



# National Indian Treaties 1-11 Gathering

*"For as long as the sun shines, the grass grows and the waters flow"*



## FINAL REPORT

July 31<sup>st</sup>, August 1, 2, 3, 2006  
Lower Fort Garry, National Historic Site of Canada  
Selkirk, Manitoba  
Treaty No. 1 Territory



National Indian Treaties 1-11 Gathering hosted by the Southern Chiefs' Organization,  
Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and Manitoba Keewatinook Ininew Okimowin



# NATIONAL INDIAN TREATIES 1 – 11 GATHERING



Treaty No. 1 Territory,  
Lower Fort Garry, Manitoba  
July 31 – August 3, 2006

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Greetings from Grand Chief Chris Henderson.....	2
Executive Summary .....	3
Conclusion.....	6
Acknowledgements.....	6
Opening Remarks and Presentations .....	7
Appendices	
A – Resolution #GT: 09-28/29-05:01.....	20
B – Agenda.....	22
C – Commentary Listing.....	24

### Chairs:

Mr. Dennis White Bird,  
Treaty Commissioner, Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba

Ms. Katherine White Cloud,  
Assembly of First Nations, Manitoba Regional Vice Chief



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April 15, 2007

Dear Treaty Chiefs, Elders, First Nation Indian Peoples,

**RE: NATIONAL INDIAN TREATIES 1 – 11 GATHERING 2006**

Boozhoo! Aniin! Wash-tay-dow! Tansi! Greetings Chiefs of Treaties 1 - 11! I am pleased and honoured to present you the National Indian Treaties 1-11 Gathering Final Report. Last year, the Southern Chiefs' Organization of Manitoba was tasked to coordinate, organize and host the National Indian Treaties 1-11 Gathering. This past summer, with the assistance of the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (the northern Chiefs of Manitoba) and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs we were able to successfully organize and host this monumental event.

In particular, with the assistance from the Treaty Chiefs and Elders we were able to fulfill our task at hand. The purpose of the gathering at Lower Fort Garry this summer was to consider the following:

1. The establishment of a Treaty Chiefs Council Secretariat (as called for in the above noted resolution); and,
2. The development and ratification of a declaration of unity statement or position.

With honour I present the National Indian Treaties Spokesperson, Chief Ovide Mercredi, Grand Rapids First Nation, Treaty No. 5 who was unanimously elected from all the numbered treaties to address the Treaty issues at the national level.

On behalf of all Chiefs of Manitoba, who are the successors to Treaties No. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, I thank everyone for attending and participating in the Treaty Gathering in Treaty No.1 Territory!

Meegwetch (Thank you!).

Sincerely,

Chris Henderson,  
Southern Grand Chief

## Executive Summary

The National Indian Treaties 1-11 Gathering held on July 31, August 1, 2, and 3, 2006 at the National Historic Lower Fort Garry, Manitoba was a follow-up to the Treaty Assembly meeting held September 27-29, 2005 in Edmonton, Alberta. At that meeting, a resolution was moved by Chief Sandford Big Plume, Treaty No. 7, seconded by Chief BillyJo De LaRonde, Treaty No. 4, and passed by those attending the Gathering, expressing unity among the Treaty Nations, and setting the stage for the Gathering at Lower Fort Garry. This resolution appears in its entire form in this report as Appendix A.

From the direction provided in the Edmonton resolution, the Chiefs' Executive Committee of the Southern Chiefs' Organization (SCO) of Manitoba tasked the SCO to organize, coordinate and seek funding sources to implement the National Indian Treaties 1-11 Gathering. There were only 13 weeks to plan this momentum event, but in that time, two informal Planning Committee meetings were held, both were held in Winnipeg, on Treaty 1 Territory. Representatives from many of the numbered Treaty Territories contributed in the planning of the event. Both of the Planning Committee meetings called for the development of a structure and the creation of an agenda which focussed on addressing the following major objectives:

1. Develop and define a Treaty Secretariat,
2. Elect a Treaty Spokesperson, and
3. Create a Unity Statement.

The agenda developed for the Gathering appears as Appendix B. A Commentary Listing of individuals who spoke at the Gathering appears as Appendix C.

With approximately 1500 people in attendance, the National Indian Treaties 1-11 Gathering proved to be a success in achieving these objectives. The Gathering was co-chaired by Manitoba AFN Regional Chief Katherine Whitecloud of Sioux Valley Dakota Nation and Dennis White Bird, Commissioner, Manitoba Treaty Commission. Over one hundred volunteers graciously offered their time during this event.

**The National Indian  
Treaties  
1-11 Gathering  
proved to be a  
success.**

Co-Chair Whitecloud provided opening comments regarding the Traditional Feast and Give A-Way which was scheduled on the last day. She stated that is important that we feast on this momentous occasion for all Treaty peoples, and we have to honour those who came here 135 years ago by having a feast for them.

Co-Chair White Bird offered a message regarding the importance of Oral History, on how the youth of today will be able to tell their children the importance of this Gathering and how it came to be. He also informed delegates of the upcoming conference in the Whiteshell Provincial Park area, "Igniting the Fire" where all cultures come together and share ceremonies and build unity with each other.

Co-Chair White Bird invited Mr. Stan Fuller, Lamb of God Ministries to offer a few words. Mr. Fuller stated, *"he comes with shame on his face as to what the white men has done to our people"*. He offered words that reflected the image of the Treaty medallion and that he represents the "white" side of the medallion. The Lamb of God ministries group tallied approximately 40 participants who listened and offered their prayers throughout the National Indian Treaties 1-11 Gathering.

**Below: Chiefs in Grand Entry**





The Gathering began with Opening Remarks from Treaty No. 1 Chiefs and official Dignitaries. In these remarks, the overall themes stated by the Chiefs were the “Inherent right and authority and power” derive from the Chiefs themselves, and that they are the delegated individuals who can speak for their Treaty peoples. Also, the importance of our Treaties and what they mean to our future Indian peoples was clearly reiterated by all Chiefs, Proxies, Councillors, and Elders.

The National Chief Mr. Phil Fontaine of the Assembly of First Nations participated in the Opening Ceremonies on Day One of the Gathering. National Chief stated, *“I want to make it clear that we are fully supportive of all, of what you are doing and we recognize the value and importance and ensuring that our people are particularly afforded every opportunity to express their positions and their thoughts on what is obviously the centre-most important issue in the lives of First Nation people, and that is our Treaties.”*

**The importance of our Treaties and what they mean to our future Indian peoples was clearly reiterated by all Chiefs, Proxies, Councillors, and Elders.**

Mr. Elijah Harper, Member of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba also addressed the Gathering. His remarks were brief and compelling, stressing the need to maintain our identity, and to be strong in our traditions, customs, and beliefs. Treaty Nations and their leaders must work together to create - UNITY.

In his address to the Gathering, the Interim Spokesperson Chief Sandford Big Plume, Tsuu T’ina First Nation, Treaty 7, offered words of encouragement and support. In September 2005, at the Gathering of Treaties No. 1 – 11 in Edmonton, Chief Big Plume was appointed Interim Spokesperson for the numbered Treaties 1 – 11, and in the term that he served, he made headway in having the Treaty issue on the forefront of national and international agendas.

Chief Big Plume stated that he was *“successful in obtaining a seat at the First Ministers Meeting held in Kelowna, BC in late November 2005, but however, was not able to present a statement. Alberta’s Premier Ralph Klein provided and alluded to brief areas of the Treaty Statement that was prepared.”* Chief Big Plume stated that holding this Interim Spokesperson position proved to be difficult at times, since there was no clear mandate or direction, other than to bring the attention of the Treaties No.1 – 11 to the forefront on many tables. He pointed out that he had requested meetings with both the Prime Minister and the Governor General, and while both appeared interested, no meetings were held.

**Below: Eagle Staff Grand Entry**



In his closing statement, Chief Big Plume called for the establishment of a Treaty Secretariat and a Treaty Spokesperson in addition to identifying the financial resources that will be needed to support the enforcement and protection of Treaties No. 1 – 11.

