales recommandations

L'avenir de la participation des Autochtones à l'économie dépend autant de la modification des attitudes que du renforcement des partenariats entre les collectivités autochtones et non-autochtones. Pour que les choses changent de manière durable, les dirigeants autochtones et ceux du milieu des affaires doivent mieux comprendre leur interdépendance et partager leurs idées avec leurs collectivités respectives. Il ressort des discussions dans le cadre de l'atelier que des approches novatrices visant à faciliter la constitution de partenariats sont envisagées. Les idées suivantes devraient être étudiées plus en détail car elles constituent un point de départ pour élaborer des outils et des stratégies créatifs permettant d'augmenter la participation des Autochtones à l'économie :

Élargir les programmes d'éducation dans l'enseignement public

- Augmenter les taux d'obtention de diplômes d'études secondaires chez les jeunes Autochtones pour faire en sorte qu'ils aient les compétences de base nécessaires pour obtenir un emploi.
- Inclure des cours consacrés aux métiers et à l'entrepreneuriat et offrir une formation en établissement de partenariats, en mettant l'accent sur les collectivités autochtones et sur les moyens d'intéresser les étudiants non-autochtones en commerce.
- Inviter les chefs de file de l'industrie à parler de leurs partenariats pour aider à mieux comprendre et connaître le travail avec des peuples autochtones.
- Investir dans des programmes d'entrepreneuriat pour les jeunes Autochtones afin d'encourager la création d'entreprise.

Offrir des débouchés dans les régions isolées

- Proposer une formation au niveau local, ce qui aiderait aussi à répondre aux besoins des femmes autochtones qui ont des obligations familiales.
- Étudier les possibilités d'apprentissage en ligne pour améliorer l'accès à l'éducation tout en tenant compte des niveaux inégaux d'aptitudes et de confort face à la technologie au sein des collectivités autochtones.
- Promouvoir les débouchés professionnels dans les régions isolées au moyen d'incitatifs fiscaux pour encourager les investissements commerciaux.
- Arranger des échanges d'emplois entre les zones rurales et urbaines au moyen de partenariats, afin de faire découvrir aux travailleurs autochtones des débouchés variés et de compenser pour le départ de travailleurs qualifiés de collectivités isolées.

Mettre au point des outils et des services en ligne

- Partager l'information et les outils concernant les partenariats avec un éventail plus vaste de collectivités, organisations et entreprises au moyen de sites Web nationaux ou régionaux sur lesquels les utilisateurs peuvent parler de ce qu'ils ont découvert et bénéficier de l'expérience des autres en matière d'établissement de partenariats.
- Créer des instruments et des services en ligne comme des bibliothèques virtuelles et des forums en ligne consacrés au développement économique des entreprises et des collectivités.
- Organiser un registre en ligne des contrats des secteurs privé et public, ainsi que des occasions de partenariats pour les collectivités et les entreprises autochtones.

Faire des essais avec des modèles de propriété autres

- Travailler en partenariat avec le secteur privé pour étudier les possibilités pour les collectivités autochtones et permettre le développement d'une culture d'entrepreneuriat chez les Autochtones.
- Envisager des solutions comme la propriété individuelle, le partage de la propriété entre des particuliers, les stratégies de sortie ou la constitution de capitaux propres pour offrir des mesures d'incitation pour des entreprises commerciales plus créatives et éveiller davantage l'intérêt des investisseurs non-autochtones.

Encourager la collaboration entre les organisations, les entreprises et les collectivités autochtones

- Se pencher sur le problème des différences de capacité et encourager à trouver des approches concurrentielles en combinant les actifs et les compétences pour une influence accrue sur le milieu canadien des affaires et sur le gouvernement, des points de vue économique, social et politique.
- Mettre en place des mécanismes formels pour veiller à ce que les collectivités dans leur ensemble, et pas seulement les entreprises, bénéficient des partenariats avec d'autres groupes autochtones.
- Créer des réseaux d'entreprises et de professionnels autochtones dans les centres urbains pour mettre en contact les demandeurs d'emploi et les dirigeants d'entreprise.

1. INTRODUCTION

Although Canada is in the midst of a recession, skills shortages compounded by demographic shifts continue to concern both the public and private sectors. While a large percentage of the workforce is nearing retirement, overall population growth rates are insufficient to fill the anticipated gaps in the labour market, resulting in the need to find alternative sources of labour to ensure future net growth. Despite an overall shrinking of the workforce, the Aboriginal population is not only growing much faster than the non-Aboriginal population, but the growth has resulted in a relatively younger demographic. In light of the demographic trends, skills training deficits, and labour market demands, increasing access to skills training and expanding economic opportunities for Aboriginal peoples would not only benefit their communities, but also the Canadian economy as a whole.

Increasing Aboriginal economic participation definitely has many advantages; however, to realize the full potential of Aboriginal inclusion, the private sector must be engaged in the process as partners that would not only contribute expertise and capital, but also benefit from the involvement and human capital of Aboriginal communities. To provide a platform for dialogue between corporate employers and aboriginal organizations, the Public Policy Forum worked in consultation with Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) as well as the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) to organize *Prosperity through Partnerships*, a national workshop to showcase successful practices and exchange ideas on mutually-beneficial strategies for building sustainable partnerships. Held at The Westin in Ottawa on June 4, 2009 with a private reception the evening before, the workshop brought together over 75 participants representing government, the private sector, Aboriginal business and community organizations, various sector associations, as well as training and research institutes to explore collaborative approaches to promote aboriginal economic participation.

1.1 Background

Established in 1999, the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy (AHRDS) is a multi-year policy and funding commitment to increase employment opportunities for Aboriginal peoples. Through an emphasis on community-based planning, the AHRDS has ensured that Aboriginal peoples have better access to employment programs and services that are responsive and relevant to their particular needs through 80 agreement holders in over 400 locations. To complement AHRDS, the Government of Canada launched the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership (ASEP) program, which funds collaborative training-to-employment projects that enable Aboriginal peoples to participate in various large-scale industrial sectors across Canada. Since its launch in 2003, nine projects have received multi-year funding and 16 projects were approved in 2007, when the budget added \$105 million to the program.

The 2009 Federal Budget includes one more year of funding for AHRDS before a new plan is put in place to address some of the gaps and challenges that remain. While AHRDS has provided greater autonomy to Aboriginal organizations that address the learning and employment gaps in their communities, barriers to economic participation still persist among Aboriginal peoples. Furthermore, there continues to be a lack of private sector awareness and access to Aboriginal employment programs and services, and many employers continue to struggle with hiring and retaining Aboriginal workers. Demonstrating a commitment to overcome the ongoing challenges, the Government of Canada will invest \$100 million in the ASEP program over 3 years and \$75 million will be allocated to an Aboriginal Skills and Training Strategic Investment Fund (ASTSIF) over 2 years. In terms of AHRDS, which was due to expire in 2009, the federal government will provide \$25 million to support current programs until the development of a new strategy in April 2010. The Investment Fund supports short-term initiatives that meet market demands for skills training, which reflects a stronger push towards innovative partnership and results-based planning to move beyond the current strategy. In light of the opportunities afforded by the

ASTSIF, working with Aboriginal communities and organizations to train and recruit Aboriginal peoples would be advantageous given the number of infrastructure projects targeted for stimulus spending.

To reflect the new collaborative vision in government, *Making Positive Change Together* was the key theme of the opening address delivered by the Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-status Indians, who emphasized the importance of partnerships between aboriginal communities, business leaders, and the government in building a competitive 21st century economy that benefits all Canadians. With Aboriginal peoples making up the fastest-growing population in the country, there will be a new generation of workers just as Canada faces the labour market implications of an aging workforce. Young Aboriginal peoples will have the opportunity to take advantage of the revenue, land, and resources that come with land claims and self-government agreements. In addition, almost half of all Aboriginal Canadians now reside in urban centres where access to adequate housing, quality education, and meaningful employment will need to be addressed. Through innovative government and private sector partnerships with Aboriginal leaders and organizations, a new direction is emerging with the current shift away from traditional dependency to collaborative endeavors that recognize the values and interests of all partners.

As stated by the Minister, government clearly does not have all the answers, and in many instances, the best thing to do is to “let business get on with doing business.” Realizing that public funding is only part of the long-term solution to increase the economic participation of Aboriginal Canadians, the government has started working with private sector partners to create more and better opportunities for Aboriginal communities. The government is also settling treaty land entitlement claims to ensure that Aboriginal communities have the ability to leverage financial and natural resources to develop business initiatives and partnerships with industry. While the potential of such partnerships provides much hope for a more inclusive and prosperous economic future, some Aboriginal leaders are concerned about the possible loss of culture with the adoption of new approaches. Despite the reluctance to explore non-traditional strategies, communities need to understand that poverty may be a greater threat to cultural preservation than economic development as argued by Chief Clarence Louie. In other words, being open to innovative economic partnerships could lead to the type of capacity building and capital growth that is necessary for Aboriginal self-determination.

1.2 Objectives

With promising practices emerging in different regions and within various sectors, the overall goal of the national workshop was to facilitate knowledge sharing across the board and support relationship building among aboriginal and non-aboriginal stakeholders. More specifically, the key objectives were to bring key stakeholders together to establish common interests and develop mutually beneficial solutions to address training and employment needs, and expand economic development opportunities for Aboriginal communities; exchange ideas on improving communication and organizational capacity to enable greater coordination among Aboriginal organizations and employers, as well as other key stakeholders; and identify successful partnerships between Aboriginal groups and employers that could contribute to the development of effective strategies to promote demand-driven initiatives based on collaboration.

