



BUILDING ON SUCCESS

A National Conversation on First Nation Self-Government
September 14 – 16, 2010

Opening Remarks by Grand Chief Ruth Massie

Council of Yukon First Nations

Good morning, National Chief, delegates and special guests.

Thank you to TAAN and KDFN for allowing us to gather/meet on their traditional territory.

At this time, I would like to thank the National Chief Shawn Atleo for his attendance at this conference and the many First Nations leaders from other parts of Canada. I also thank our regional Vice Chief Eric Morris for hosting this important and timely event.

This conference has been an important opportunity for the Self Governing Yukon First Nations' to share our experiences good or bad and show case some of our successes and benefits stemming from our treaty agreements thus far.

We have fifteen years of experience implementing our treaty agreements and we acknowledge the many challenges along the road to effective and successful implementation. For those of you just starting with your processes, hopefully our lessons learned will help you avoid mistakes of the past.

From the discussions that have taken place thus far in this conference; I convey to you that Yukon First Nations leaders are sincerely committed to their responsibilities and obligations of our agreements in the best interest of our communities, citizens and region.. We will continue to strive to achieve our ultimate goal of self sufficiency by working together as a cohesive team, being proactive in advancing our agendas and daily affairs.

We are still young governments in the Yukon, and we realize that we have a lot more learning and hard work ahead of us, however, together all 11 Yukon Self Governing First Nations, have the desire and the inclination to succeed, blazing out a good path for others to follow.

In moving forward, we know it is a must to build effective and supportive systems that work for us, and we see this happening with the improvements of our existing intergovernmental relationships with our many stakeholders, governments, industry, and other first nations.

You heard of the many challenges we faced with implementation of our new responsibilities overnight. But our expectations and perspectives of implementation were not the same as our proposed partners. We took the spirit and intent of our agreements to the word and I can't say the same about the other parties. We needed a common ground to discuss our concerns and inadequacies of support for our assumed responsibility for program and service delivery, tax-room sharing, and



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renewal of Canada/Yukon First Nation Financial Transfer Agreements.

With this in mind, we have established various forums to assist in the government-to-government relationship, through cooperation and participation in various bilateral and tripartite forums.

Government to government relationship building resulted in the following:

1. Establishing the Yukon Forum, involving First Nations and the Yukon government.
2. The Intergovernmental Forum, involving Canada, Yukon and all 14 Yukon First Nations.

The forums were mutually established to help build stronger relationships between the governments of Canada and Yukon, and the 14 Yukon First Nations with the intent and purpose of reviewing adequacy, strategic and equitable allocation of federal funds flowing to the Yukon region.

◇ This partnership with First Nations and the Government of Canada and Yukon, helped to support governance and capacity initiatives and it allowed the parties to enter into agree upon common priorities, on such things as Northern Strategy initiatives, Can Nor Framework and delivery in the north.

◇ First Nations envision these forums to address our concerns on issues interfering with our progress of implementation of the agreements and we need to revisit and critique the formats if we are sincerely going to work together for resolve.

I would like to emphasize that, Yukon Self-Government has been a success, we have the success of transferred title of land and finances, development of SGYFN governance institutions with some of the highest levels of accountability and transparency in Canada, Governance and management of programs and services allowing community specific modification for better results, we have established new intergovernmental relationships amongst all SGYFN's

At the signing of our respective agreements, none of the Parties had experience implementing these types of treaties or knew exactly what to expect. We now have nearly 15 years of data on the Yukon Agreements.

The parties have utilized the information collected to identify and begin to address the issues that threatens our continued success; we can analyze our success and correct our mistakes, as we vigorously build healthy communities.

This demonstrates to me that through open dialogue and partnership we can achieve success, we can identify SG issues of common interest and concern, apply a regime of collective problem solving to the challenges identified, share Human



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& Financial Resources needed to address issues of common interest to SGFN's, thereby avoiding inefficiencies, repetition & duplication.

We must continue to facilitate the Sharing and Communication of vital information amongst YFN Governments (and other governments) on SG issues.

CYFN is fully committed to building healthy people, communities and nations while working collaboratively with all Yukon First Nations, and Governments while doing so.

We must continue to mobilize support for the challenges yet to come, we will continue to must work to bridge the gap between all SGYN's, Canada and Yukon.

**Relationship Building is Crucial...
Improvements come from continued dialogue.**