The Elders Forum was facilitated by co-Chairs Mr. Dennis White Bird and Assembly of First Nations Regional Chief Katherine Whitecloud. This was an opportunity for the many Elders present to offer their views and opinions.

## National Indian Treaties 1-11 Gathering Lower Fort Garry, Manitoba, July 31 to August 3, 2006

Each day of the Gathering consisted of Chiefs and Proxies from the Treaty areas sharing and providing a voice from their respected Territories. The major themes expressed by the majority of the Chiefs was the creation of a united front by all Treaty areas 1 – 11 in addressing the following areas:

- Poverty
- Economic development
- Land issues
- Urban centres taking over the traditional land (e.g., Edmonton)
- Collective Treaty rights upheld
- Land resources
- Inherent rights
- Portable Treaty Rights, we should be able to move freely
- We need to organize by Treaty Areas
- Time line is critical, Elders are preparing, we need to get have our plan in order.
- Traditional and Contemporary System that is ours!
- Health concerns
- Environment
- Treaty is about the land.
- We didn't give up anything, it is still ours!
- Who are we waiting for? We have the expertise here!
- Treaty is alive!
- Infiltrate the Canadian government
- Education
- Using our own intellectual resources, what are we waiting for?
- Treaties are International Agreements – Nations to Nations
- Sovereign nations
- International level playing field

The final day of the National Indian Treaties 1 – 11 Gathering began with overview of the activities of the previous three days and a message from Grand Chief Chris Henderson. He reminded participants that today (August 3, 2006), marks the Commemorative Day of Treaty 1, 135 years of the original signing near the front of the Old Stone Fort. He offered congratulations to Treaty 1 successors Chiefs, and Elders and Treaty peoples.

The Treaty Caucus Reports were presented by the Treaty Chiefs of the numbered areas. It should be noted that not all Treaty regions had a representative present, but nevertheless, the Treaty Chiefs appointed Interim Spokespersons for these areas.

The Closing Ceremonies included the announcement of the National Indian Treaty Spokesperson identified as Chief Ovide Mercredi from Grand Rapids First Nation, Treaty No.5. This was followed by an honour song and acknowledgement from all the people present. Chief Mercredi offered congratulations on a well-organized conference. As a first step, he called for each Treaty area to come together and have gatherings in their own territories to talk about the history of their Treaty, the issues affecting their Treaty and their mind on how they are going to advance their Treaty, and how they are going to engage the government directly with themselves in discussions. He described his role as principle spokesperson, whose job will be to advance Treaty areas in all different avenues, including working closely with the Treaty Commissioners in these provinces.

Followed by the Drum, Chiefs and Elders proceeded to the original signing area outside the Fort, where a brief traditional ceremony was conducted. This was followed by a traditional feast and give-away.



**Treaty Gathering Grand Entry.**

## Conclusion

The Treaty Chiefs, Elders, and delegates that attended the National Indian Treaties 1 – 11 Gathering discussed, shared and ultimately met in Treaty Caucus which led to the appointment of Treaty Area Interim Spokespersons.

Treaty No. 1	Chief Irvin McIvor, Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation
Treaty No. 2	Chief Robert Maytwayashing, Lake Manitoba First Nation
Treaty No. 3	To be confirmed
Treaty No. 4	Chief Morris Shannacappo, Rolling River First Nation
Treaty No. 5	Chief John Miswagon, Cross Lake First Nation
Treaty No. 6	Grand Chief Arthur Noskey, Loon River First Nation
Treaty No. 7	Chief Sandford Big Plume, Tsuu T'ina First Nation
Treaty No. 8	Vice Chief Rose Laboucan, Driftpile First Nation
Treaty No. 9	To be confirmed
Treaty No. 10	To be confirmed
Treaty No. 11	To be confirmed

The appointed Treaty Chiefs, then in turn, agreed in unity to elect one (1) Treaty Spokesperson to bring issues forward. The elected individual was Chief Ovide Mercredi, Grand Rapids First Nation, Treaty No. 5 in Manitoba.

## Acknowledgements

The Southern Chiefs' Organization would like to express their humble thanks to the support received from the organizations of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and the Manitoba Keewatinook Ininew Okimowin for their administration assistance, personnel and financial support. In addition, SCO would like to thank the many volunteers who gave of their time willingly and in a professional manner.

The Southern Chiefs' Organization would also like to thank our major financial supporters for their contribution. This financial support enabled the National Indian Treaties 1 – 11 Gathering to come together in the few weeks available to plan, coordinate and implement the event. Meegwetch!

The following is a list of Financial Supporters.

- Tribal Councils Investment Group of Manitoba
- Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta
- Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
- Province of Manitoba
- Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
- Manitoba Keewatinook Ininew Okimowin
- Department of Culture, Heritage and Tourism
- Brokenhead Ojibway First Nation
- Lamb of God Ministries
- Grand Chief Chris Henderson, Southern Chiefs' Organization
- Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba
- Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation
- Manitoba Hydro
- Parks Canada (In-kind support)
- Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (Donations of bottled water)

## Opening Remarks and Presentations

**Note:** The following opening remarks by the Chiefs and other dignitaries have been transcribed verbatim from tape recordings. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, some small, unintentional variations between the transcriptions and the actual speech may have occurred in the translation.

### Dennis White Bird

#### Commissioner, Manitoba Treaty Relations Commission

Commissioner White Bird thanked all participants for assisting in the Opening Grand March.

Thanks to the Chiefs, Elders, National Chief, Grand Chiefs, and all the Chiefs that are representing their communities. Thank all our citizens and our honoured guests. We thank you for joining us. I would like to introduce you to my Co-chair. I have been asked to co-chair as an honouring member of the Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation. I have been asked to participate at this level. I would like to introduce to you Ms. Katherine Whitecloud who is the Vice Chief of this region of the Assembly of First Nations, representing the Manitoba Chiefs at the national level.

We call on Elder Mark Thompson for an opening prayer.

### Katherine Whitecloud

#### Manitoba Regional Vice Chief, Assembly of First Nations (AFN)

First of all, good morning. I would like to thank the Elders. Thank you for being here for over the next few days, where we will be looking to you for guidance, for your wisdom and for your history that you carry on our behalf that we now need to take on as a responsibility to carry forward.

To the singer Curtis Assiniboine and his drum group, thank you for the beautiful songs and thank you for the explanation which is so very important for all of us to remember, where we came from, that our traditions and songs are very important and that we need to include them always in everything we do. I would like to quickly explain the Veterans song that was sung, because it was in Dakota. What the words for that song meant, was *“my friends my comrades, are coming to be with us, they are coming here to join us”*, With that we know that our warriors are here with us and our present and past are with us in spirit and in person to assist us in taking care of this land and taking care of the future for our children for this Gathering.

That is what we are here for this Gathering. It's more significant to sit here and talk, it's about a direction that we were given many, many years ago that we need to take up and take forward again, as always was the intent. I appreciate the opportunity to be here with you today and I welcome you all to the region as the Regional Chief at the Executive level and to the women who are here. You are so very important to what we need to do as life givers for the children. We carry the responsibility for the home and the future. Thank you for being here and thank you to Elder Mark Thompson who offered the beautiful prayer and for bringing his humour. Humour always carries us in difficulty and in difficult times. Now I will excuse myself as I will be absent this afternoon for an Executive Meeting.

**“I welcome you all to the region as the Regional Chief at the Executive level and to the women who are here. You are so very important to what we need to do as life givers for the children.”**





**Chief Deborah Chief**  
**Brokenhead Ojibway First Nation, Treaty No. 1**

Good morning everyone. My name is “Wahbaashka Penais Ikwe (Ojibwe)” – White Thunderbird Woman, from the Bear Clan. Welcome to our territory. I would like to say good morning and thanks to the Elders, the women, the leaders, and the Chiefs, Councillor members and our Grand Chiefs. Today is the day of celebrating and also a time to reflect on what has happened in the past and how we can make our future better for our young people.