Discussions focused on training and employment partnerships as well as collaborative approaches to business and community economic development. Participants also had the opportunity to contribute their expertise in a roundtable session dedicated to a discussion of best practices for supporting aboriginal inclusion through partnerships. The outcomes anticipated for the workshop include the exchange of promising practices to promote partnerships within and between Aboriginal organizations

and employers, and increased understanding regarding the role of various stakeholders in facilitating partnerships for Aboriginal economic participation.

2. LABOUR MARKET DEVELOPMENT

One of the key themes of the workshop was Aboriginal labour market development, with discussions beginning with the first panel on training and employment partnerships between Aboriginal organizations and employers. While rural and urban Aboriginal perspectives were provided by AHRDA holders that have been successful in partnership building, industry experiences and practices were shared by two private sector leaders in Aboriginal engagement. As the theme of labour market development also carried over into the roundtable session, the following issues and recommendations encompass the key points raised throughout the workshop.

2.1 Issues and Considerations

From the perspective of Aboriginal communities, workforce development and economic development are interconnected as training opportunities ensure the capacity to develop local as well as surrounding communities, and meet the current and future skills demands of urban migration and rural sustainability. Although private sector partnerships could provide the investment and expertise needed to support labour market development, there are mutual interests in collaboration due to changing contexts and some of the subsequent shifts that have taken place across industries. For instance, collaboration with Aboriginal communities enables companies to respond more effectively to such emerging realities as the limited supply of natural resources, human resource challenges, infrastructure demands, and the growing need for capital. Moreover, doing business successfully in the current economic environment also requires a prioritization of social objectives such as sustainable development. Acknowledging the shared benefits of collaboration between Aboriginal communities and employers is, however, only the first step to partnership building as there are many other factors involved in the development of a good working relationship.

The need for mutual respect

- Partnerships require much more than simply establishing agreements as the real challenge is ensuring that there is a mutual understanding of values and objectives.
- As partners bring different strengths and perspectives to the table, the development of meaningful employment and sustainable businesses depends on both communities and industries.
- Given the diversity among Aboriginal communities, it is necessary to respect the different capacities and traditions across communities, and be open to experimenting with various economic models to avoid such issues as labour displacement from a shift in economies.
- Acknowledging the unintended benefits from partnerships will foster greater appreciation for collaboration such as the flexibility and efficiency of industry and the comprehensive view of impacts that Aboriginal perspectives bring to environmental assessments.
- As an example of an unexpected benefit from Vale Inco, the Labrador Innu, who have the highest rate of type II diabetes in North America, have experienced significant health benefits from working at the fly-in/fly-out mining site, which offers set meals and promotes fitness standards.

Systemic competition and inefficiency

- The current system of public funding is a major obstacle for collaboration as stakeholders are competing for funds and focused on their own sustainability.

- Competition over funding sources affects the level of productivity between industry, sector associations, and aboriginal organizations; therefore, more emphasis should be placed on engaging industry and developing partnerships.
- The confusing complexity of programs is another barrier to partnership building; for instance, a participant noted a case where the number of funders is equal to the number of clients for a single education program.
- Since 1996, there has also been a 2 percent funding cap affecting all public programs for First Nations, thereby resulting in a process of de-skilling as opportunities of advancement have been limited.

Limited opportunities in rural communities

- Despite the number of opportunities in the construction sector and Aboriginal peoples with the necessary experience, having to write exams and gain formal training creates employment barriers; however, revising assessments and enabling upgrading could change the situation, as well as creating role models to inspire younger people.
- As the need to leave the community for training is an issue for those who reside in remote areas, assessing qualifications in a flexible manner would allow many Aboriginal peoples to take advantage of alternative training opportunities.
- Given that remote communities often lack the capacity to provide opportunities to trained individuals, in 2002, Vale Inco and the federal government developed a training and employment program with joint objectives.
- While there is reluctance on the part of some communities to acknowledge the benefits of outside training, a long-term perspective is required to appreciate the potential impact of bringing that outside experience back to the community in the future.
- In terms of apprenticeships, the drawback is that a job is required before such training is offered; however, the Construction Sector Council website provides regional information on future demands in 38 trades until 2016, which helps to inform employers about possible trends in skills shortages.

Aboriginal women and youth

- While ASEP has been successful in many respects, the program does not specifically address the economic issues facing Aboriginal women and youth.
- In Winnipeg, the Centre for Aboriginal Human Resource Development (CAHRD) has been encouraging and training women to try occupations with good salaries such as aerospace industry jobs; in fact, 30-40 percent of the participants have been Aboriginal women, and some with large families to support.
- Many resource-based industries are dominated by men, and with distant work sites such as fly-in/fly-out arrangement, women with families are even more reluctant to apply, especially when they have never been employed or lived outside of their communities.
- Female representation in the construction sector is even lower than in the mining industry; however, the industry has started hiring women with skills in trades and is offering mentoring programs for female employees.

2.2 Best Practices

Framing a new understanding for human resource development requires all stakeholders to come together and focus on developing collaborative solutions to meet mutual interests. Without patience and the time commitment needed to build trusting relationships, strategic partnerships will, however,

not result in long-term progress. Furthermore, partners need to remain open to other perspectives and value each other's experiences, and there needs to be a concerted effort on the part of all stakeholders, to address systemic barriers that hinder capacity building and innovation. To elaborate on the recommendations put forth by participants regarding partnerships in labour market development, the following discussion highlights the specific approaches that would benefit each of the key stakeholders.

Recommendations for AHRDAS

With HRSDC's strategy shift in 2010, Aboriginal organizations need to develop an employer strategy that is based on marketing and developing relationships with key employers who have compatible requirements. The focus should be on high-demand occupations and labour market trends, as well as the needs of clients, especially as individual well-being influences employment success. Accurately characterizing the local labour force and effectively promoting a positive public image of Aboriginal communities will help to address discrimination and engage employers. While competition for funding exists among industry partners and other Aboriginal organizations, there is a need to be flexible and efforts should be made to avoid taking capacity away from others. Take opportunities when they come and develop an economic strategy package to present to potential partners. Invest in partnerships by taking part in public forums where organizations can seek opportunities, share information, and increase learning. Most importantly, organizations should not lose sight of the mutual benefits of partnerships as Aboriginal peoples are looking for sustainable employment and employers require human capital.

Rural Perspective

- The lack of transportation from remote areas to cities and towns is an issue for those seeking training and employment opportunities; however, some communities are working with federal departments to address barriers.
- Finding common goals is often the key to partnership building as demonstrated by such examples as the ecological restoration project between Grand River Employment and Training (GREAT) and the City of Hamilton or the project with Imperial Oil, which resulted in mutual benefits as training was provided to the local community.
- Despite the proximity to cities, the unemployment rate in Grand River is 25 percent; therefore, it is critical that organizations make an effort to reach out to employers and engage them in partnerships.

Urban Perspective

- As collaboration is needed for all programs, sustainability requires establishing partnerships that are long-term.
- All partners need to clarify their needs and expectations from the start, especially when the degree of collaboration for certain projects can be quite extensive due to jurisdictional divisions and various funding sources.
- Considering the changing needs of industry and the fact that many lack familiarity with Aboriginal communities, there is a need to remain flexible and open-minded.

Recommendations for employers

Perhaps the most valuable principle to uphold in partnerships is a commitment to a shared understanding of goals, visions, and cultural differences. To ensure that there is an alignment of objectives, communicate and develop a better understanding of the values of the community both within the company and throughout the industry. Recognize the interests within the community and

their connection to business success such as understanding the need to respect land claim entitlements. Furthermore, the cost of a project is not always financial as there are social and environmental aspects that also affect the bottom-line due to their long-term impact. To effectively manage expectations, clarify benefits and generate interest while maintaining a realistic view of the project.

Recruitment and Training

- In terms of larger industries, their workforces should be representative of the populations where they operate.
- While recruitment in the past was based on short-term objectives, the priorities have shifted to long-term goals, which involve re-framing hiring practices according to workforce and community development needs such as life skills and other orientations that are often expected from non-Aboriginal employees.
- With some industries such as the construction sector, offering entry level opportunities is critical to labour market development as it takes many years to develop capacity; for instance, the British Columbia Construction Association (BCCA) developed a six-week entry level program in consultation with employers to ensure that it would provide immediate benefits.
- Concentrate on developing workers to avoid turnover as good employers invest time and energy into human resource development, which is a long-term commitment that allows for ongoing internal recruitment of managerial and supervisory roles.

Rural Projects

- To address the reluctance to leave small communities, companies interested in developing projects in remote areas need to engage local communities.
- Providing local training to communities or long-term work experience would likely ensure community collaboration.
- Encourage local communities to accept workers from other areas as a way to address immediate labour market shortages, as well as build capacity and opportunities in the long-run through sharing knowledge and bringing greater exposure to remote locations.
- Explore e-learning options to improve access to training although it is important to consider that the technology may not be available in many rural communities.

Aboriginal Women

- Take a practical approach to addressing the gender imbalance by offering training within communities to increase female participation in certain resource sectors such as mining.
- There is a need to reassess expectations due to the nature of certain industries and the general reluctance in some sectors to change attitudes.
- Employers must confront the issue of gender inequality and recognize the impact of their own discriminatory views.
- Successes should be clearly illustrated and widely shared, such as the real stories of individual women and how their employment has benefited families.

Recommendations for government

- Address systemic barriers in the area of education and consider incorporating trades into school curricula.
- Establish flexible ways of evaluating skills such as through Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) and increasing awareness of the diverse opportunities in each community.

- To engage non-Aboriginal stakeholders, provide education about Aboriginal communities and cultures and frame partnerships in the context of emerging demographic challenges and skills shortages.
- Encourage industry leaders to spread the word about successful partnerships and share best practices within and across sectors.
- Facilitate the development of employment opportunities in remote locations and promote the benefits of living in rural areas to ensure the sustainability of communities.

3. BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The other key themes discussed at the workshop were business and community economic development, which featured the views of prominent Aboriginal business leaders and consultants, as well as experts in the area of sustainable communities. There has been tremendous growth in collaborative ventures within the last few years as more corporations have begun to recognize the long-term advantages of establishing good working relationships with Aboriginal communities. In addition, Aboriginal communities are acknowledging the benefits of partnering with the private sector, and opportunities for developing Aboriginal businesses are also becoming more apparent and accessible due to increasing capacity and a more creative approach to investing public funds. Such positive developments help to underscore a broader realization of interdependency and a new vision for Aboriginal empowerment. While there is much progress to be shared, many more opportunities exist for improving both the quality of partnerships and the range of economic relationships between Aboriginal communities and corporations, and within specific communities as well as among those with similar objectives.

3.1 Issues and Considerations

Although corporate Canada and Aboriginal groups have a relatively clear relationship with the government, there is a lack of clarity and consistency regarding the dynamics between the private sector and Aboriginal communities. Another issue in need of clarification is the distinctions between rural and urban contexts, which have major implications for economic development and the types of partnerships that could emerge. For example, rural communities are able to leverage land claims and their resource base whereas Aboriginal groups in urban areas tend to follow a more entrepreneurial model of economic participation. And further to the issue of empowerment, if Aboriginal groups seek self-sufficiency, they need to start imagining a future where partnerships could provide economies of scale, whether through joint ventures with other Aboriginal communities or the private sector. The issues and considerations mentioned above are just some of the overarching concerns regarding Aboriginal business and community economic development. As such, captured below are the other themes that generated the most discussion among panelists and participants.

The role of partnerships

- Partnerships should contribute to the development of communities by creating a climate for investment, ensuring access to capital, and building the capacity of the workforce.
- Communities need a vision of where they want to go and a strategy to make it a reality, which is where partnerships come into play.
- Technological advancement and globalization have created opportunities for partnerships; however, promoting sustainable communities is a challenge as many partnerships develop on an ad-hoc basis and are intended to last for only a short period of time.
- Through partnerships, Aboriginal communities can gain access to markets, capital, expertise, and have the option of risk-sharing whereas businesses can expand their markets, increase their

resource supply, demonstrate compliance with the regulatory environment, meet corporate social responsibility goals, and ensure cost-effectiveness with local capital.

- While partnerships enable Aboriginal peoples to utilize resources to create healthy communities, sustainable partnerships take time to develop as there is a need to connect people through dialogue and find a way to overcome barriers together.

Entrepreneurs versus communities

- Entrepreneurship on reserves is a challenge due to systemic barriers created by the Indian Act; therefore, Aboriginal groups are about 20 years behind the mainstream business community.
- Government investment is limited and access to capital largely comes from treaty settlements and other public funding mechanisms that are controlled by community leaders.
- Although the government has the capital to contribute to an effective partnership, the lack of private capital and business education impedes entrepreneurship.
- The separation of politics and business is not a new issue and it is often misinterpreted as a diminishing role for leadership even though there have been successes and failures with both models of development.
- Leadership helps to develop a community strategic plan and establish regulations to create the right environment for economic development; however, to foster a context that is more conducive to economic development, consideration must be given to exit strategies and entrepreneurship (i.e. venture capital model specifically).
- Concepts and terms such as “exit strategy” are new to many communities given the dominance of traditional governing structures that have resulted in such issues as the restricted access to capital and the prevalence of nepotism.
- While the Métis have had a strong entrepreneurial class, the systemic challenges such as the lack of capital may be perpetuated by the corporate model rather than their particular form of communalism.
- There is a role for elected leadership to play as demonstrated by the success of such modern cooperatives as the Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation; in fact, individual risk levels often prevent access to capital whereas native crown corporations are considered to be a much safer investment.
- With profit as the main focus, some still argue that the private sector tends to run businesses more efficiently than government, and as the Aboriginal middle class grows, there is hope that the entrepreneurial class will gradually emerge.

Land tenure

- The difference between on and off-reserve land has implications for Aboriginal business development as the lack of security collateral on reserves results in the value reduction of reserve land although their prices are gradually matching market rates.
- First Nations entrepreneurs must raise their own capital to support ventures as the reserve system and provisions of the Indian Act limit individual access to capital such as real estate equity; however, some Aboriginal communities have developed alternative land management regimes such as the Westbank First Nation.
- While INAC-funded land management systems have facilitated commercial development, federal fiduciary duty leads to inefficiency; therefore, exploring such options as using technology to increase access to accounts should be considered by the government in addition to addressing other barriers to Aboriginal economic development.

3.2 Best Practices

With the many innovative collaborations emerging between Aboriginal communities and the private sector, best practices should be discussed to promote shared learning and effective implementation of partnerships as both Aboriginal and business communities need to develop a better understanding of the concerns and needs of potential partners. While there is no shortage of materials on partnership building, most of the discussions tend to be fairly high-level despite the demand for practical knowledge to support communities; therefore, simplifying information and applying broad principles would ensure that information and tools are relevant and accessible.

Despite the importance of understanding the purpose of building partnerships, many community and business leaders fail to establish a clear rationale for collaboration. As such, perhaps the most important first step to partnership building is ensuring that all partners agree on the specific objectives and expected outcomes of working together. Although partnerships are primarily economic relationships, it is possible to develop meaningful relationships with a shared vision beyond immediate interests such as the promotion of sustainable communities and businesses, and greater prosperity for all Canadians.

Sustainability tends to be a recurring theme that speaks to the desire of many stakeholders to ensure long-term progress. Some of the suggestions put forth by workshop participants include changing traditional funding schemes by separating community politics from business strategies, improving public education to better prepare Aboriginal youth for the workforce, and encouraging corporate Canada to work with Aboriginal peoples through policy conditions. Clearly, circumstances will dictate the specific strategies that will be the most effective; however, the one key factor that is critical to any type of partnership is leadership as lasting change requires the initiative from both community and business leaders to engage in dialogue and to align their interests.

While the key points mentioned thus far apply more generally to all stakeholders, the recommendations provided below refer to the specific changes that should be made by Aboriginal businesses and communities, non-Aboriginal businesses, and government to facilitate the formation of mutually-beneficial partnerships.

Recommendations for Aboriginal businesses and communities

- Perceptions of fiduciary responsibility need to be challenged as communities learn to develop independence and build partnerships.
- While Aboriginal communities need to outline their own interests by examining community goals and assets, they must also consider the interests of private sector partners who seek maximum value for shareholders, sales and profit growth, cost control, a respected public reputation, and a business environment that is conducive to investment.
- With the need for extensive outreach to the private sector, making the time commitment is critical and communities need to ensure that they are on the same page as potential corporate partners; for instance, some Aboriginal communities such as the Osoyoos First Nation have established an advisory committee of external business representatives.
- Non-aboriginal communities must be seen as potential partners rather than competitors as their development affects surrounding communities.
- Some communities have taken a more collective approach to economic development such as the Atlantic First Nation Chiefs, who have developed a collaborative strategy that compensates for differences in expertise and resources.

- As collective ownership and political involvement could undermine the creation of a business class, there is a need to address the politicization of community economic development for greater efficiency and economic freedom, for example, redefining the role of tribal councils and nations and accommodating such options as private shareholding.
- To change their risk profile, Aboriginal communities need to develop a business incubator to ensure more opportunities in the future.
- Elected leaders need to engage their communities in a long-term plan to determine whether developing entrepreneurs or maintaining collective ownership would be more appropriate based on their capacity and needs.

Recommendations for non-Aboriginal businesses

- Partnerships form when there is a need and an ability to fill gaps; however, what is missing in the equation is trust, which is developed when there is dialogue before the necessity of collaboration arises.
- Good communication can help to overcome the negative impressions from past experiences with misinformation, unstructured transactions, and bad private sector partners.
- To ensure long-term opportunities for growth, corporations should invest in such initiatives as Junior Achievement Programs to teach entrepreneurship to Aboriginal youth, and invest in building the management capacity of Aboriginal communities to ensure responsible and profitable business practices.

Recommendations for government

- Develop a new level of information delivery at the regional rather than the community level, with specific roles based on the needs and capacities of each region.
- Consider delivering partnership tools through a virtual school or library and providing online accreditation for economic development officers.
- Promote awareness of the mutual benefits of partnering with Aboriginal communities through the public education system and the dissemination of research that focuses on quantitative results and case studies.
- Embrace new approaches to Aboriginal economic development such as experimenting with a business model of education through greater corporate involvement.
- Government should be a facilitator of partnership building between stakeholders from the Aboriginal community and the private sector.
- Unlike reserve communities, there is greater diversity among urban Aboriginal populations, resulting in a need to find ways to connect diverse groups to ensure that private sector partnerships meet the needs of all groups.
- As the role of government lies in spending and taxing powers, the emphasis should be on providing procurement opportunities for Aboriginal businesses and using taxing powers to encourage business investment (e.g. the Clinton initiative for urban renewal).

4. PARTNERSHIPS BASED ON INTERDEPENDENCY

Given the increasing examples of mutually-beneficial partnerships, there is growing acknowledgement of the interdependency that exists among Aboriginal and non-aboriginal stakeholders with regards to sustainable economic progress. In fact, finding common ground simply requires recognition of the value that all stakeholders bring to the table, whether that means economic opportunities and expertise in the case of the private sector, or access to natural and human resources that Aboriginal communities could provide. Moreover, promoting collaboration among Aboriginal communities that have settled land

claims agreements could result in greater clout vis-à-vis non-Aboriginal corporations and government as demonstrated by the innovative joint venture of One Earth Farms. To better illustrate the interconnected interests among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal stakeholders, this section clarifies the strengths and weaknesses of both groups and discusses their respective roles and responsibilities in promoting effective partnerships.

