

Media Release

FSIN Communication Unit



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FSIN BACKS IMMEDIATE CHANGE TO THE LAND CLAIMS SYSTEM

Vice Chief Glen Pratt of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations welcomes the release of the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples report on the specific land claim process. The title of the report, *Negotiation or Confrontation: It's Canada Choice*, reflects the urgency in fixing the current system that deal with specific claims. As the Committee stated:

The Committee feels that eliminating the delay in settling Specific Claims is an outright necessity not only for the claimants but for Canadians in general. Failing to find the political will to act appropriately on Specific Claims could invite more confrontations. The choice is Canada's.

The Committee said the current process is so fraught with delay and so ineffective as to be working to the detriment of the government's *stated objectives*. Vice Chief Pratt agrees with the Senate Committee's four recommendations for fixing the problem: an increase in funds available for settlements; the establishment of an independent claims body within two years; adequate resources for the existing process; and the adoption of new guiding principles.

"Now that the Senate Committee has issued this timely study, it is up to the Government to act," Vice-Chief Pratt says. "As part of its election platform, this Government promised to take steps to resolve the backlog of specific claims." Vice Chief Pratt says he was encouraged by the statements made by the Minister of Indian Affairs, Jim Prentice, when he testified before the Senate Committee. Prentice said a claims resolution body independent of government was needed to resolve specific claims. Pratt called on the Government to begin working with First Nations to build on the work of the past to develop the legislative framework to create this independent body which must make the process efficient, effective, and fair.

The Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations represents 74 First Nations in Saskatchewan. The Federation is committed to honouring the Spirit and Intent of the Treaties as well as the promotion, protection and implementation of the Treaty promises that were made more than a century ago.

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