**“Our people will benefit from the outcome of this Gathering.”**

For all of our people – and the Treaties are very sacred to us – we must find a way through this gathering to strategize so that we can benefit our people. Our people will benefit from the outcome of this Gathering. It’s an honour for me to welcome you all here. We are a signatory of the Brokenhead Ojibway First Nation Treaty No. 1, which is about 35 minutes from Lower Fort Garry. I also welcome you to visit our community, if you have an opportunity. There are a few things that I wanted to say. For us, as Aboriginal people, we need to come together and work together so that we can strengthen our Treaties. We can form new ways of looking out for ourselves and also to be confident as Indian people and as leaders so that we can work towards providing for ourselves. That is the goal.

On behalf of the Council of Brokenhead Ojibway First Nation, that is our goal we are working on and also to deal with the issues of land management and how we can use the land as we see appropriate for each First Nation. I welcome you here and hope you have a good time and hope we all can learn together. Enjoy your stay. With that, Meegwetch.

**Councillor Lloyd Sinclair**  
**Peguis First Nation, Treaty No. 1**

Strong Elk, clan is the Badger Clan. I guess we are familiar of how the Badger is and I hope that stand with our Treaty is just as strong as the Badger coming from our nation. Ainee, Tansi, Boozhoo, Good morning Elders, Chiefs, Councillors, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the Old Stone Fort, the Lower Fort Garry, the traditional territory of our Treaty 1 nations.

**“Our sovereignty, our self-determination and our nationhood was not relinquished, contrary to what some of our non-indigenous neighbours would like to believe.”**

Treaty 1 was signed here in August 1871 by the seven nations whose traditional territory covered much of Manitoba. The Gathering here for the next four days is to share ideas, goals, common concerns, and how we can work together in unison in getting a commitment, getting results, on the implementation of our Treaties – keeping in mind the “Spirit and Intent” of our Treaties. Treaties are sacred to our First Nations peoples. Treaties are international covenants signed by nations – nations that have full sovereignty and the right to self-determination as indigenous people to Turtle Island. Our sovereignty, our self-determination and our nationhood was not relinquished, contrary to what some of our non-indigenous neighbours would like to believe.

Treaty 1 was signed 135 years ago. Still today, many of our First Nations are waiting for implementation by the federal government of those covenants and obligations found in Treaty. Lands, schools, hunting, fishing, economic developments, indexing of Treaty money and the loss – the list goes on. For example, if there is a crisis in farming, the federal government responds within two to three months, through programs such as Farm Aid. If there is downturn on the fishing on the east or west coast, the federal government, they respond to alleviate the plight of those fishermen. As I have stated, we signed our Treaty 135 years ago, and are still waiting for the federal government to implement our Treaty. Our Treaty areas all suffer from the lack of Treaty implementation. In closing, I want to remind you of our Treaty rights and go beyond the written Treaty. It includes the oral promises that were made by the then negotiators, but not written into the text of the Treaty. Our Chiefs who signed the Treaty truly believed the word of the commissioners, and that those promises and assurances would be kept.

Naturally, when it comes to the interpretation of the Treaty, our fiduciary, the federal government, always disputes its Treaty obligations. Whenever there is a court case, the federal court always intervenes as party against the First Nations. Is that the role of a fiduciary? Let us stop deluding ourselves and believing that Indian Affairs and the federal government is on our side. History tells us the exact opposite. In the spirit of our ancestors and in the spirit of our Great Chief, Chief Peguis, Red Eagle, as known as Henry Prince, who signed Treaty 1, I ask for guidance from our grandfathers, for the next four days, on behalf of Chief and Council and the people of Peguis. I wish us here in our Treaty gathering much success and continued fight for our Treaties. With this, Meegwetch, Ekosi.

## **Grand Chief Ron Evans Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs**

Thank you Regional Chief Katherine Whitecloud, and Treaty Commissioner Dennis White Bird, for MC.

Good morning. First of all, thanks for the Prayer and Drum Group, for their sacred prayer and songs. I would like to thank the Elders, Leadership, Chiefs, National Chief, and Grand Chief Henderson for hosting this gathering and bringing us all together. I would like to thank the Chiefs from the Assembly of Manitoba. Chief Meeches, Chief McIvor, Chief Mercredi, Chief Buck and Chief Chief, and all the other Chiefs who will be joining us. I thank the representatives from government; Minister Oscar Lathlin, MLA Tina Keeper, Member of Parliament Anita Neville. This week is a busy week for First Nations, from across the nation, and visiting Chiefs, and youth. We have the AFN Executive meeting here in Winnipeg and a ceremony on Thursday.

On behalf of the Manitoba Chiefs, it's an honour to be here to share in the gathering. It's important that the First Nations take a lead in establishing a new era of respect for our Treaties. The original spirit and intent of the Treaties is recognized and enforced. We are confident that this new era will assist our citizens and nations to continue to be strong and heal from the negative effects that we still experience from past government practices and existing laws and policies not of our making, and of course, as a result of lack of full implementation of the Treaties.

At the last National Treaties Gathering in 1995, which was also held in Manitoba, nations came from Turtle Island. At that Gathering, Manitoba First Nations leadership articulated that Treaties and bilateral nation-to-nation instruments which provided political and legal confirmation of the inherent right of sovereign First Nations to self-determination and self-governance. Treaties are the foundations for the First Nations to Crown Canada relationship. They represent an exchange of solemn promises between the parties. The nature of the agreement is sacred. The honour of the Crown survives and dealings with First Nations require integrity.

Furthermore, it's the Treaties, not the Indian Act or Canada's government policies, which define this relationship. First Nations Chiefs advocate that when our forefathers entered into Treaties, they believed that this recognition of our inherent rights would provide a guarantee to that land and resources with freedom of movement and exercise of self-determination to provide a livelihood and ensure non-interference from others as they have always done in ancestral times and for eternity. First Nations have not benefited equally from the Treaty obligations to this day. We continue to welcome other nations and their citizens to our traditional territories. In some, we have co-existed for nearly 300 years. First Nations have respected the Treaties as international instruments of coexistence, but we have attempted to utilize them as they were intended – as economic arrangements between sovereign nations and we are troubled by the unilateral action or interpretation. The full scope of First Nation Treaty and Aboriginal rights as understood by First Nations are recognized and affirmed in Section 35 of the Constitution.



**Grand Chief Ron Evans**

**“Treaties are the foundations for the First Nations to Crown Canada relationship. They represent an exchange of solemn promises between the parties.”**

**“Traditional acceptance of the oral traditions has not had success since the written text is still being used as a higher source.”**

However, today the nation-to-nation relationship between First Nations and the Crown Canada presents challenges and we must stand together as nations in our lands. For our common goal is self-determination and self-government. One such challenge is a struggle of Canadian courts to broaden the understanding for Treaties by importing First Nations understandings of Treaties into its evidence. Traditional acceptance of the oral traditions has not had success since the written text is still being used as a higher source. The AMC strategies are supported by its leadership. Our leadership continues our efforts to address these challenges, to lay the foundation for commitment by the Crown to redress breaches of Treaty and to honour Treaty obligations. This Gathering is a time to share how each of us are working towards strengthening and implementing sacred Treaties.

Here in Manitoba, the AMC entered into a political relationship with the Government of Canada to join the established Treaty Relations Commission in Manitoba in 2005. The Commission is mandated to examine Treaty issues as identified by the parties and focus on research, public education and discussion forums. One key research plan is to conduct the Manitoba Oral Treaty Research Project that began with the signing of the Research Protocol Terms of Reference. Under this process, the AMC Elders Council provides council to the AMC leadership and Treaty Commissioner, as well as, since 1994, the FAI provides that in this process these Treaty rights of First Nations will be given an interpretation to be agreed upon by Canada and First Nations in contemporary terms while giving full recognition to their original spirit and intent.

The AMC has also worked at supporting the work of the TLE committee, to resolve the impediments to the transfer of lands process. We have discussions with the Province of Manitoba and Canada currently in place. We are also involved in economic strategies with Chiefs of Manitoba to a working relationship with the Province of Manitoba and the private sector. As the AMC Grand Chief, I will continue to advocate for our inherent rights of self-determination and implementation of Treaties and Treaty rights. Our understanding of the Treaties guides us to perseverance to preserve our relationship-building with the Crown to forge an economic relationship that results into true mutual benefits for both parties to the Treaties.