4.1 Combining Strengths

In reflecting upon the discussions throughout the day, Aboriginal representatives on the closing panel reiterated the need to acknowledge and build on the economic, political, and social advantages of Aboriginal communities. Although many still view partnerships as a way to gain capital, expertise, as well as training and employment opportunities from the private sector, Aboriginal communities must also recognize the value that they bring to partnerships and the associated responsibilities of economic collaboration, which includes delivering on promises to business partners and the community. The strength of many Aboriginal communities comes from both their traditional knowledge and their relationships with government. For instance, traditional environmental practices and indigenous wisdom could serve as an asset to companies interested in sustainable resource development. In addition, as the area of Aboriginal relations has now become a common component of corporate social responsibility, working in collaboration with communities would contribute to a more positive public image. Land entitlements and agreements that include the duty to consult, access to public funding, and their relationship with government are other factors that could add value to business partnerships with Aboriginal communities.

While there is a clear need to respect and acknowledge the strengths that all stakeholders bring to a partnership, considering the challenges of potential partners is also critical to successful collaboration. In terms of partnering with Aboriginal groups, companies need to understand the capacity issues within communities and their lack of familiarity with corporate governance as some communities have yet to develop what may be common knowledge in the private sector. Non-Aboriginal stakeholders must also understand that Aboriginal communities have varying levels of expertise and experience in business. Aboriginal communities also lack property rights and control over funding, which is a major issue when there is a need to raise equity for large scale projects. Furthermore, the legal conditions and bureaucratic processes involved in government relations tend to hinder the ability of Aboriginal communities to take advantage of business prospects. As such, both Aboriginal and industry leaders need to be open to creative ways of raising equity for development projects and arranging repayments when collaboration starts to bring financial returns to communities.

4.2 Clarifying Responsibilities

To ensure that partnerships are sustainable and effective, the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders need to be clarified. Although realizing the interdependency among partners is vital for long-term commitment, there are specific contributions that each stakeholder must be prepared to make. In other words, it is necessary to identify areas that require leadership, cooperation, and flexibility, and support as well as non-interference.

Business leadership

- Build capacity and ensure increased Aboriginal ownership and control for sustainable agreements.
- Address cultural challenges in the agreement such as maintaining the quality of the environment, as well as traditional culture, identity, and pursuits, and ensuring that the partnership is meaningful to the entire community.

- While work conditions and locations should fit the community culture, there is also a need to increase retention and vertical integration of Aboriginal employees, and Cameco serves as a good example as almost half of the management team is Aboriginal.

Sound partnership agreements

- To manage expectations, making sure everyone understands the risks and liabilities associated with the financial investment and take a realistic approach to project involvement by developing an incremental model of increased ownership.
- Agreements should include exit clauses, dispute resolution mechanisms, and policies for amendments due to changing contexts although governance structures and accountability may remain the same.
- Separate business and politics by establishing impacts and benefits agreements regardless of whether it is a partnership with an Aboriginal or a non-Aboriginal business.

Aboriginal leadership

- Similar to corporations and their shareholders, Aboriginal businesses need to be accountable to their communities and Aboriginal leaders must acquire business knowledge through due diligence.
- Economic partnerships between Aboriginal communities is not a new phenomenon as there used to be trade agreements among First Nations; therefore, Aboriginal leaders need to put politics aside and consider the potential benefits from combining strengths and supporting those that lack the resources or the capacity to pursue economic development.
- While indigenous communities around the world are focusing on human rights, aboriginal groups in Canada are moving towards discussions about economic partnerships; as such there is a collective moral responsibility to make them work and share our lessons with other

The role of government

- Land claim agreements provide a level playing field with government as there are joint obligations in implementation such as territorial policies to ensure Aboriginal representation in regional government, procurement opportunities, housing needs, as well as training and education; therefore, government must continue to play a role even after agreements are settled.
- A coalition of 22 communities with land claim agreements promotes the adoption of a national implementation policy that emphasizes education for greater public awareness and coordination across federal departments.
- As Aboriginal communities are moving away from fiduciary responsibility, government needs to move away from rigid criteria and regulations to facilitate the right economic climate for investment and allow partnerships to unfold.

5. LOOKING AHEAD TO FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Based on the insights and experiences discussed at the workshop, the future of Aboriginal economic participation depends as much on attitudinal shifts as collaborative solutions both within and between Aboriginal and business communities. While the lack of non-Aboriginal engagement is commonly raised as an issue, change requires those with partnership experience, whether they are Aboriginal or business leaders, to increase awareness about their interdependency and share practices and lessons with their respective communities. The recognition of mutual interests must, therefore, be combined with practical approaches to promote partnerships between Aboriginal communities and the private sector.

5.1 Challenges to Overcome

Although reforming policies or implementing new legislation may result in some positive change toward a more conducive environment for Aboriginal business and economic development, an attitudinal shift needs to take place before there is any lasting change. To empower Aboriginal peoples, perceptions of fiduciary responsibility must be replaced with a new understanding of self-determination and a new appreciation of business partnerships; however, patience on the part of all stakeholders will be required as such a collaborative approach to economic development will involve learning over time. To address the issue of trust between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal stakeholders, the private sector should build relationships with communities before initiating agreements to gain a better sense of their specific needs and interests, as well as to familiarize themselves with the values of the particular community, which could help to promote more sustainable economic development. In keeping with the concept of interdependency, the private sector must also avoid perceiving partnerships as a type of salvation for Aboriginal peoples since the business community has as much to gain from partnerships as Aboriginal communities.

In terms of offering practical recommendations, strategies must be developed to better organize efforts toward partnerships given that the lack of coordination among stakeholders exacerbates competition. Although the competitive environment is linked to current funding structures, some have alluded to the need for Aboriginal communities to be mindful of the varying levels of economic progress across different groups to avoid taking capacity and resources away from other communities. More emphasis should also be placed on the need to address employment issues confronting Aboriginal women and youth as many opportunities for developing the Aboriginal labour market have been focused on male-dominated fields where the needs of female workers are often overlooked, which can result in serious implications for Aboriginal families. Despite the need for labour market development in remote areas, access to training may not correlate with the availability of employment, which is a concern for many rural communities where skilled workers tend to leave for more economically promising locales. Community politics could also have a negative impact on Aboriginal business development due to the ability of Aboriginal leaders to monopolize capital and influence economic decisions.

5.2 Ideas to Explore

The barriers to Aboriginal economic participation seem substantial, especially when addressing such challenges requires multiple dimensions of change and a genuine commitment from Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal stakeholders; however, new and creative approaches to facilitate partnership building are currently being explored. Based on some of the key recommendations discussed at the workshop, the following ideas provide a starting point for the development of innovative tools and strategies for increasing Aboriginal economic participation through collaboration.

Expanding curricula in public education

Increasing graduation rates among Aboriginal youth would ensure that they possess the basic skills to enter the workforce; however, the public school system should also consider expanding curricula to include other subjects that would support future economic prosperity for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth. For instance, including courses in trades and entrepreneurship, and providing training in partnership-building with a focus on Aboriginal communities would also encourage non-Aboriginal business students to become more engaged when they enter the workforce. Business schools should also consider inviting industry leaders to speak about their partnerships to increase awareness and knowledge about working with Aboriginal peoples. Furthermore, corporations can play a major role in

developing entrepreneurs by investing in entrepreneurship programs for Aboriginal youth such as Junior Achievement.

Providing opportunities in remote areas

The lack of training and employment opportunities is repeatedly raised as a major concern for remote Aboriginal communities. To ensure a skilled future workforce, industries would benefit in the long-term by investing in local training, which would also help to accommodate the needs of Aboriginal women who have family obligations. Exploring e-learning options could also improve access although it is necessary to be aware of the differing levels of technological capacity and familiarity among Aboriginal communities. To promote employment opportunities in remote areas, tax incentives could be used to encourage business investments. Another possible strategy is to arrange for rural-urban employment exchanges, which would expose Aboriginal workers to diverse opportunities and compensate for the departure of skilled workers.

Developing online tools and services

Despite the varying levels of technological access and knowledge, the internet offers many different possibilities in terms of information and service delivery. Sharing partnership information and tools with a wider range of communities, organizations, and businesses could be achieved through a national or regional websites where users can contribute insights and learn from other experiences in partnership-building. While the Aboriginal Human Resource Council has a website to educate the private sector about Aboriginal partnerships, many Aboriginal communities could also take advantage of online tools and services such as virtual libraries and online forums on business and community economic development. Creating an online registry for private and public sector contracts, as well as Aboriginal business and community partnership opportunities would also facilitate two-way engagement.

Experimenting with alternative models of ownership

Working in partnership with the private sector expands the scope of opportunities for Aboriginal communities; nevertheless, current Aboriginal models of collective ownership may limit the economic choices available to Aboriginal peoples and hinder economic diversification within communities. To enable the development of an entrepreneurial culture among Aboriginal peoples, options such as individual ownership, private shareholding, exit strategies, and building equity would provide the incentive for more creative business ventures and generate more interest among non-Aboriginal investors.

Encouraging collaboration among Aboriginal communities, businesses, and organizations

While partnership building usually focuses on the collaboration between Aboriginal communities and the private sector, partnerships among Aboriginal groups should also be promoted as a way to increase economic participation. By working together, Aboriginal communities, businesses, and organizations can address capacity differences and challenge competitive approaches by combining assets and skills to support their economic and social development. Although such collaborations are among Aboriginal groups, they are essentially business partnerships that require formal mechanisms to ensure that there are community-wide benefits rather than just business profits. In addition, establishing better ways of connecting urban Aboriginal populations may enable them to take better advantage of the various economic opportunities available in cities. For instance, establishing Aboriginal business and professional networks would help to link job seekers with business leaders.

