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SCO LEADERSHIP MOVES JUSTICE RIGHTS FORWARD AT CHIEFS' SUMMIT

Fair justice requires enacting traditional First Nation systems of governance and law

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ANISHINAABE AND DAKOTA TERRITORY, MB – The Southern Chiefs' Organization (SCO) held a Chiefs-in-Summit meeting this week in Winnipeg focused on justice and rights for southern First Nation citizens.

“All of our member Nations share challenges and opportunities and Summits bring the Chiefs together to focus on key issues,” said **SCO Grand Chief Jerry Daniels**. “This gathering was about adequate justice and equitable supports for our citizens, including our children, youth, and Veterans.”

The Chiefs passed a key resolution on equity and sovereignty for southern First Nations justice and policing, to be advanced by developing a community-driven justice and policy legislative framework. Gladue Reports were also discussed, an important area of justice that must be addressed for our citizens awaiting sentencing, as well as the need for court officials to have more First Nation cultural awareness training.

“First Nation justice systems and services have existed since time immemorial and were disrupted by colonization,” stated **Chief Glenn Hudson of Peguis First Nation**. “First Nations have the expertise and knowledge to support our citizens and ensure justice is delivered in a culturally appropriate way.”

SCO's First Nation [Justice and Rights Program](#) is expanding to address the over-incarceration of our citizens, including with prevention strategies such as the recently launched Restorative Justice Digital Wellness Program guided by Elders and Knowledge Keepers.

Following the National Day of Action for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQ+ people (MMIWG2S+) on October 4th, another vital resolution was passed calling for the establishment of a dedicated SCO MMIWG2S+ unit. Another top priority during the summit was SCO's continued support for the delivery of mental health and wellness services.

With the recent growth of the [Jordan's Principle Program](#) to better meet the needs of southern First Nation children and youth, a resolution was passed to maintain important partnerships and identify new partnerships with other health, education, and social service delivery organizations.

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“Our children are our most precious gifts from Creator and we have the responsibility to ensure they are at the heart of our decision making,” said **Chief Cornell McLean of Lake Manitoba First Nation**.

During the gathering the Chiefs resolved to focus on the homelessness crisis and increase safe and affordable housing for relatives on and off-reserve by developing comprehensive programming, wrap-around supports, and housing development.

An additional area of attention was the crucial work of disrupting racism in the settler colonial state of Canada by continuing to engage with southern First Nation citizens on their experiences of racism within settler systems including rescinding racist laws and papal bills such as the Doctrine of Discovery.

Finally, the Anishinaabe and Dakota Chiefs passed a resolution to identify ways to honour and support southern First Nation veterans for their service and sacrifice by exploring opportunities for support with funding, advocacy, and program development.

“I am honoured to represent the Chiefs of SCO and support the revitalization of our traditional systems of governance and law as we tackle our shared priorities.” **concluded Grand Chief Daniels**. “By working together, we can ensure a clear path forward to build healthy, safe and strong communities for all.”

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The Southern Chiefs' Organization represents 34 First Nations and more than 81,500 citizens in what is now called southern Manitoba. SCO is an independent political organization that protects, preserves, promotes, and enhances First Nations peoples' inherent rights, languages, customs, and traditions through the application and implementation of the spirit and intent of the Treaty-making process.

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