**Marching to the Feast.**



I will end my comments by quoting from “Wahbung” - Our Tomorrow. It was written in October 1971, and it states, First Nations must assume control and ownership over all aspects of their lives. I am, as we all are, committed to implement the Treaty-Crown Canada relationship and I will work for unity and strong governance and economic strategies for stronger families, community and nations. Ekosi. I look forward to the Gathering and the success of the Gathering. Thank you and God Bless.

## Grand Chief Chris Henderson Southern Chiefs' Organization

Meegwetch Regional Chief Whitecloud, Madam Chairperson, Good morning, Boozhoo, Aiini. It's an honour to be here on a beautiful hot, muggy day and I'm hoping that our Elders will be taking care of by our volunteers and staff. If there is anything that you need, please do not hesitate to ask.

It's an honour to be asked from the 36 Southern Chiefs of Manitoba to take the lead, to coordinate and to host this four-day gathering and it's rather fitting that we are hosting here at the Old Stone Fort. Because this Thursday is the 135th Anniversary of the original signing, when Treaty 1 was signed by the Chippewa and the Anishinaabe and the Swampy Cree Indian Tribal Nations and the British Crown.

For the benefit of the Elders, leaders, who may be here today, there have been questions as to why we are convening this meeting. This is a follow-up meeting from late September 2005. That Treaty Gathering was hosted by Treaty 6, Treaty 7 and Treaty 8. That was a three-day Treaty Gathering. The reason why that meeting was convened was that some of our respected Chiefs in the numbered Treaties had felt that there was not enough emphasis or priority placed on the Treaties. It's not to be disrespectful or disputing the work of the AFN, I say these words respectfully because there have been questions looming, as to what happened last September and what is happening here today. The work that will be considered here is in no way a slap in the face of the work of the National Chief, the Executive and the member Chiefs of the AFN.



Grand Chief Chris Henderson

One thing to remember, we always have to be reminded as Grand Chiefs, as Regional Chiefs and perhaps as the National Chief, is that we possess no inherent or no political authority. All political authority or mandates that are given come from the Chiefs and their Council. The Chiefs are the successors to the Treaties. That's where the political power and authority emanates from and comes from, so as Grand Chief of SCO or MKIO or AMC, we possess no inherent political authority. All direction and mandates and actions come from the Chiefs themselves, so if the Treaties Chiefs want to convene in Assembly and want to talk about Treaty and strategies and plan, then that is their inherent right, that is their god-given right that they have inherited, because they are the successors to those numbered Treaties. I just wanted to clarify that. No way, from whatever comes from this Gathering, it is not a slap in the face of the AFN or any regional political authority that fall in the regions of Treaties 1-11. With that much I wanted to clarify.

Of course, I would like to thank the Chiefs, the southern Chiefs and the northern Chiefs of Manitoba, and my colleagues Grand Chief Evans and Grand Chief Dr. Sydney Garrioch and of course, the National Chief and the Regional Chiefs who are meeting here in Winnipeg. I would like to acknowledge the Treaty Commissioner of Manitoba, Mr. Dennis White Bird. He was appointed the Treaty Commissioner last May 2005. I would like to acknowledge him as serving as Co-chair, and acknowledge Katherine Whitecloud for representing the Dakota Nations. Not all Indian nations are signatory to Treaties. Some of our Indian nations decided of their own accord not to enter into Treaties. Sioux Valley Dakota Nation is one of those that did not enter into Treaties, Regional Vice-Chief Whitecloud is from Sioux Valley.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and thank our contributors to making this four-day Gathering possible, particularly Treaty 8 of Alberta. They were the first out of the gate to make a substantial contribution of \$20,000. I believe this assembly should acknowledge them now. Meegwetch!, Chiefs, Grand Chiefs of Treaty 8. I would also like to acknowledge Tribal Council Investment Group (TCIG) for making a substantial contribution of \$50,000 toward this Gathering.

**“All political authority or mandates that are given come from the Chiefs and their Council. The Chiefs are the successors to the Treaties.”**



I would like to acknowledge the AMC Chiefs and our sister organization the MKIO in the North. Both organizations made substantial contributions. And thanks to our fiduciary partners, the Department of Indian Northern Affairs Canada, and the Province of Manitoba. I would like to thank and acknowledge the Provincial Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs. Premier Gary Doer has been an ally and advocate for First Nations and in the last couple of years, he has in meetings often stated that his party, the NDP party government respects Treaty rights, so I thought we would hold him to that.

Grand Chiefs' reception line.



I would like to thank other contributors such as Parks Canada, who have accommodated our staff and volunteered with their help and assistance to make sure that this Gathering occurs without any glitches. I would like to thank Manitoba Hydro, at the very least. And finally, I would like to thank all the Chiefs who have traveled from far and wide to this Gathering in this territory, Treaty No. 1 Territory.

We ask for all the people to have patience as we deliberate in discussion. The agenda is flexible, to allow for technical presentations or other presentations that will happen naturally. And after we are done here, that's when we will allow for the official opening remarks from the Treaty regions and numbered Treaties. I would like to thank all the staff of SCO, MKIO, and AMC that contributed to the work for this day to be made possible. And for those people who contributed, we will account for the funds. We will be accountable and transparent. We respect your patience. First and foremost this is a Treaties Assembly so the Chiefs will be speaking first, and allowances will be made for Elders to address the Assembly. Thank you for your time and attention. Like I said earlier, that is where the political power and authority comes from is the Chiefs, Thank You. Meegwetch.

### Co-Chair Katherine Whitecloud

Thank you Grand Chief Chris Henderson. (I) just would like to explain that Grand Chief Dr. Sydney Garrioch is away this morning attending the Water Panel Hearings that are being held in Winnipeg, today and tomorrow. He will be joining us in a bit, I know there are other Chiefs attending that important meeting and will be joining us later. Just a quick acknowledgement - I would like to welcome Chief Sandford Big Plume from the Tsuu T'ina First Nation, who was the selected Interim Spokesperson for the Treaties 1 – 11. He had his summer celebration this past weekend, and had a wonderful time. We thank you for hosting that.

At this time, I would like to welcome National Chief Phil Fontaine, from the Assembly of First Nations who is also from the Treaty 1 Territory.

## National Chief Phil Fontaine

Thank you very much Regional Chief Whitecloud, Treaty Commissioner White Bird, Grand Chief, Chiefs, Elders. First of all I want to acknowledge the Drum, the singers for their kind support this morning. I want to express my thanks for all of those who participated in the ceremonies yesterday, to prepare us for this important Gathering, I thank those good people. I want to make a couple of good points here. One, the AFN is pleased that this Gathering is taking place here in Treaty 1 Territory, in fact, my Executive colleagues are here today. This is a demonstration of our support for all of the good work that went into making this Gathering possible. We are not in any way offended or slighted by this Gathering; we believe in the importance of such a Gathering. I want to make it clear that we are fully supportive of all, of what you are doing and we recognize the value and importance and ensuring that our people are particularly afforded every opportunity to express their positions and their thoughts on what is obviously the centre-most important issue in the lives of First Nations people, and that is our Treaties.

The other thing that I wanted to mention, when we were preparing to dance in with the Eagle Staff, preceded by our Drum, was the significance of this Gathering and why we are gathered in Treaty 1 Territory. It gives us an opportunity to focus on our Treaties, and the historical relationships that exists between Treaty Nations and the federal Crown. In that special relationship instructs all First Nations leaderships, particularly the Treaty Nations, represented by their Chiefs, on how we are engaged with the federal Crown, and that gives us an opportunity to consider seriously all the unfinished business as far as our Treaties are concerned.