Considering the number of possible avenues for further explorations, Aboriginal Canadians and corporate Canada have only just begun the path to mutual understanding and prosperous partnerships.

What is needed to move forward is a willingness to experiment with new ideas and share emerging best practices with a wider audience to inspire hope and action, as well as provide the tools and strategies that will enable Aboriginal and business communities to establish mutually-beneficial partnerships.

ANNEX 1 - OPENING ADDRESS by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-status Indians

**Speaking Notes
for
The Honourable Chuck Strahl , PC, MP
Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-
status Indians**

Making Positive Change Together - Public Policy Forum (PPF) at Prosperity through Partnerships, a National Workshop Exploring Partnership Opportunities to Promote Aboriginal Economic Participation

**Ottawa, Ontario
June 4, 2009**

Thank you for the kind introduction.

(Acknowledgments of hosts, officials, dignitaries in the audience, as appropriate...)

Thank you for allowing me to speak at the start of your important forum.

I welcome this opportunity to meet with Canada's business and Aboriginal leaders – important allies in advancing our Conservative government's strong agenda. An agenda that will see us jointly create a competitive 21st Century economy that generates benefits for all members of society.

Your support and leadership are crucial as we work together to overcome the challenges of these uncertain times, and ready Canada for the economic rebound ... charting a course for a prosperous future for all Canadians.

I have come here today to outline our Government's efforts to ensure that Aboriginal Canadians play a pivotal role in achieving this goal and benefit fully from its realization.

As the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, I have made it my mission to make tangible progress and continual improvements to the everyday lives of Aboriginal Canadians. I am convinced that, working with willing partners like you, we can put an end to the historic isolation of Aboriginal communities that has marginalized First Nations, Inuit and Métis members of our society for far too long.

I also want to talk about why this matters to you and your companies, and why you need to be involved. There is a strong argument both for the necessity – and the advantages to the private sector – of being a part of this process. Whether you look at demographic trends, labour shortages or access to resources on Aboriginal peoples' lands, it is in businesses' best interest to get on board.

This certainly isn't the first time I have reached out to the business community like this... last year I spoke at a number of Chambers of Commerce, including Brandon and Calgary... as well, I spoke at the Canadian Club in Toronto. The message has been consistent and is more important than ever... Making Positive Change Together.

Why it matters

Our government wholeheartedly agrees with the title of your forum – ‘Prosperity through Partnerships.’

Working in close partnership with Aboriginal people, we really can capitalize on their contributions to the economy and the life of our country. Most important, we can ensure they share equally in all that Canada has to offer.

Since becoming Indian Affairs Minister I have visited Aboriginal communities from coast to coast to coast. I’ve consistently met wonderful people in my travels. And I’ve seen some incredible success stories, where business is booming and citizens are thriving – in New Brunswick, Ontario, BC.... But it is true that they are the exception, not the rule. The plight of far too many Aboriginal people in this country is still deplorable - and that needs to change.

I am not going to rhyme off a lot of statistics. Suffice to say, in just about every category – from disease and disability to drop-out rates, to unemployment, suicide and mortality numbers – Aboriginal people fare far worse than other Canadians.

These people aren’t just numbers to me. I have seen the faces behind those statistics and heard their stories. I’ve witnessed the wasted opportunities, the despair and frustration – frustration I share.

This situation is patently unacceptable in a country as rich and resourceful as Canada. As much as it is morally repugnant, we are squandering the immense potential of Aboriginal people who have so much to offer our country.

We are talking about the fastest-growing population in the country – a whole new generation of workers at a time when we’re confronting the labour market impacts of an aging population. A young population, with the growing benefits of land claims and self-government agreements that provide new revenues, land and a resource base upon which to build a vibrant economy.

A population that’s eager to stake a claim to a better future. All they need is a hand up instead of the traditional hand out. Through our government’s historic and growing partnerships, and strategic investments - this is underway. And Aboriginal people are frequently the first to say they want to put an end to the cycle of dependency that keeps them in poverty.

And not many say it like Chief Clarence Louie of the very successful Osoyoos Band out in BC... he’s also the Chair of the National Aboriginal Economic Development Board – a very important board that is helping us shape a new Aboriginal Ec-Dev Framework. I will actually quote him a couple of times this afternoon... in reference to jobs on-reserve, he says: “If your biggest employer is the band office, something’s wrong.”

Getting things done

Ladies and gentlemen... Enough is enough. We have heard endless talk by previous governments, and seen a lot of hand-wringing and righteous indignation. What’s been missing - is action.

Our government is focused on getting things done and getting on with building that better future. Not only because it is the right thing to do. It's the smart thing to do. Making Positive Change Together must continue.

That means taking risks and trying new things. We are not afraid to take an unflinching look at what has – or, more often, what has not – been done in the past. We approach Aboriginal issues with a willingness to break taboos and confront the uncomfortable truth of our relationship with Aboriginal Canadians.

Nothing better illustrates this than the Prime Minister's apology to former students of Indian Residential Schools – June 11th of last year.

The apology forms part of a more comprehensive settlement agreement which has processed more than 79,000 Common Experience Payment cases over the past couple of years. And I hope to have some good news soon regarding the appointment of three new commissioners for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

But the apology and compensation is not the end of the story. By closing a sad chapter in Canada's history, we sent a clear signal that we are committed to opening a new page in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relations. And this year, instead of a National Day of Action, Aboriginal Leaders are holding a National Day of Reconciliation.... June 11th. In two short years - a Day of Action has turned into a Day of Reconciliation.

I am especially proud of our Government's success in securing human rights protection for Aboriginal Canadians by amending the *Canadian Human Rights Act*. This Government took the decisive steps necessary to close a 30 year old gap – 30 years too many, for those living on reserves without full legal access to the protections under the CHRA.

Driven by that same spirit, we're taking action to protect Matrimonial Real Property Rights... to ensure women and children are protected following marriage or relationship breakdowns. Provincial and territorial laws ensure that assets of the marriage are distributed equitably between husbands and wives ... off-reserve. But on reserve...those protections don't exist and far too often the result is homelessness for women and children.

This legislative gap continues to affect women, children and families - daily. And we need the opposition parties in Parliament to support this important legislation – these important human rights... under Bill C-8.

Human rights are truly helping make safer communities... but so too are on and off reserve police forces. Look at the drug busts in Kanasatake, Quebec two weeks go. Making First Nations communities healthier will also be achieved by cleaning up drug and gang problems, this is very important – and that is no different than a community here in Ottawa or in Vancouver. Making Positive Change Together.

Fulfilling promises

After years and years of unfulfilled promises, our government is delivering on longstanding obligations to Aboriginal Canadians.

We are settling treaty land entitlement claims. We have converted 315,000 acres of land in Manitoba and Saskatchewan to reserve status – a 42% increase in just three years.

And we are finally getting treaties in place in British Columbia. After decades of uncertainty, we have ratified the first modern treaty in the province with the Tsawwassen First Nation. This settlement – the first ever settled land claim in a major urban centre – is a real game changer. Set in Vancouver, it creates unprecedented opportunities for partnerships with the economic mainstream that will bring benefits to the entire Lower Mainland region and to Canada as a whole.

In addition to creating legal certainty over land ownership, these agreements provide First Nations with financial and natural resources to launch business initiatives, many of them in partnership with industry. They can also invest in their people to increase their capacity to play a role in the economy. Making Positive Change Together.

Our action plan on Specific Claims is another historic breakthrough. It's historic not just because First Nations have been waiting 60 years to see this progress. But also because it is the result of a Joint Canada-Assembly of First Nations Specific Claims Task Force. Many of our initiatives are led or co-directed by Aboriginal groups, reinforcing our commitment to inclusion.

We have set up an arm's length Specific Claims Tribunal to make binding decisions on unresolved claims – some of them dating back generations. We want to see these issues settled, once and for all.

Why have we chosen this path? AFN National Chief Phil Fontaine said it best: "When there is political will, we can always find ways to resolve our differences."

Outside of that process.... We are still getting strong results... setting records in settled claims for 07-08 and 08-09. over 170 claims settled in those two years.

Road forward out of dependency

The Specific Claims Tribunal reflects our determination to get to the root of problems, fix them and move on so we can build a better Canada together. The road forward out of dependency is already being paved.

We believe in developing innovative solutions, instead of pouring money into futile programs that don't produce results.

Our recent audit of post-secondary education is a perfect example. We wanted to know why, when we are investing more than \$300 million every year to make a university or college education accessible to Aboriginal youth, Canadians are not getting a better bang for their buck. We are now engaged in a thorough renovation of these programs to correct flaws in their design.

Also, we just announced 10 new schools and 3 major upgrades under our Economic Action Plan... Yes, we know more is needed and we will deliver. But for years First Nations leaders were fed lip service... but no more, we are putting real action behind our commitments.

We are also giving Aboriginal communities a direct voice in decisions about the education offered to their children. We reached historic tripartite education agreements with Aboriginal communities and Provinces... British Columbia and New Brunswick are already working with us and others want to follow.

The benefits of this approach are clear. Tripartite education agreements give First Nation communities greater control over education. These agreements put in place high standards for students and teachers. And they make sure schools are held accountable for the academic results of students. But the best reason for this approach was voiced by Chief David Peter-Paul of Pabineau First Nation in New Brunswick. Chief Peter-Paul bluntly stated that these forward-thinking agreements “ensure that our First Nation children are better educated and prepared to meet the challenges of the 21st Century.” I couldn’t agree more.

