Nishnawbe Aski Nation
ᐊᓂᔑᓇᐯ ᐊᐧᑭ ᐃᐣᑯᓂᑲᓇᐣ ᐅᑭᒪᐧᐃᐣ
100 Back Street, Unit 200, Thunder Bay, ON P7J 1L2
Tel: (807) 623-8228 Fax: (807) 623-7730 www.nan.on.ca

NEWS RELEASE

Friday January 30, 2009 **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

NAN GRAND CHIEF STATEMENT ON TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy is hopeful the announcement of the resignation of Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission Commissioners Claudette Dumont-Smith and Jane Morley on Friday will allow a new Commission to be established and work to begin as soon as possible for the sake of residential school Survivors.

"The work of the Commission has to start as soon as possible to begin the healing process for Survivors and their families," said NAN Grand Chief Stan Beardy, who was in the House of Commons for the Prime Minister's historic apology to residential school survivors on June 11, 2008. "Every day we lose Survivors, and there is a growing sense that we need to make progress soon in order to bring closure and ensure that Survivors secure the truth, justice and reconciliation they deserve."

The resignation of the commissioners comes after the Chair of the Commission, Justice Harry LaForme, resigned in October 2008 citing what he called an "incurable problem" between himself and his two government-appointed commissioners.

"It is very disappointing that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has suffered so many setbacks, but I hope that the resignation of the commissioners provides a clean slate from which to move this process forward," said Beardy. "The challenge now is for all the parties - Survivors, First Nations leaders, Church officials and the Government of Canada – to work together to set the Commission on the right path."

Approximately 5,000 NAN members attended residential schools. Since 2005, NAN has been working for the continuation of programs focused on individual and community healing for the 90 percent of NAN members who have been impacted by the residential school system.

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

* * *

For more information please contact *Michael Heintzman, Media Relations Officer – Nishnawbe Aski Nation (807) 625 4906 or (807) 621 2790 mobile.*