And one good example of the unfinished business is the many, many outstanding specific claims in the country - specific claims that are related to Treaty violations. It has to do with the illegal surrender of Treaty lands, First Nations lands. It has to do with the theft, outright theft of Treaty lands. It has to do with the breach of the fiduciary obligations and responsibility of the federal Crown to our people. And I'm not talking about comprehensive claims. For example in BC, they are involved in negotiating new Treaties, modern day Treaties, as the Nisga'a did and the northern Crees did in Quebec. There are 1000 claims before Canada right now. One thousand! Over 300 of those claims have been validated by Canada in a completely unfair process, because Canada is both judge and jury. It's the funder, it validates claims, and it unfortunately takes on the order of 27 years to resolve this claim. One claim takes on the average 27 years, so we can just think for a moment, if we are ever, under the current system, if we are going to resolve these valid, legitimate claims. The conclusion is never in the lifetime, in the lifetime of grandchildren. The system has to change. There has to be a better, more just, fair system.

**“One claim takes on the average 27 years... The system has to change. There has to be a better, more just, fair system.”**

So I would ask in a respectful way that the Chiefs that are gathered, our Elders, and our First Citizens to think about this, and to give us your best advice on how we go before Canada to try and convince them that we need a much fairer, just system to resolve our claims. We have had discussion with the current Minister Prentice, who used to be a Commissioner of the Indian Claims, who was there for almost ten years. Minister Prentice is the most knowledgeable about claims, particularly specific claims, and I believe that he is prepared to bring about the changes necessary. Whether he will go as far as we know he has to go, that is something that is going to be left to us to negotiate. So your advice will be absolutely welcomed. I want to assure you of that.

I want to make one final comment, and that has to do with Grand Chief Henderson. He is absolutely right. The National Chief and Grand Chiefs have no inherent power or authority. The power and authority that we have, the mandate that we carry, is derived from the Chiefs of Canada. That mandate and power is expressed through Resolution at our Assemblies. I just wanted to confirm what Grand Chief Henderson has pointed out to you. We are a powerful organization if the National Chief and the National Executive are seen as having clout and influence and is able to effect change and able to convince Government to bring about appropriate action that is good for us. That is because the Chiefs have given us that power and provided us those mandates to go forward with confidence and that we represent the interests of all of our people.

**“...the Chiefs that came to negotiate came with their own maps. These maps described all of the land that their community wanted to retain and what they were prepared “to lend” to the white settlers. Who knows where these maps went to?”**

So in conclusion, I want to express my deepest appreciation first of all to Chief Deborah Chief, for her gracious welcome to all of us and to remind the Assembly that I’m also a Treaty person, Sagkeeng, I’m a Treaty 1 person. I remember reading the newspaper accounts; I did research on Treaty 1, on our First Nation, when our nations were gathering they negotiated the Treaties, in the close approximation from where we started this morning. The “big smoke” where people were dancing is how the newspaper described the gathering. What I found most interesting is the fact that the Chiefs that came to negotiate came with their own maps. These maps described all of the land that their community wanted to retain and what they were prepared “to lend” to the white settlers. Who knows where these maps went to? The land was given to us, the land that we retain is far less. Of course, there are people here in this room that know this history far better than I. What I learned is what I read about Treaties, and what I’ve learned from the Elders. But the history is far different from the oral history. That has to come into play as we negotiate.

Anyway, a bit a history. In conclusion, on behalf of the AFN Executive, thank you to SCO, Grand Chief Henderson and the Chiefs and all of the good work of the Chiefs, to make it possible to bring us together to talk about the most important matter in our lives, Treaties. Thank you Chief Deborah Chief from Brokenhead Ojibway First Nation, Anishinaabe people. And I wish you much success in the next few days. We look forward to the outcome of your discussion. We welcome your advice, because Treaties and the implementation of Treaties, fair and just resolution of the many outstanding claims, is very much dependent on the collective effort. We will be most successful if we work together, rather than divided. We all know this very well. I acknowledge Minister Lathlin and all the dignitaries that are gathered here.

Kitchi Meegwetch.

**Minister Oscar Lathlin**  
**Aboriginal and Northern Affairs – Province of Manitoba**

Thank you Regional Vice Chief Katherine Whitecloud, Tansi,

From Treaty 1 to Treaty 11, I want to bring greetings from our Premier Gary Doer, and also welcome everyone here to Lower Fort Garry, the site of signing of the first Treaty in 1871. I want to welcome the Chiefs, from the various Treaties, visiting Chiefs, and our own Chiefs from Manitoba, all the Elders, the staff of the various organizations, welcome to Manitoba. It is a privilege for me to be here this morning, some of you may be aware, I was Chief of Opaskwayak Cree Nation before I entered Provincial politics over 16 years ago. In all those 16 years, now being on the Government side, I have always supported the objectives of our people. I have a colleague in cabinet, the honourable Eric Robinson. We have a strong influence on our government, influencing government to respect Treaty rights.

When people ask me, my commitment of Treaty rights on the Manitoba government, not on the part of First Nation’s government, my reply is usually, that blood is thicker than water. I am First Nation and I will always support Treaty rights no matter which government I am serving.

I want to also congratulate our Grand Chief Chris Henderson for taking the lead role in the organization, coordination of this Gathering. I commend him and I wish him all the best, that the Gathering here will be successful and that your deliberation will result in an action plan be developed and implemented. Once again, I thank you Chiefs for inviting me here and I wish you all the success and also want to acknowledge our Elders, our youth - this morning I saw quite a few young people. Also to say that I think its not only useful that we as First Nations people get together to revisit the Treaty to find out exactly or what is the meaning of Treaty for us. I think the facilitator explained it this way, we are all part of the Treaty-making processes, the descendants, whether we are First Nations or non-First Nations. As a young person, I never looked at Treaties that way. It was not until I was in my 20's that I was taught, that even non-First Nations would look at Treaties as an Indian thing. That's why I agree with the previous speakers, is that we all work together, to make things happen. Once again I thank you Grand Chief, Chiefs and I wish much success in the next few days. Thank you

**“I am First Nation and I will always support Treaty rights no matter which government I am serving.”**

### **Dawn Bronson Superintendent of Lower Fort Garry, Parks Canada**

Thank you Commissioner, Grand Chief, Chiefs, Elders, Councillors, special guests, ladies and gentlemen, Tansi. Welcome to Lower Fort Garry. Welcome to the spiritual home of Treaty 1. We are very pleased that you chose to hold your Gathering here.

Many of those who have spoken have talked about how important Lower Fort Garry is to First Nations. You heard that Treaty 1 was made here 135 years ago. The governments of Canada commemorated that event in 1925, for its historical role in making of this country. We heard this morning the importance of August 3, 1871, we will celebrate on Thursday, the 135th Anniversary. That celebration will speak about how important Treaty signing was, and how alive that Treaty is today.

Lower Fort Garry is a treasured national site that is important to all Canada. It's recognized in its role in the fur trading in the Hudson Bay Company. The two are related in the relationship between First Nations and non-First Nations. I was pleased earlier this year, when Treaty Commissioner officially announced that here at Lower Fort Garry Historical Site. Parks Canada shares the vision of the Treaty Commission of the importance of educating all Canadians of our Treaties relationships. We hope to work with the Treaty Commissioner and other partners to build a stronger and richer understanding of Treaties. Public awareness and understanding is a key to building a future together. We are carefully creating programs about Treaties. It's hard work. We are slowing coming to grips with the complexities and the different perspectives and implications for all Canadians. We hope to partner with the Treaty Commission to continue to develop educational programs and products, in that, it's my vision, that every visitor to Lower Fort Garry will know that Treaties is part of the foundation of Canada.



**Plaque commemorating the signing of Treaty No. 1.**

I wish you well over the course of four days. Please take the opportunity to visit the historical grounds and buildings. Take the time to visit and share your stories and thoughts with our staff. I hope you take inspiration at being here at Lower Fort Gary where the first of the eleven Treaties were made. I hope that you take memories of this beautiful place home with you, Meegwetch.



**Chief Sandford Big Plume  
Tsuu T'ina First Nation, Treaty 7**

Thank you very much Elders, Chiefs, Councillors, ladies and gentlemen. First of all, let me bring greetings from the Chiefs of Treaty 7 who have accompanied me on this trip - Chief Weasle Head, Chief Adrian Stimson, Siksika Nation, Chief Peter Strikes With A Gun, Piikani Nation.