And there’s more, I recently signed an agreement with ITK – the national Inuit organization in Canada, representing four Inuit regions – to develop a joint strategy to improve educational outcomes for Inuit students as well. This four-government, 14-party agreement is another major step forward.

Like I said, no more lip service.... This is what Six Nations Chief Bill Montour said in response to a question from the Brantford Expositor at an announcement for a new water treatment plant in his community – something they had been waiting years for: “I know I worked with the department of Indian Affairs through the Liberal government. But I’ve expressed a lot of disappointment in the attempts of the Liberal government to move forward. But it’s my experience working with the Conservative government that you should go at it from a business perspective. It usually gets done.”

And just a quick note on water.... When we took office, we inherited 193 high risk water systems. After our Action Plan on Water was launched and our strategic investments, that number has been cut by well over half. Making Positive Change Together.

Making a difference

Our focus on vitally important items like education and water underscores that we are zeroing in on priority issues where we can make a difference. We realize we can’t tackle each and every problem that requires attention, throw lots of money at them and think these matters will be magically resolved.

We know you get a much better return on investment when you focus on bite-size problems, work in partnership to come up with practical solutions, and ensure you take realistic steps that have a measurable impact on the lives of Aboriginal people.

A program founded on the simple yet profound belief that the best social support we can offer Aboriginal Canadians is helping them get jobs - is the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership program.

ASEP brings together people from Aboriginal groups, private-sector companies (like Cameco) and provincial and territorial organizations to make sure Aboriginal workers get the training and acquire the skills they need to take advantage of emerging employment opportunities in a variety of industries. Industries like yours: mining, construction, fisheries, tourism, hydro development and public infrastructure.

To ensure the long-term viability of this forward-thinking program, the Government will invest in it an additional \$100 million over the next three years. And that's not all.

Canada's Economic Action Plan sets aside an additional \$200 million for skills and training to make sure Aboriginal people are ready and able to seize employment opportunities. And I'm not only talking about youth or First Nations residents living on reserve. As one example, work is underway in Saskatchewan to prepare Aboriginal adults on welfare for a range of employment opportunities in the province's growing economy.

Roughly 50 percent of Aboriginal Canadians now live in our larger cities – half of them in 13 cities sprinkled throughout the western half of the country. We need to ensure this fast-growing population has access to adequate housing, quality education and a meaningful job.

That's the motivation behind the *Métis Nation Accord* that I signed last September with the President of the Métis National Council. This is an agreement to work together to explore the federal government's responsibilities to Métis people. We are funding ways to improve their lives and livelihoods so they, too, can contribute their full potential to our country.

At the same time, we want Canadians to gain a deeper understanding of the immense contribution that Métis people have made in the success of our country. That's why, as a first step, we've partnered with the Métis National Council to launch a website that enables Canadians to appreciate the vital role played by Métis soldiers, sailors and airmen during the First and Second World Wars.

Métis veterans will finally have a venue through which they can tell their stories of heroism and sacrifice. It's an important step forward, not just for the veterans and their families, but also for all Canadians. These are stories we all need to hear. We are Making Positive Change Together.

Our Economic Action Plan includes a total of \$1.4 Billion in new spending on issues like these that matter the most to Aboriginal people and that will generate the greatest benefits for all Canadians.

These funds will underwrite the construction of new housing, schools, water systems, and health clinics – the foundation of social and economic progress.

The Action Plan dedicated \$400 million for First Nations, and another \$200 million for the North, for home renovations, the construction of new housing and associated activities, like lot servicing.

These housing investments represent the latest in a series of actions designed to increase access to adequate housing on-reserve, from construction to renovation projects, and it will also stimulate economic activity in First Nation communities... something at the very heart of our Action Plan.

And we are investing over \$500 million in critical infrastructure – from drinking water and waste water facilities, to health and policing facilities, to roads and bridges. Infrastructure investment is vital to the quality of life of people living in Aboriginal communities. It is also essential to attract investment and to link those communities with the mainstream economy.

Doing things differently

What matters is not how much we are investing but *how* we are investing these funds. If there is a single defining feature of our approach it's that we don't waste time on unproductive and unsuccessful processes. We are doing a lot of things differently - to get better results.

For instance, we've embarked on innovative partnerships such as the First Nation Market Housing Fund, a joint initiative of my department and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. The \$300 million fund enables members of First Nation communities to access capital for home construction, repair and renovation, but does so in a way that respects the principle of communal ownership of reserve lands.

Last spring marked the official opening of the fund, and several First Nation communities have been approved for housing loans backed by the fund. We're going to continue to work with partners in these and many more First Nation communities—both to advance these new commitments and to further implement the Market Housing Fund so that more members of First Nation communities can realize their dreams of owning their own homes.

In fact, over the next 10 years, we expect this fund will make it possible for us to create up to 25,000 new housing units for Canadians who live on reserve.

We are also trying new things when it comes to child and family services. As we pledged in the residential schools apology, never again will we lose a generation of innocent children.

Instead of the traditional government or Ottawa knows best approach, we are turning to willing partners – Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal in both the public and private sectors – to find workable solutions to longstanding problems such as this. We have 3 Child and Family Service tripartites.... in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia and two more should be finalized soon. These tripartites are allowing all involved to move to a more enhanced prevention-based approach ... Making Positive Change Together.

We are also working with willing partners in the private sector – P3's are another positive. We've partnered with [Westcap Management Ltd.](#) and Aboriginal communities in Saskatchewan to develop a new initiative that will help communities establish resource and energy businesses.

Also in Saskatchewan, we combined with the [Affinity Credit Union](#) to provide debt financing to First Nation businesses that hold assets on reserves. We did the same in Manitoba through a partnership with the [Assiniboine Credit Union](#).

We need more Aboriginal leaders to be open to ideas like these. While there is a new crop of business-savvy, young leaders ready to take on these kinds of partnerships, we can't wait a generation to produce better results for all Aboriginal Canadians. We need to see a greater willingness, by a lot more communities and their leaders, to join the economic mainstream.

Back to Chief Louie for a moment.... Some Aboriginal leaders are afraid they could lose the culture and traditions in their communities if they venture into a new way of thinking... an honest concern, but one that can also be damaging... to that Chief Louie says: "You're going to lose your language and culture faster in poverty than you will in economic development."

Columnist Doug Cuthand, who wrote a couple of weeks ago about Chief Louie agreed, saying: “This is absolutely true. As our people have grown in affluence, we have seen a growth in awareness of culture and traditions. Poverty has the opposite effect.”

Necessity of partnerships

I am not going to pretend that government has all the answers. I know as well as you do that we don't have the market cornered when it comes to good ideas. Sometimes the best way we can help is to get out of the way and let business get on with doing business. Be my guest!!

I also know that we cannot spend our way to Nirvana. As a recent opinion piece in the Edmonton Journal noted, \$100 billion in federal spending in the last decade on only half the Aboriginal population hasn't measurably bettered their lives.

Public financing and support is only part of the long-term solution to the complex challenges facing Aboriginal Canadians. Fiscal realism dictates that we invest wisely, where we will produce the best results, but recognize the limits of our influence.

A final reference to the Cuthand column – and this writer is First Nations ... he says:

“So how do we change our societies to take advantage of future economic development? Politicians talk about economic development as if it exists in a vacuum. However, real development begins with the people. You can have all the opportunity in the world, but unless you have the right leadership and motivated people, you are beaten even before you begin.

Economic development starts with successful self-governance that leads by looking at the big picture. Too many band councils micro-manage and run businesses based on political rather than business decisions.”

In the end, this has to be a societal change. All Canadians, from all walks of life and all parts of the country, have to start seeing Aboriginal Canadians with new eyes. Open minds and hearts wouldn't hurt either.

Ultimately, the power for change rests with all of us. We will only move forward when we all step up and commit to Making Positive Change Together.

And some of the most important actors in this unfolding story are here today in this room. Many of you have already demonstrated that you not only get it - you want to get ON with it. You are both leaders and champions of the kind of change I have been talking about today.

I applaud you. And I challenge you to encourage others in the business community to start seeing the incredible potential that Aboriginal Canadians have to offer to our economy and to our country. Your credibility will go a long way to help us achieve our shared goals of a more prosperous future for all Canadians.

Conclusion

I believe there is every reason for optimism - and I am sure this forum will point many of you towards more success. I wish you all a productive forum here this week.

Aboriginal people are hungry for change and are actively taking control of their destiny to create a better future for themselves and their children. We are helping, and so are you.

Governments at all levels are working collaboratively as never before.
The private sector is seizing the tremendous potential of new partnerships with Aboriginal communities.

Most important, our Conservative government has made it abundantly clear: there is no turning back. Never again will we witness the waste and missed opportunities that marked so much of our past.

We have a clear plan. A partnered and strategic plan. We are executing it to produce measurable results. We are getting the job done and we are doing it right.

We are well on our way to a better and more prosperous future for Aboriginal Canadians – and all Canadians.

Making Positive Change Together.

Thank you.

