



## News Release

**Date: April 4, 2023**

### **Revised Final Settlement Agreement: Justice for First Nations Children**

**(xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C.)**

The First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) and the Indigenous Child & Family Services Directors Our Children Our Way Society welcome the completion of a revised Final Settlement Agreement on compensation. The \$23.2 billion dollar agreement will provide compensation for all children and families who endured Canada's discrimination through the First Nations Child and Family Services program and Jordan's Principle, including those formerly excluded.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs stated: "Yesterday, we bore witness to the unparalleled and unprecedented recognition of and compensation for the egregious harms experienced by First Nations children, their families, and communities, as a result of Canada's discrimination. We must reflect on, celebrate, and honour our children who became victims and survivors, some of whom are with us and some whom have passed on, whose stories have led to the revised Final Settlement Agreement on Compensation for First Nations Children and Families, being achieved, to end the cycle of child removal and abuse. We are responsible to continue the fight for justice and transformation of First Nation child and family services."

The First Nations Child & Family Caring Society and the Assembly of First Nations filed a human rights complaint against Canada in 2007. The complaint was substantiated nearly a decade later when the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT) ruled that Canada had discriminated against First Nations children and families through its flawed and inequitable provision of First Nations child and family services. The CHRT found that Canada had long been aware of the discrimination and of its adverse impacts on children, including the delay and denial of critical services and the unnecessary removal of children from their families, communities, and cultures.

Cheryl Casimer, First Nation Summit Political Executive stated: "Achievement of the revised Final Settlement Agreement on Compensation for First Nations Children and Families is a long-fought and long-awaited step towards meaningful reconciliation through recognition and compensation for victims, survivors, and their families. No settlement will ever undo or reconcile the harms experienced, which continue to have revolving impacts on our families and communities. It is our responsibility to continuously work to end the imposition of colonization on our peoples, as manifested through ongoing child welfare systems, policies, and practices."

The CHRT ordered Canada to compensate the children and families who suffered discrimination. Two class actions were subsequently filed, seeking compensation for a broader group of children and families with more substantial compensation than could be ordered by the CHRT. In July of 2022, Canada reached a \$20 billion dollar agreement with the AFN and the class action representatives to settle both class actions and the CHRT compensation orders. However, the Caring Society argued that this agreement left out many children and families who were entitled to compensation, under previous CHRT orders and upon review, the CHRT rejected the agreement in October 2022.

Regional Chief Terry Teegee for the British Columbia Assembly of First Nations stated: "Compensation for all 'classes' of victims, who experienced inequitable service provision by Canada, reflects our continual and collective pursuit of justice for our children, youth, and families, nothing less of which will suffice, as demonstrated in December 2022. Yesterday's achievement is cause for tremendous celebration and will be remembered in our hearts and history books, as a pivotal moment in our shared history. With that in mind, let us work towards the long-term reform of child and family services, including prioritization of long-term, sustainable, predictable, and needs-based funding to ensure our people are adequately equipped to exercise their inherent rights to jurisdiction over child and family services."

Yesterday a revised settlement agreement was announced, which includes an additional \$3.2 billion dollars to ensure that all the children and families contemplated in the CHRT orders will receive a minimum of \$40,000 in compensation.

We hold our hands up to Cindy Blackstock and the Caring Society for their unrelenting efforts to ensure that all the children and families entitled to compensation are included in the Final Settlement Agreement.

Mary Teegee (Maaxw Gibuu) from Takla Nation, Chair of the Indigenous Child & Family Services Directors Our Children Our Way Society stated: "When we started this process all those years ago, we had three goals: to end discrimination against children and families, to ensure discrimination never happens again, and to compensate the children and families who suffered. Yesterday we delivered a measure of justice to our children. They are our most precious resource, and they deserve nothing less. But our work is not done. We will continue to work diligently toward long-term reform of child and family services to ensure that no child suffers discrimination ever again."

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*The First Nations Leadership Council is comprised of the political executives of the BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN), First Nations Summit (FNS), and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC).*

*The Indigenous Child & Family Services Directors Our Children Our Way Society represents the 24 Indigenous Child and Family Service Agencies in British Columbia. We work to safeguard the best interests of Indigenous children.*

**For further comment, please contact:**

Mary Teegee, ICFSD Chair

Phone: 250-612-8710

**For further information, contact:**

Cheryl Casimer, FNS Political Executive

Phone: 778-875-2157

Annette Schroeter, BCAFN Communications Officer

Phone: 778-281-1655

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, UBCIC President

Phone: 250-490-5314