



**Nishnawbe Aski Nation**

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## NEWS RELEASE

**Wednesday October 17, 2007**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### NAN GRAND CHIEF WELCOMES CANADA'S COMMITMENT FOR FORMAL APOLOGY, HOUSING, AND TRAINING

**THUNDER BAY, ON:** Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy welcomes portions of yesterday's Throne Speech identifying a commitment by the Government of Canada to formally apologize for Indian Residential Schools, improve housing in the north, and skills training to better benefit from job prospects based on Canada's vast natural resources, however a more comprehensive plan to close the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians is required.

Beardy says that although he welcomes portions of the Throne Speech identified to meet the needs of Canada's First Nations, a more comprehensive plan is required, including a more substantive housing and resource revenue sharing plan and priorities for health and education.

"It's good to see specifics outlined, especially the commitment by Prime Minister Harper to deliver a formal apology in the House of Commons for residential schools, however closing the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians must be addressed on a wider scale," said NAN Grand Chief Stan Beardy. "The specifics outlined in the Throne Speech are just a start. By working together to develop a more comprehensive 'bigger picture' plan we can improve the quality of life for First Nations not only in Ontario, but across Canada."

The Kelowna Accord (2005) was the closest the Government of Canada has come to a 'bigger picture' plan to close the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians. The plan developed from the First Ministers Meeting on Aboriginal Issues in Kelowna, B.C. November 2005, had former Prime Minister Paul Martin's Liberal government announcing contributions of more than \$5 billion over the next five years to close the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians in the areas of education, health, housing, and economic opportunities.

"The Kelowna Accord offered a good option to address First Nation issues on the short-term, however that plan wasn't sustainable," said Beardy. "A long-term strategy and enabling legislation to include meaningful participation and input by First Nation people in mainstream society will create sustainability and encourage our people to take responsibility for our own future – this goes beyond job and skills training to include a fair share of revenue generated from resource development in our territory."

Nishnawbe Aski Nation is a political territorial organization representing 49 First Nation communities in James Bay Treaty 9 territory and Ontario portions of Treaty 5 – an area covering two-thirds of the province of Ontario.

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**For more information please contact Jenna Young, Director of Communications - Nishnawbe Aski Nation at (807) 625 4952 or (807) 628 3953 (mobile).**