As you know, in September of last year, the Treaty areas of 6, 7, and 8 gathered to talk on our Treaty, the issues pertaining to our Treaty, and the lack of action pertaining to our Treaty. We had over 95 Chiefs and Proxies. For a last minute thing, that was a good turnout, because of the Kelowna Accord. Our objective of that time was to get into the room to let the Prime Minister and Premiers know that, yes, we are still sovereign Chiefs and we are still autonomous and we still speak on behalf of our own nations.

**“In September 2005, we agreed to work together. We called for an establishment of an Interim Treaty Chiefs Secretariat and an Interim Treaty Spokesperson to uphold the protection and enforcement of our promises and terms of our Treaties.”**

I'm much honoured to be here with all of you of Treaty 1 Territory. Thank you Grand Chief Henderson and your staff for hosting this event. I'm confident that our deliberations will produce a realistic plan that will allow our people to enjoy the life that was envisioned by our forefathers from that time of signing Treaty. This will only happen with our collective efforts and commitment. In the development of our plan of action we must keep in mind that our forefathers entered into Treaty with the Crown and Great Britain with the position of strength. We still have our rights to our lands, our government, our laws, our customs, our religious beliefs, and our language and our histories.

Our forefathers did not enter into Treaty with Canada. Canada, a colony of Great Britain, came into existence as a result of the British North American Act 1867. The difficulties that our peoples have had in the relationship with the enforcement of Treaty, is with Canada. Canada has and still continues to use Section 91/24 of the British North American Act to undermine our inherent rights and not live up to Treaty obligations. Canada enacted the Indian Act which is an administration Act to suppress and deny us our rights. This is the reason why our peoples live in poverty.

In September 2005, we agreed to work together. We called for an establishment of an Interim Treaty Chiefs Secretariat and an Interim Treaty Spokesperson to uphold the protection and enforcement of our promises and terms of our Treaties. As the Interim Spokesperson, I was mandated to partake in meetings important to Treaty First Nations. I was successful in gaining a seat in the Kelowna Conference through Premier Ralph Klein of Alberta. However, I was unsuccessful in gaining the privilege of delivering a statement to the First Ministers of Canada and the National Aboriginal organizations. Premier Ralph Klein however alluded to portions of our statement to the Assembly. This statement called for the need to address Treaties on a

nation-to-nation basis between the Treaty First Nations and Canada.

Canada was notified that the Treaty First Nations have not given their consent to any organization to discuss our issue on our Treaties. Historically, as it continues to be the case, only our Chiefs and our Headman have the authority to speak on our behalf on issues relating to our Treaties. The Kelowna Agreement was to suppose to bridge the gap of poverty between Aboriginal people and the dominant society. Although the Agreement had a lot of merit, it did not meet the obligation under Treaty that Canada has to our Treaty peoples.

**Staffs coming together in ceremony.**



To advance our bilateral relationship we have with Canada, I wrote to the Prime Minister and requested a meeting with him and our Treaty Chiefs. Mr. Sol Sanderson met with his staff in attempt to have this meeting. His staff appeared interested and cooperative. The meeting did not happen and it did not get a written response. I also wrote to the Governor General seeking her assistance getting her government to the table with us. Again, staff appeared interested, we did not get her help. After the fall of Liberal government, I received a response and it was not positive. Copies will be available for your reading.

There was also work at the international level. It has progressed in our favour as Indigenous people. The Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples has by motion been approved at the Human Rights Council. It is expected that the Declaration will be tabled at the General Assembly of the United Nations by this fall for approval. It was no surprise that Canada along with Russia voted AGAINST this motion. It is unfortunate that Canada voted against this Declaration, as we know that it is an instrument that Canada can use to reconcile Treaty issues with the Treaty Indigenous peoples. This does not stop us in utilizing the Declaration to advance our agenda. Also copies of the motion and the draft Declaration are available.

The Harper government spent little time in citing their priorities. They included federal accountability, tax relief incentive measures, child care allowance, justice changes and health wait time guarantees. Their budget that was tabled did not include any measure for our Treaties. As you see, we have a major task on our hands as Chiefs of Treaties 1 to 11.

Our National Chief has indicated his intention to advance the commitment made by the Liberal government to the new Harper government. This includes the Kelowna Agreement and the Political Accord in recognition and implement on First Nations governance. Also, I understand that the National Chief and other national organizations had discussions with the premiers of Canada on the Kelowna Agreement. The National Chief has also met with Minister Prentice to advance our national agenda. Mr. Prentice attended the National Chiefs' Assembly (AFN) in Vancouver and indicated his willingness and cooperation to work with our national organization.

Today, I have spoken briefly on the actions at the national and international levels, because I believe we must be aware of the impact of our efforts of our enforcement of our Treaties in our territories. It is up to us to determine on how we proceed with our agenda.

In conclusion, I strongly recommend we finalize the structure of our Treaty Secretariat and elect our Spokesperson at this Gathering. We need to provide a clear mandate on the advancement of our Treaty. I also recommend that we address the financial resources to advance the work be carried on.

I understand the planning committee passed a motion that each First Nation in Treaties 1 – 11 contribute the amount of \$5000 toward the development of what we quote call a “war chest”. These funds are intended to be used for the work that is required for the enforcement and protection of Treaties 1 – 11. I hope that this week, we will have some good news on funds available for the enhancement and protection and enforcement of our Treaties from private sectors that I have been working on. I am confident that we have a commitment that we have started from the forefathers, started at the time when Treaty was started.

That was some of the things that were done since September 2005 leading up to this week's Gathering. It was difficult as the Interim, since there was no structure or clear mandate or direction as being an Interim. But just only to get into First Ministers Meeting in Kelowna and to tell the premiers and Prime Minister that yes, there are some Treaty Chiefs from Treaties 1 – 11 that still want to speak on behalf of their Treaties. With that I thank you for your prayers, and that Creator watches over us. Thank you very much for inviting us from Treaty 7.

**“The Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples has by motion been approved at the Human Rights Council. It is expected that the Declaration will be tabled at the General Assembly of the United Nations by this fall for approval.”**

## Chief Ovide Mercredi Grand Rapids First Nation, Treaty 5

The conference is extremely well organized. The volunteers come from our organizations – AMC, MKIO, and SCO, and some communities sent volunteers. Thanks to the young people for taking their duties seriously in assisting in this Gathering. Thanks to all the Elders who came to this historical event. The young Chief Henderson coordinated this conference on behalf of the other leaders. Grand Chief Sydney Garrioch has been here for the last three days, through that kind of cooperation and recognition of the division of labour amongst ourselves, we don't have to compete for the responsibility, but just work together. Both leaders have left their imprint in this conference. The smoothness of the Gathering is part of their planning and dedication into this conference in making it successful.

The next steps in Treaties 1 – 11. I have been advised by an Elder to mention all treaties, Treaties 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. We will sit down with government representatives and engage their leaders of Canada and the Provinces, on our terms, not theirs. We will not take money from them to attend those meetings. This effort will be completely self-financing. Many Chiefs have said that they will decide what contribution will be made on behalf of their communities to this joint effort of Treaties 1 – 11.



Chief Ovide Mercredi

I acknowledge the role of women in our communities and invite them to work with the spokesperson, to lend their organizational experience to support our effort. Our Canadian brothers and sisters have been listening intently to our words and supporting our Treaties, therefore I know there is support for our people in Canadian society, and they are not our enemy. We need to challenge both federal and provincial governments to honour our Treaties. They are our adversaries and we have to treat them as such.

Government is not friendly to our Treaty rights. Their government bodies think of ways to diminish our Treaty rights

as a people. They don't always do what is in the public's interest. They do not always do what their own people support, because if the truth be known, the Canadian people support aboriginal people in the rights that we have as the original peoples. We are not fighting white people; we are fighting governments.

Each Treaty area has to get strong. We have to allow for that development to take place. We need to gather like this at least once a year. Each year it will get more powerful, more stronger.

**"I see my role as being a principle spokesperson, relaying what I am asked to say. I will not be negotiating."**

The first step is for each Treaty area to come together and have gatherings in their own Territory to talk about the history of their Treaty, the issues affecting their Treaty and their mind on how they are going to advance their Treaty, and how they are going to engage the government directly themselves in discussions. I see my role as being a principle spokesperson, relaying what I am asked to say. I will not be negotiating. My job will be to advance Treaty areas in all different avenues, including working closely with the Treaty Commissioners in these provinces.

