OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

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UNION OF B.C. INDIAN CHIEFS
43RD ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SEPTEMBER 14TH – SEPTEMBER 16TH, 2011
WHISTLER, B.C.

Resolution no. 2011-42

RE: Provincial Commitments Regarding First Nations Children

WHEREAS Indigenous Nations in the territory known as British Columbia assert an inherent right of self determination including jurisdiction relating to the children and families of those Nations;

WHEREAS the First Nations Directors Forum ("Directors Forum") is comprised of the Executive Directors of the First Nations Child and Family Service Agencies within the province of British Columbia. Since its inception in 1996-1997, it has evolved and grown to represent 23 agencies, and its vision is for all First Nations communities to be well equipped in the provision of high quality and culturally appropriate care for all of our children;

WHEREAS the First Nations Child and Family Wellness Council ("FNCFWC") was established at the Indigenous Child at the Centre (ICC) II Forum in July, 2008, where delegates developed and endorsed the "One Heart, One Mind Statement of Solidarity and Cooperation" which affirmed their commitment to work together in a Nation-to-Nation and community-driven process to secure the individual and collective survival, dignity and well-being of our children. To advance these matters, the Statement also supported the establishment of an FNCFWC to take primary responsibility: to amend the Indigenous Child at the Centre Action Plan ("Action Plan"); to develop a workplan to advance and implement the Action Plan; and to develop a Terms of Reference for a permanent FNCFWC;

WHEREAS since January 2008, there have been three (3) province-wide, inclusive ICC Forums with the purpose of bringing together First Nations leaders to discuss and strategize on child and family wellness,

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Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President

and as the vehicle for developing a common vision for all First Nations service providers pertaining to children and families, whether they are community-specific, Delegated Agencies, or related councils. In order to proceed with implementation of the Action Plan, the FNCFWC requires sufficient discussion and consensus from the Leadership on an annual basis, which has typically been at the ICC;

WHEREAS the Directors Forum has been working since May 2001 to establish a position of First Nations Director within the Ministry of Child and Family Development (MCFD), and in July 2008 the Deputy Minister announced creation of this position. In March 2011, the Directors Forum was informed by MCFD that a First Nations Director was a misnomer, as the position was without a budget and was solely responsible for oversight of delegated Aboriginal agencies, and further, that the position would be here forth known as Director of Aboriginal Agencies;

WHEREAS the FNCFWC Executive has followed all provisions and guidelines under the contract with MCFD and yet, the ICC IV has been delayed three separate times in 2011 due to MCFD withholding funds directly related to ICC IV;

WHEREAS the United Nations *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) sets out:

> **Article 3**: Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.
>
> **Article 18:** Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision-making institutions;

WHERAS Article 21 of the UNDRIP sets out that States shall take effective measures and, where appropriate, special measures to ensure continuing improvement of their economic and social conditions. Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities;

WHEREAS the unilaterally imposed change of title by the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) from "First Nations Director" to "Director of Delegated Aboriginal Agencies" is a step backwards in our efforts to create space within the governmental Ministry responsible for children and families, and does not recognize our inherent rights or our aspirations for self-determination; and,

WHEREAS through repeatedly and capriciously withholding funds for ICC IV, the MCFD has delayed the effective implementation of the Action Plan;

WHEREAS BC Premier Christy Clark was elected on a "Families First" platform, where she promised that her first priority would be improving on lives of BC families.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the UBCIC Chiefs-in-Assembly unanimously reaffirm that our children are the foundation for our future, and fully expect the government to support strategies and

activities that promote the betterment of existing conditions and improve the chances for positive, healthy, safe and happy futures for our children;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the UBCIC Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the UBCIC Executive to demand that the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) work with First Nations leadership and reinstate the critical position of First Nations Director within MCFD instead of the current, limited "Director of Delegated Aboriginal Agencies" position;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the UBCIC Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the UBCIC Executive to call on the Premier of BC and the MCFD to fully commit to supporting the Indigenous Child at the Centre (ICC) IV Forum, and all future ICC Forums, in concert with the Province of BC's "Families First" agenda and respectfully uphold all financial commitments made;

THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED the UBCIC Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the UBCIC Executive and staff to work with the First Nations Directors Forum, the First Nations Child and Family Wellness Council, the BC Assembly of First Nations, and the First Nations Summit to ensure that the Province of BC, including the MCFD, upholds commitments made to improve the lives of Indigenous children including those set out in the Tsawwassen Accord; Transformative Change Accord; the Recognition and Reconciliation Protocol on First Nations Children, Youth and Families; and the July 2008 "One Heart, One Mind: Statement of Solidarity and Cooperation."

Moved: **Chief Coreen Child, Kwakiutl First Nation**
Seconded: **Chief Nelson Leon, Adams Lake Indian Band**
Disposition: **Carried**
Date: **September 16th, 2011**

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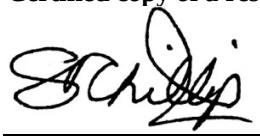

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President