ANNEX 2 – AGENDA

**PROSPERITY THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS:
Framing the Future of Aboriginal Economic Participation**

June 3rd, 2009 - Private Reception, Oak Room (6pm - 8 pm)

June 4th, 2009 - Full-day Workshop, Confederation I (8am - 4pm)

The Westin Ottawa

11 Colonel By Dr., Ottawa

8:00 - 8:45 a.m.	Registration and Breakfast
8:45 - 9:00 a.m.	Welcome Prayer by Elder Irene Lindsay
9:00 – 9:30 a.m.	Opening Address by the Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Canada, and Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians
9:30 - 10:30 a.m.	<p>Panel I. Collaborative Strategies for Training and Employment - Chaired by Toby Heaps, Corporate Knights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marileen Bartlett, Centre for Aboriginal Human Resource Development • Manley McLachlan, B.C. Construction Association • Tom Paddon, Vale Inco • Iris Wright, Grand River Employment and Training
10:30 - 10:45 a.m.	Open Discussion
10:45 - 11:00 a.m.	Break
11:00 - 12:00 p.m.	<p>Panel II. Bringing Communities and Businesses Together – Chaired by Anne Noonan, NIKA Technologies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clint Davis, Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business • Blaine Favel, One Earth Resources Corp. • Ray Gerow, Aboriginal Business and Community Development Centre • Dr. Fred Wien, Dalhousie University and the Canadian Institute of Health Research
12:00 - 12:15 p.m.	Open Discussion
12:15 - 1:15 p.m.	Networking Lunch (buffet service)
1:15 - 2:45 p.m.	<p>Roundtable Session-Developing a Partnership Approach to Aboriginal Economic Participation – Moderated by Chris Paci, Métis Nation of Ontario</p>
2:45 - 3:00 p.m.	Break
3:00 - 3:30 p.m.	<p>Panel III. Finding Common Ground – Chaired by Kelly Lendsay, Aboriginal Human Resource Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Udloriak Hanson, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. • Stephen Lindley, SNC-Lavalin • Dr. Judith Sayers, Hupacasath First Nation
3:30 - 3:45 p.m.	Open Discussion
3:45 - 4:00 p.m.	Closing Remarks by Paul Thompson, Associate Assistant Deputy Minister, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, and Neil Yeates, Associate Deputy Minister, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

ANNEX 3 – BIOGRAPHIES OF CHAIRS AND PANELISTS**PROSPERITY THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS:
Framing the Future of Aboriginal Economic Participation****BIOGRAPHIES OF CHAIRS AND PANELISTS**

MARILEEN BARTLETT

Marileen Bartlett, Executive Director, (CAHRD) Centre for Aboriginal Human Resource Development, Inc., Winnipeg, MB and Aboriginal Centre of Winnipeg. Marileen has been actively promoting sustainable growth, continued excellence and nationally recognized “best practices” in adult education, training, and employment within Winnipeg’s Aboriginal community for over 20 years. Under her leadership, CAHRD has received accreditation as a recognized stand alone Adult Learning Centre, overseen the development and management of a Daycare and Early Childhood Education Centre for CAHRD students, has developed and now operates a state-of-the-art technical and vocational post-secondary training centre, and has completed a 28-unit student transitional housing complex. In addition to administering and managing CAHRD, Marileen is active on a number of committees and boards of directors, and in 2006 she was presented with the prestigious Winnipeg YMCA-YWCA “Women of Distinction” award in Education and Training.

CLINT DAVIS

Clint was most recently the National Director of Aboriginal Banking for BMO Bank of Montreal. In that position, he was responsible for growing the business by providing exceptional service and products that met the unique needs of the Aboriginal community. Clint holds a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from Acadia University, a Bachelor of Laws from Dalhousie University and a Masters of Public Administration from Harvard University. He is a Canada/US Fulbright scholar and a recipient of two scholarships from the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation.

BLAINE FAVEL

Blaine is currently the President and CEO of One Earth Resources, an affiliate of Sprott Resource Company based in Calgary, Alberta. Blaine serves as the Chairman of One Earth Farms LP. He graduated with his LLB from Queens University, Kingston, Ont., and a Masters in Business Administration, Harvard Business School, Boston, Massachusetts. Blaine has had public service experience working with the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade as a counsellor on international indigenous issues. He also served as Chief of the Poundmaker Cree Nation, and as Grand Chief of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations which represents the 74 First Nations in Saskatchewan. He has also served as legal counsel to the Assembly of First Nations, and continues in the role of Special Advisor to National Chief Phil Fontaine.

RAY GEROW

Ray Gerow has an extensive background in economic and community development, both as an entrepreneur and as a business development service provider. For the past 17 years Ray has worked in the field of economic and community development, most recently as President/CEO of the Aboriginal Business & Community Development Centre in Prince George. He sits on a number of boards and is also a founding Board member and past President of the BC Native Contractors Association. Ray has also served on the Aboriginal advisory boards for Simon Fraser University and Royal Roads University. He

was also a long time Board member and past President of the United Native Nations and the BC Association of non-status Indians.

UDLORIAK HANSON

Udloriak Hanson was born and raised in Iqaluit, Nunavut. She has two undergraduate honours degrees in Business and Education. She started her career in the private sector then moved into the non-profit sector advancing and promoting Inuit interests with Inuit land claims organizations. She also served as an Executive Assistant to the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development with the Government of Nunavut. Hanson is currently working on policy issues relating to Inuit and the Arctic with Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. in Ottawa, Ontario.

TOBY HEAPS

Toby Heaps is the president, editor and co-founder of Corporate Knights, an independent Canadian-based media company launched in 2002 and focused on prompting and reinforcing sustainable development in Canada and abroad. Corporate Knights magazine is distributed quarterly to 100,000 subscribers of The Globe and Mail. In 2005, Toby spearheaded the first global ranking of the world's 100 most sustainable corporations, which is now an annual staple of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. In 2008, Toby served as Press Secretary to Ralph Nader.

KELLY LENDSAY

Kelly Lendsay is president and CEO of the Aboriginal Human Resource Council, where he leads the design of partnerships and knowledge networks that address a diverse range of Aboriginal human resource development issues. A proud Canadian of Métis, Cree and European ancestry, he became the first director of the new Aboriginal Business Education program at the College of Commerce in 1995. There he helped initiate and nurture several Aboriginal business education programs, including Canada's first M.B.A. with a specialization in Indigenous management. Kelly's consulting study, *The Impact of the Changing Aboriginal Population on the Saskatchewan Economy: 1995-2045*, is one of the most widely cited sources on the implications of Aboriginal demographics and the economy. He was selected to participate in the 1995 Governor General's Canadian Study Conference: The Employee and Employer: Redefining the Working Relationship for a Better Canada. In 2007, in recognition of their 100th anniversary, the University of Saskatchewan honoured Kelly as one of the University's *100 Alumni of Influence*.

STEPHEN LINDLEY

Steve Lindley is corporate Vice President responsible for Aboriginal & Northern Affairs for SNC-Lavalin Inc., one of the world's leading engineering and construction firms. Steve is responsible for developing and maintaining corporate relations and partnerships with aboriginal organizations and businesses throughout Canada, conducting business development and marketing and providing project support to all Divisions of the Company. Stephen is currently a member of the Board of Directors of three aboriginal-owned joint venture companies, of which SNC-Lavalin is a minority shareholder. He is also a Director in the SNC-Lavalin Environment Division and an Adjunct Professor in the University of Toronto Civil Engineering Program.

MANLEY MCLACHLAN

Manley McLachlan is the President and CEO of the BC Construction Association (BCCA), the largest and most inclusive construction organization in the province. Prior to taking the position at BCCA in March 2004, Manley managed the Saskatchewan Construction Association (SCA) for nine years. Manley is the past co-chair of the Vancouver Aboriginal Strategic Employment Partnership Van ASEP Training Society.

Phase 1 of Van ASEP was a \$21 million Education Training and employment initiative focused on Aboriginal Communities on the lower Mainland and the Olympic Corridor. Manley is an ex-officio director of the Council of Construction Associations, Canadian Council for Innovation in Construction and is a committee representative to a number of Canadian Construction Association national committees including the Human Resources and Research and Innovation committees.

ANNE NOONAN

Anne Noonan specializes in the field of Aboriginal affairs with thirty years experience in Canada. She has worked within and outside of the public sector providing policy analysis, research, advisory and evaluation and performance measurement services related to Aboriginal programs. Anne established Anne Noonan and Associates in 1979; one of the first Aboriginal owned consulting businesses in Canada. She has provided strategic advice to Aboriginal leaders in order to garner federal and provincial support for their social, environmental and economic priorities. . Anne has helped lever financing for capital investments in major projects owned by Aboriginal groups such as irrigation systems and bio mass projects in Alberta and British Columbia. She has lead evaluation teams on national Aboriginal programs. She has an interest in governance and established Nika Technologies Inc. in 1999 to work with Geographic Information Systems in support of local government. Anne is presently Special Federal Representative for the Labrador Innu Comprehensive Healing Strategy 2009-10 and she continues her consulting practice.

CHRIS PACI

Chris Paci is manager of Education and Training for Métis Nation of Ontario. Previous to this work he owned and was principal researcher of Deep Consulting Inc., based in Yellowknife, NT, where he provided research and analysis for Dene governments. During the ten years Chris spent living and working in northern Canada, he contributed original research with Athabaskan peoples to the Arctic Council, in particular in the *Arctic Climate Impact Assessment Report*, the *Arctic Human Development Report*, and the work of the University of the Arctic (of which he remains a roving faculty member). Chris has an interdisciplinary doctorate from the University of Manitoba.

TOM PADDON

Tom Paddon is the General Manager of Labrador Operations and the President (Interim) of Vale Inco Newfoundland & Labrador Limited. Born in Labrador, Tom has held a number of positions with Vale Inco since joining the company in 1997. He was the Manager of Aboriginal Affairs & Labrador Human Resources for about 10 years and became General Manager of Vale Inco's Labrador Operations in February of 2007. Tom played a pivotal role in negotiating Impact and Benefit Agreements with Innu Nation and Nunatsiavut Government. On behalf of Vale Inco he also led the negotiations to develop a Shipping Agreement with the Labrador Inuit. He assembled a team in Labrador that worked tirelessly to address the expectations of aboriginal groups, communities, businesses and politicians.