A Treaty Council will be formalized once we have a clear idea of each Treaty area's agenda and their chosen representatives. Until then, I will work with the existing organizations. Once there is a formal Treaty Council, then we will become more forceful in how we engage government in our discussions. With your consent, there will be an official request to the Govern-

ment of Canada, the Prime Minister and the Governor General, to meet with all the Treaty Chiefs 1 – 11. If the Canadian Government will not engage in discussions with us, then there is no need in meeting with them. This will be the grounds to go to the International stage.

Many chiefs have said that we need to educate our young people about the nature, the importance and how powerful the Treaty is to our future. Treaties should become part of our daily discourse. It starts with belief and we have to believe in what Treaty stands for. Many people think that Treaty is the right to education, health and housing. It is all those physical things about the Treaty right to hunt, to fish, to gather, but it is much more than that. Treaty did not give us sovereignty. It recognized and affirmed our sovereignty as a people. We never surrendered our self-determination or our land to anyone in this country. The Treaties are an affirmation of our nationhood as a people. If the animals are gone, that Treaty right will not exist. Part of our right is the right to the environment and the right to the habitat that our people had before the white man came. So we need to protect that habitat for the animals in order for us to exercise our Treaty right to hunt.

Treaty is also the recognition of the vast territories we had and part of that is the water that flows in our Territory. We never surrendered our water which belongs to our people. Pollution has now gone into our water systems, our rivers and lakes. That devastation cannot allow this sovereign to have control of our water because they have damaged it. They have not earned the right to attain authority in terms of water on our territories. We must reclaim our jurisdiction with respect to the protection of the water that runs through our territories. The river in which we reside begins in the mountains of Alberta and flows down through Saskatchewan and Manitoba. As Treaty groups, we can all work together to protect that river in its pristine form - that is what we were guaranteed, because when they say you can live as before, it meant that you can drink the water too.

A Commemoration medal was given to all heads of Indian tribes that assembled in Calgary in September 1901, by the Duke of Cornwall and York, our people have been gathering for many, many years in an effort to persuade the government to honour our Treaties.

I would like to acknowledge George Mercredi and Louise, my mom and dad, and my daughter Danielle.

The young people need to know on a daily basis, what Treaties are, they need to believe in them. All they know is that it is the right to fish, hunt, housing, education and health services – but it is more than that. It is about Sovereignty! Treaty is about our sovereignty, the land and the water!

Thank you.

**“Treaty is also the recognition of the vast territories we had and part of that is the water that flows in our Territory. We never surrendered our water which belongs to our people.”**

**Chief Mercredi being elected National Treaties 1-11 Spokesperson.**





## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Resolution #Gt: 09-28/29-05:01;

#### **Subject: Declaration of Unity between the Treaty Nations of Treaties No. 1 to No. 11.**

**WHEREAS** Treaty Chiefs, Headmen and members of the Nations from Treaties No.1- No.11 did meet in a duly convened gathering September 27-29, 2005 in the City of Edmonton, Alberta – Treaty No. 6 Territory; and

**WHEREAS** the Treaty Chiefs of Treaties No. 1 to No. 11 do hereby declare the non-recognition and eminent erosion of our Treaties and by this Resolution do fully assert and enforce the true Spirit and Intent of the Treaties no. 1 to No. 11; and

**WHEREAS** the Treaty Chiefs of the Indigenous Nations of Great Turtle Island in what is now known as Canada, honour the signing of Treaties No. 1 to No. 11 by our ancestors, and as member Treaty Nations, agree to uphold the duty as the collective Treaty Keepers; and

**WHEREAS** the Treaty Chiefs of Treaties No. 1 to No. 11 agree through the establishment of a Treaty Chiefs Secretariat to uphold the protection, promotion and enforcement of the promises and terms of our Treaties, as told through the oral history of our Elders from Treaties No. 1 to No. 11; and

**WHEREAS** the Treaty Chiefs of Treaties No. 1 to No. 11 are totally committed to work together in honour and respect to act on the responsibilities of our solemn duty to uphold the traditional and spiritual aspects as Inherent Keepers of Treaties No. 1 to No. 11 as signed by our ancestors.

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED** that the Treaty Chiefs in attendance at the Gathering of Treaty Nations of Treaties No. 1 to No. 11 establish and mandate an interim Treaty Chiefs Council, representative of all Treaty Territories of Treaties No.1 to No. 11.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Treaty Chiefs select an Interim Principal Spokesperson for this Treaty Chiefs Council to represent all Treaty Chiefs present at the Edmonton Assembly of Treaty Chiefs No. 1 to No. 11; prepare and organize the Spokesperson & the Treaty Chiefs Council to partake in meetings important to Treaty First Nations, i.e: FMM (First Ministers Meeting) Conference in BC.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Treaty Chiefs hereby reaffirm our commitment to the Inherent Right to Self-Determination and Self-Government as set out in the following 1981 Declaration of First Nations.

We the Original Peoples of this land know the Creator put us here.

The Creator gave us laws that govern all our relationships to live in harmony with nature and mankind.

The Laws of the Creator defined our rights and responsibilities.

The Creator gave us our spiritual beliefs, our languages, our culture, and a place on Mother Earth which provided us with all our needs.

We have maintained our Freedom, our Languages, and our Traditions from time immemorial.

We continue to exercise the rights and fulfill the responsibilities and obligations given to us by the Creator for the land upon which we were placed.

The Creator has given us the right to govern ourselves and right to self-determination.

The rights and responsibilities given to us by the Creator cannot be altered or taken away by any other Nation.

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that Treaty Chiefs in assembly do hereby establish a Treaty Chiefs Council Secretariat to gather any and all material related to our Treaties for the purpose of a rolling living Draft to be finalized at a Treaty Chiefs gathering of the Treaties No. 1 to No. 11 at Lower Fort Garry in Manitoba in the Moon of the Melting Snows of 2006;

*Moved By:* Chief Sanford Big Plume, Tsuu T'ina Nation

*Seconded By:* Chief BillyJo DeLeRonde, Pine Creek First Nation

**Question Called**

**Vote:** For: 54  
Against: 0  
Abstentions: 4

**RESOLUTION CARRIED**

## APPENDICES

### Appendix B: Agenda

#### MONDAY JULY 31, 2006 – DAY ONE

**9:00 AM**

**Opening Ceremonies**

Grand Entry and Honour Songs – “Assiniboine Jr’s”

*(Long Plain First Nation – Treaty No. 1)*

Opening Prayer

*Mr. Mark Thompson (Sagkeeng First Nation – Treaty No. 1)*

**10:00 AM**

**Welcoming Remarks**

Chairpersons (Rotating and Alternates):

- Manitoba Regional Chief Katherine Whitecloud  
(Sioux Valley Dakota Nation)
- Treaty Commissioner Dennis White Bird,  
Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba
- Alternates to be determined and announced.

Political Representatives:

- Chief Deborah Chief, Brokenhead Ojibway First Nation (Treaty No.1)
- Councillor Lloyd Sinclair, Peguis First Nation (Treaty No.1)
- Grand Chief Ron Evans, Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
- Grand Chief Dr. Sydney Garrioch, Manitoba Keewatinook Ininew Okimowin
- Grand Chief Chris Henderson, Southern Chiefs’ Organization
- National Chief Phil Fontaine, Assembly of First Nations
- Federal Minister of Indian & Northern Affairs Jim Prentice (Invited) or Representative
- Manitoba Minister of Aboriginal & Northern Affairs Oscar Lathlin
- Parks Canada – Ms. Dawn Bronson, Superintendent MB Field Unit

**10:30 AM**

**Update from First Ministers’ Meeting in November 2005**

*Chief Sandford Big Plume, Tsuu T’ina First Nation (AB)*

Selected Interim Spokesperson for Treaties 1-11 in September 2005 in Edmonton, AB.  
prior to the FMM in Kelowna, BC.

