



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 11, 2016

Modern treaties reflect UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

VANCOUVER – At the 15th session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in New York the government of Canada announced its full support of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, without qualification.

“We intend nothing less than to adopt and implement the Declaration in accordance with the Canadian Constitution,” Carolyn Bennett, the Honourable Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada announced at the Forum. Minister Bennett added that Canada sees “modern treaties and self-government agreements as the ultimate expression of free, prior and informed consent among partners” and “UNDRIP reflects the spirit and intent” of treaties.

“By adopting and implementing the Declaration, we are breathing life into section 35 and recognizing it as a full box of rights for Indigenous peoples.” said Minister Bennett. The Treaty Commission is optimistic this will result in a renewed commitment to completing treaty negotiations in British Columbia.

“Modern treaties, fairly negotiated and honourably implemented, are the greatest expression of reconciliation and of UNDRIP,” said Acting Chief Commissioner Celeste Haldane. There have been successes in treaty negotiations: eight First Nations in British Columbia are asserting self-determination through modern treaties, and several are entering the final stages of negotiations. Acting Chief Commissioner Haldane added: “A new era of recognition and reconciliation is at hand - the BC treaty negotiations process is well placed to embrace these changes, and lead the country, and the world, in reconciliation.”

-30-

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Odette Wilson / Communications Advisor / t: 604-482-9215 / c: 604-290-4059 / owilson@bctreaty.ca

Mark Smith / Director of Process / t: 604-482-9208 / msmith@bctreaty.ca

About the BC Treaty Commission

The Treaty Commission is the independent body responsible for overseeing treaty negotiations among the governments of Canada, BC and First Nations in BC. It has three roles: facilitation, funding, and public information and education.

Visit www.bctreaty.ca to learn more about the Treaty Commission.