Nishnawbe Aski Nation
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NEWS RELEASE

Thursday April 26, 2007 **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

NAN WOMEN'S COUNCIL URGES DIRECT CONSULTATION ON MRP PROCESS

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Deputy Grand Chief RoseAnne Archibald, together with NAN Women's Council spokesperson Jackie Fletcher, say the matrimonial real property (MRP) consultation process must include direct consultation with individual First Nation communities throughout NAN territory – an area covering two-thirds of Ontario.

"This can't be a cookie-cutter approach where governments come in basing the process on laws that work in non-native communities because it's not the same at all," said NAN Women's Council spokesperson Jackie Fletcher. "Every community is unique and individual with different customs and traditions that must be respected and incorporated to ensure a successful consultation process."

Fletcher's comments come after Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) Minister Jim Prentice tabled the Ministerial Representative's Report on Matrimonial Real Property in the House of Commons Friday April 20, 2007.

The NAN Women's Council made various recommendations to the report and in November 2006 urged a five year moratorium on the MRP process to include additional time and resources for meaningful consultation and public education with First Nations.

These recommendations included the need for proper resources for meaningful consultation across NAN territory, including lawyers to interpret laws and education materials to be made available in the three languages spoken across NAN territory – Ojibway, Ojicree, and Cree.

"It's time now to figure out how we're going to make these policies work for us and to do that we need time to properly inform and educate our communities," said Fletcher.

Matrimonial real property includes land and anything permanently attached to it, such as a home. In cases of divorce between First Nation members, provincial courts cannot order the division of real property or land, as under the Indian Act only the federal government has jurisdiction over "reserve lands".

The NAN Women's Council, established November 2004, works to address many of the political and social issues experienced by the families and communities of Nishnawbe Aski Nation.

Recommendations made by the group reflect attending participants only.

Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) is a political Aboriginal organization representing 49 First Nation communities in the James Bay Treaty 9 territory and Ontario portions of Treaty 5.

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