**11:00 AM**

**Opening Address**

***“The Spirit and Intent of Treaty-making”***

*Treaty Commissioner Dennis White Bird*

Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba (Honorary Citizen of Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation – Treaty No.1)

**12:00 PM**

**Lunch**

Pow Wow Demonstration

**1:00 PM**

**Opening Statements**

- Treaty No. 1 Chiefs
- Treaty No. 2 Chiefs
- Treaty No. 3 Chiefs
- Treaty No. 4 Chiefs
- Treaty No. 5 Chiefs
- Treaty No. 6 Chiefs
- Treaty No. 7 Chiefs
- Treaty No. 8 Chiefs
- Treaty No. 9 Chiefs
- Treaty No. 10 Chiefs
- Treaty No. 11 Chiefs
- Non-Treaty Chiefs

**5:00 PM**

**Wrap-up of Day One**

**TUESDAY AUGUST 1, 2006 - DAY TWO**

- 9:00 AM**      **Call to Order – Chairperson(s)**  
                    Recap of Day One
- 9:30 AM**      **Continuation of Opening Statements from Day One**  
                    (If required)
- 12:00 PM**     **Lunch**  
                    Entertainment: Mr. Don Burnstick (Comedian)
- 1:00 PM**      **Treaty Caucuses**  
                    Locations to be determined by available Tipi's
- 5:00 PM**      **Wrap-up of Day Two**

**WEDNESDAY AUGUST 2, 2006 – DAY THREE**

- 9:00 AM**      **Call to Order**  
                    Reports from Treaty Caucuses
- 12:00 PM**     **Lunch**  
                    Entertainment: "Burnt" (musical group)
- 1:00 PM**      **Establishment of a Treaty Chiefs' Council Secretariat**  
                    For discussion and consideration as called for in September 2005 Resolution
- 2:00 PM**      **Resolutions**
- 5:00 PM**      **Wrap-up of Day Three**

**THURSDAY AUGUST 3, 2006 – DAY FOUR**

- 9:00 AM**      **Call to Order**  
                    Recap of Day Three
- 9:30 AM**      **Ratification of Declaration of Unity Position amongst Treaties 1-11**
- 12:00 PM**     **Traditional Feast to honour the 135<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the signing of Treaty No.1**  
**(signed August 3, 1871)**  
**Closing Ceremonies**



## APPENDICES

### Appendix C: Commentary Listing

Grand Chief Ron Evans	Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
National Chief Phil Fontaine	Assembly of First Nations
Grand Chief Sydney Garrioch	Manitoba Keewatinook Ininew Okimowin
Grand Chief Chris Henderson	Southern Chiefs' Organization
Grand Chief Rose Laubocan	Driftpile First Nation, Treaty No. 8
Grand Chief Arthur Noskey	Loon River First Nation, Treaty No. 8
Grand Chief Noeline Villebrun	Dene Nation, Treaty No. 8
Chief James Anhnassay	Dene Tha' First Nation, Treaty No. 8
Chief Ralph Beaulieu	Ebb and Flow First Nation, Treaty No. 2
Chief Pascal Bighetty	Mathias Columb Cree Nation, Treaty No. 5
Chief Sandford Big Plume	Tsuu T'ina First Nation, Treaty No. 7
Chief Norman Bone	Keeseekoowenin First Nation, Treaty No. 2
Chief Ian Bushie	Hollow Water First Nation, Treaty No. 5
Chief Cameron	Alexsis Nakota Band, Treaty No. 6
Chief Leon Chalifoux	Swan River First Nation, Treaty No. 8
Chief Elaine Chicoose	Pasqua First Nation
Chief Deborah Chief	Brokenhead Ojibway First Nation, Treaty No. 1
Chief David Crate	Fisher River Cree Nation
Chief Harold Crow	Pauingassi First Nation, Treaty No. 5
Chief Robert Daniels	Swan Lake First Nation, Treaty No. 1
Chief Joe Danttouze	Northlands Denesuline, Treaty No. 10
Chief BillyJo DeLaRonde	Pine Creek First Nation, Treaty No. 4
Chief Jerome Denechezhe	Lac Brochet – Northlands, Treaty No. 10
Chief Gerald Ermineskin	Ermineskin Cree Nation
Chief Francis Gladue	Big Stone Cree Nation, Treaty No. 8
Chief Gabriel Hart	Bunibonibee
Chief Marcel Head	Shoal Lake Cree Nation
Chief Edward Henderson	Prince Albert Grand Council
Chief Betsy Kennedy	War Lake First Nation
Chief Henry Lewis	Onion Lake First Nation, Treaty No. 6
Chief Rose Lameman	Papaschase Band, Treaty No. 6
Chief Eddy Makokis	Saddle Lake Cree Nation, Treaty No. 6
Chief Robert Maytwayashing	Lake Manitoba First Nation, Treaty No. 2
Chief Irvin Mclvor	Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation, Treaty No. 1
Chief Dennis Meeches	Long Plain First Nation, Treaty No. 1
Chief Ovide Mercredi	Grand Rapids First Nation, Treaty No. 5
Chief Ron Michel	Prince Albert Grand Council
Chief John Miswagon	Cross Lake First Nation
Chief Wallace Moar	O-Chi-Chak-Ko-Sipi First Nation
Chief Terrance Nelson	Roseau River Anishinabe First Nation, Treaty No.1
Chief Harvey Nepinak	Skownan First Nation, Treaty No. 2
Chief Floyd Noskey	Little Red River Cree Nation, Treaty No. 8
Chief Peter Strikes With A Gun	Blackfoot Confederacy, Treaty No. 7
Chief Glen Ross	Opaskwayak Cree Nation
Chief Roger Ross	Manto Sipi First Nation
Chief Sol Sanderson	Chakastaypasin Cree, Treaty No. 6
Chief Morris Shannacappo	Rolling River First Nation, Treaty No. 4
Chief Adrian Stimson	Siksika Nation
Chief Joe Thorassie Jr.	Sayisi Dene First Nation

## National Indian Treaties 1-11 Gathering Lower Fort Garry, Manitoba, July 31 to August 3, 2006

Chief Dave Traverse	Kinonjeoshtegon First Nation, Treaty No. 5
Katherine Whitecloud	Manitoba Regional Vice Chief, AFN
Chief Garnet Woodhouse	Pinaymootang First Nation, Treaty No. 2
Proxy Dennis Bird	George Gordon
Dawn Bronson	Superintendent of Lower Fort Garry, Parks Canada
Proxy Norman Calliou	Sucker Creek First Nation, Treaty No. 8
Elder Howard Cardinal	
Dave Courchene Jr.	
Proxy Regena Crowchild	Tsuu T'ina First Nation, Treaty No. 7
Elder Daniels	Swan Lake First Nation
Councillor Marrison Fontaine	Sagkeeng First Nation
Simon Frog	Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Treaty No. 9
Mr. Stan Fuller	Lamb of God Ministries
Theresa Gray	
Mr. Elijah Harper	Member of the Manitoba Legislature
Headman Joe	Lac Brochet – Northlands, Treaty No. 10
Proxy Les Healy	Blood Tribe
Proxy Walter Janvier	Cold Lake First Nation
Vice Chief Lawrence Joseph	
Elder Fred Kelly	Treaty No. 3
Minister Oscar Lathlin	Aboriginal and Northern Affairs – Province of MB
Proxy Darcy Linklater	Nisichawayasihkk Cree Nation
Allan McLeod	TCIG Plaque Presentation, CEO,
Proxy Irene Michell	Barren Lands First Nation
Charles Nelson	Roseau River Anishinabe First Nation, Treaty No. 1
Proxy Fred Poorman	Kawacatoose First Nation
Proxy Henry Raine	Louis Bull Tribe
Proxy Rodrick Ross	Berens River First Nation, Treaty No. 5
Proxy Lorne Stewart	Prince Albert Grand Council
Councillor Lloyd Sinclair	Peguis First Nation, Treaty No. 1
Dennis White Bird	Treaty Commissioner, Treaty Relations Commission
Proxy John Robert Yellowback	Manto Sipi First Nation





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