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PEI Mi'kmaq Chiefs optimistic about a renewed relationship with the Government of Canada

Gatineau, PQ, December 9, 2015 ---

PEI Mi'kmaq Chiefs are expressing optimism after hearing Prime Minister Justin Trudeau speak at the Assembly of First Nations Special Chiefs Assembly in Gatineau, Quebec, yesterday.

"The Prime Minister pledged a total renewal of the relationship between Canada and the First Nations peoples," said Chief Brian Francis of Abegweit First Nation. "We are optimistic that we can make progress on a relationship that honours and respects the constitutionally-guaranteed rights of First Nations - a relationship that recognizes that the respect of rights, treaties and jurisdictions is an obligation not a choice."

"Prime Minister Trudeau touched on a number of issues that PEI First Nation leadership have been emphasizing and advocating on publicly," said Chief Matilda Ramjattan of Lennox Island First Nation. "We are pleased that the Prime Minister is publicly re-committing to implementing these signature Election promises; however, we will remain guarded in our optimism until we see these promises in action."

Prime Minister Trudeau committed to:

- End the 20-year cap on funding for First Nations programs,
- Increasing funding for Education programs
- Implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- Review the Legislation unilaterally imposed on First Nations people by the previous Federal Government
- and launch the long-awaited national public inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in Canada.

"Prime Minister Trudeau committed to make meaningful and immediate progress on these issues," said Chief Ramjattan.

The PEI Mi'kmaq Chiefs on behalf of all Mi'kmaq on PEI on and off-reserve, are attending the Special Chiefs Assembly in Gatineau, Quebec.

The term "First Nations" refers to one of three distinct groups recognized as "Aboriginal" in the Constitution Act of 1982. The other two distinct groups characterized as "Aboriginal" are the Métis and the Inuit.

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) is a national advocacy organization representing First Nation citizens in Canada, which includes more than 900,000 people living in 634 First Nation communities and in cities and towns across the country.

For more information:

Don MacKenzie: 902-626-2882, dmackenzie@mcpei.ca

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