



Nishnawbe Aski Nation

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NEWS RELEASE

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 28, 2013

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NAN PARTICIPATES IN PRESENTATION OF UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON THE RIGHT TO FOOD REPORT

THUNDER BAY, ON: On March 4, 2013, Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) will join hundreds of Canadians under the umbrella of Food Secure Canada to express concern about the right to food in Canada. In an interactive national webinar Olivier De Schutter, UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, will present the results of his mission to Canada (May 2012) to people gathered in different communities across the country. He will present his report to the UN Council on Human Rights in Geneva earlier in the day.

In Thunder Bay, many people will be gathering in NAN's Main Boardroom 710 Victoria Ave. East, 12:00-1:00 p.m. This event is open to the media and journalists are invited to attend and interview participants about what the right to food means to them as well as to hear the Special Rapporteur.

"Healthy nutrition is a key factor in helping to reduce the high rates of childhood obesity and diabetes within NAN territory. Because many of NAN's communities are remote, it is very challenging to access quality food that is nutritious and affordable," said NAN Deputy Grand Chief Goyce Kakegamic. "With support from the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, we expect Canada, our treaty partner, to work with us to ensure the basic human right to food is met in our communities as outlined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Providing our children with access to wholesome foods now will lead them to make healthy choices in the future."

In most cases, NAN's remote First Nations are forced to pay double the average cost for essential foods such as milk, vegetables and fruit, making it very difficult for the many that are on social assistance to maintain a well-rounded diet. NAN supports efforts to revise the social assistance levels to correspond with the cost of basic necessities. Based on the revised northern nutritious food basket, the cost to purchase healthy foods for one week for a family of four in NAN can be as high as \$499.00 however a family of four on social assistance receives far less than that amount which makes it impossible for them to meet their basic food needs.

"Sachigo Lake First Nation is a remote fly-in community located north of Sioux Lookout, and the high cost of food and essentials to our community members - parents raising families, elders, growing children - is a severe challenge faced on a daily basis," said Chief Titus Tait. "It may be incomprehensible to our fellow Canadians to understand the cost of food we pay; we must also address the issues of food quality and selection. Food cost issues exist in Canada - and our people face it every day."

Canada is a signatory to the United Nations Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and therefore has a legal obligation to respect the right to food. "Yet we have millions of people in Canada for whom this basic right is not respected, and we have an unhealthy and unsustainable food system," said Diane Bronson, Executive Director of Food Secure Canada, who organized the

nation-wide interaction. “We need a national food policy, where all actors are at the table, including the hundreds of civil society organizations across this country who are already implementing innovative solutions to hunger, health and sustainable agriculture and fisheries at the community level.”

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.

For more information please contact: Amy Harris, Director of Communications – Nishnawbe Aski Nation (807) 625-4906 or cell (807) 252 2806 email aharris@nan.on.ca

Diana Bronson, Executive Director of Food Secure Canada: director@foodsecurecanada.org or (519) 629 9236

Journalists wishing to interview Olivier De Schutter are encouraged to contact his office directly: Yoonie Kim: Yoonie Kim YKim@ohchr.org