



**Nishnawbe Aski Nation**

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **ROAD TO ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE REQUIRES CHANGE IN THINKING, SAYS NAN GRAND CHIEF**

**THUNDER BAY:** Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Harvey Yesno says preconceived ideas, stereotypes and limitations on First Nations must be set aside, and common ground must be found on Treaty and Aboriginal rights in order for Canada to grow and prosper as a nation.

“The road to economic independence for NAN will require a change of thinking by our Treaty partners and the Canadian public,” NAN Grand Chief Harvey Yesno told Northern Ontario community leaders at an event in recognition of the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination this morning. “This issue transcends political parties, as there is much to be gained by all of us in a strong, healthy growing economy.”

The Grand Chief delivered a keynote address entitled “The Road to Economic Independence” at the Seventh Annual Celebration Breakfast held by Diversity Thunder Bay at the Victoria Inn.

The continued denial of Treaty and Aboriginal rights has left First Nations struggling to reach the basic standards and essential human rights to health, education, and in many cases, the bare necessities of food and shelter. NAN First Nations are not asking for more than other Canadians enjoy, but while the Government of Canada is focused on GDP growth, far too many First Nation families are struggling to make ends meet.

Canada will not achieve its full potential unless First Nations are engaged in a meaningful way, especially in the development of traditional lands to unlock the wealth of resources they contain. But this will require Treaty implementation and meaningful consultation on all legislation that affects the rights of First Nations.

“Everyone must join forces to end racism and promote unity and harmony everywhere,” said NAN Deputy Grand Chief Goyce Kakegamic. “On this International Day, we need to recommit to ending racial discrimination and realize a vision of justice and equality for all. NAN has always been actively involved in seeing this vision come to life and by continuing to work together we can make meaningful change.”

In addition, First Nations must overcome the stereotype of being burdens to taxpayers and be recognized for the contributions they make to the Northern Ontario economy. First Nations offer professional services in engineering, accounting, aviation and the legal profession, and hold countless meetings, conferences and cultural events that provide an economic boost to urban centres such as Thunder Bay, Timmins and Kenora.

*Nishnawbe Aski Nation is a political territorial organization representing 49 First Nation communities in James Bay Treaty No. 9 and Ontario portions of Treaty No. 5 – an area covering two thirds of the province of Ontario in Canada.*

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