DR. JUDITH SAYERS

Dr. Judith Sayers is a member of the Hupacasath First Nation, where she served as Chief from 1995 until 2009. Judith is the Chair of Eagle Rock Materials, Co-Chair of the Island Corridor Foundation and the Public Advisory Panel of the Canadian Electricity Association. She sits on the Boards of Tourism BC, New Relationship Trust, the Pacific Salmon Foundation and previously served for two years on the Political Executive of the First Nations Summit. Judith holds degrees in business and law and an Honourary Doctor of Laws from Queen's University. She practiced law extensively in Alberta and BC, working to promote and protect First Nations rights and title. Judith has received the Bora Laskin Fellowship on Human Rights, the Alberni Chamber of Commerce Woman of Distinction award (twice), a Silver

Canadian Environmental Award for Climate Change and been honoured by Atira Women's Resource Society as an Inspirational Woman. She was a finalist for the Buffet Award for Indigenous Leadership. In February 2009, Judith was admitted to the Aboriginal Business Hall of Fame of the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business.

DR. FRED WIEN

Fred Wien has an Honours B.A. in Political Studies and Spanish from Queen's University (1962-66), and an M.A. and PhD. in Development Sociology, Government and Latin American Studies from Cornell University (1966-71). In 1973, he was appointed a Research Associate at the Institute of Public Affairs, Dalhousie University, where he was one of the leaders of a major research program on low-income work in the Maritime region. He became the Director of the Maritime School of Social Work in 1981, serving in that capacity until 1986 and on an acting basis on two occasions more recently. From 1992-1996, Dr. Wien served as the Deputy Director of Research at the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples where he headed up the research program on employment and economic development. Upon his return to Dalhousie in 1996, he continued as a professor in the School of Social Work but also serves as the nominated principal applicant for the Atlantic Aboriginal Health Research Program (AAHRP), funded by CIHR/IAPH. He is also the co-chair of the Steering Committee for the Atlantic Aboriginal Economic Development Integrated Research Program (AAEDIRP). At a national level, he chairs the Advisory Board for the Institute of Aboriginal Peoples Health (CIHR) He also chairs the "Make Poverty History" Expert Advisory Committee serving the Assembly of First Nations, and is a member of the Advisory Committee on Social Conditions for Statistics Canada.

IRIS WRIGHT

Iris Wright is a member of Six Nations of the Grand River Territory. After 20 years of working with various political and service-oriented Aboriginal organizations in Ontario, she returned to university where she earned an undergraduate degree in Business and Public Administration. After graduation Iris worked as a management consultant in Northern Ontario during which time she was instrumental assisting a First Nation attain ISO certification. In 2006, Iris returned to Six Nations to work as the Special Projects Manager for Grand River Employment and Training. Two major projects initiated by her is a 3-year research project on strategies for employer engagement and the other is a Six Nations/Haudenosaunee labour force survey.

ANNEX 4 - PARTICIPANT LIST

PROSPERITY THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS:
Framing the Future of Aboriginal Economic Participation

Participants

Mr. Gary Anka Senior Program and Policy Advisor Aboriginal Affairs Natural Resources Canada	Ms. Terry Anne Boyles Vice President, Member Services and Public Policy Association of Canadian Community Colleges	Mr. Allan Clarke Director General, Land and Economic Development Strategic Policy Branch Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
Dr. Emily Arrowsmith Researcher Canadian Apprenticeship Forum	Ms. Monica Brunet Business Development Specialist Clarence Campeau Development Fund	Ms. Susanna Cluff-Clyburne Director, Parliamentary Affairs Canadian Chamber of Commerce
Ms. Emily Bain Senior Research and Policy Advisor Colleges Ontario	Mr. Bruce Burrows Vice President, Public and Corporate Affairs Railway Association of Canada	Ms. Alana Cochrane Co-Ordinator Peguis First Nation
Mr. Frank Barrett Principal Office of the Auditor General of Canada	Ms. Carey Calder Policy Collaboration Coordinator Native Women's Association of Canada	Ms. Laura Commanda Assistant Director Institute of Aboriginal People's Health and Canadian Institutes of Health Research
Ms. Marileen Bartlett Executive Director Centre for Aboriginal Human Resource Development	Ms. Cindy Cameron Policy Analyst, Coordination and Stakeholder Relations Indian and Northern Affairs Canada	Mr. Keith Conn Director General, Aboriginal Affairs Directorate Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
Ms. Maryse Beaubien Advisor, Youth Recruitment and Retention Parks Canada Agency	Mr. Bob Carter Manager, Public Affairs Voisey's Bay Nickel Company Vale Inco	Ms. Holly Cooper Account Executive Donna Cona Inc
Ms. Paula Bellerose Trade Manager Prince George Nechako Aboriginal Education and Training Association	Mr. Lawney Chabot Member First Nations Human Resource Labour Council	Ms. Kelly Cooper Senior Policy Analyst, LED Strategic Policy Branch Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
Mr. Dale Booth Director, Coordination and Stakeholder Relations Indian and Northern Affairs Canada		Mr. Ian Cull Associate Vice-President University of British Columbia

Chief Kevin Daniels
National Chief
Congress of Aboriginal Peoples

Mr. Clint Davis
President and Chief Executive
Officer
Canadian Council for Aboriginal
Business

Dr. Louise Desjardins
Senior Policy Advisor
Canadian Institutes of Health
Research

Mr. Andrew DeVries
Director, Conservation Biology
Forest Products Association of
Canada

Mr. Ken Donnelly
Senior Advisor, Aboriginal
Affairs Directorate
Human Resources and Skills
Development Canada

Mr. Blaine Favel
President and Chief Executive
Officer
One Earth Resources Corp.

Ms. Pamela Favel
Director
Employment and Training
Peguis First Nation

Ms. Sara Filbee
Assistant Deputy Minister,
Lands and Economic
Development
Indian and Northern Affairs
Canada

Mr. Kent Flint
Director, Workforce
Development
Railway Association of Canada

Mr. Ray Gerow
President and Chief Executive
Officer
Aboriginal Business and
Community Development
Centre

Ms. Dianne Gravel-Normand
Senior Project Administrator
Public Policy Forum

Ms. Karen Green
Chief Executive Officer
Native Women's Association of
Canada

Ms. Udloriak Hanson
Executive Director
Nunavut Tunngavik Inc

Mr. Toby Heaps
President and Publisher
Corporate Knights Inc.

Mr. Bryan Hendry
Senior Policy Analyst
Assembly of First Nations

Mr. Steven Hobbs
Policy Advisor, Minister's Office
Indian and Northern Affairs
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Ms. Deborah Hyde
Acting Director
Human Resources and Skills
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Ms. Kristin Kennedy
Program Assistant, Employment
and Training Program
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Ms. Marie-France Lamarche
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Human Resources and Skills
Development Canada

Ms. Pamela Lamarche
Analyst, Aboriginal Affairs
Parks Canada Agency

Mr. Keith Lancaster
Executive Director
Forest Products Sector Council

Mr. Greg Landberg
Aboriginal Workforce and
Procurement Officer, NWT
Region
Indian and Northern Affairs
Canada

Mr. Kelly Lendsay
President
Aboriginal Human Resource
Council of Canada

Mr. Stephen Lindley
Vice-President, Aboriginal and
Northern Affairs
SNC - Lavalin Group Inc

Ms. Irene Lindsay
Cree Elder
One Arrow First Nation

Ms. Nancy Martin
Executive Director, Aboriginal
Employment and Training
Miziwe Biik Aboriginal
Employment and Training

Ms. Danielle Matheusik
Researcher
Canadian Apprenticeship Forum

Mr. George McBeth
Senior Strategic Advisor,
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Mr. Manley McLachlan
President and Chief Executive
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British Columbia Construction
Association

Ms. Deirdre McMurdy
Vice President
Public Policy Forum

Mr. Richard Meyers
Vice President, Diamonds
Mining Association of Canada

Mr. Michael Mills
Senior Manager, Major
Resources Development and
Energy
Indian and Northern Affairs
Canada

Mr. Lewis Morris
President
Akwesasne Area Management
Board

Ms. Anne Noonan
NIKA Technologies Inc.

Ms. Cecile O'Neil
Acting Director
Gabriel Dumont Institute
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Dr. Chris Paci
Manager, Education and
Training
Métis Nation of Ontario

Mr. Tom Paddon
General Manager, Labrador
Operations
Vale Inco

Mr. Jerry Peltier
AHRDA National Director
Congress of Aboriginal Peoples

Mr. Jacques Plante
President
Nasittuq Corporation

Mr. Anthony Polci
Vice President
Government Relations
Canadian Bankers Association

Mr. Dennis Price
Policy Manager, LED Strategic
Policy Branch
Indian and Northern Affairs
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Mr. Marlin Ratch
Interim Director of Employment
and Training
Métis Nation British Columbia

Ms. Linda Riley
AHRDA Program Manager
Walpole Island First Nation

Mr. Michael Sadler
Chief Executive Officer
First Nations Social
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Ms. Judith Sayers
Chief Negotiator
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Mr. Paul Thompson
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Mr. Frank Vermaeten
Senior Assistant Deputy
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Ms. Colleen Wassegijig-
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AHRDA Coordinator
Wiwemikong Unceded Indian
Reserve

Ms. Wenda Watteyne
PCA Coordinator
Métis National Council

Ms. Francine Whiteduck
Economic Development
Consultant
Native Women's Association of
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Dr. Fred Wien
Professor, School of Social Work
Dalhousie University and
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Research

Ms. Winnie Wong
Research Associate
Public Policy Forum

Ms. Iris Wright
Special Projects Manager
Grand River Employment and
Training

Mr. Neil Yeates
Associate Deputy Minister
Indian and Northern Affairs
Canada