O.K.N.T.C.

Oweekeno-Kitasoo-Nuxalk Tribal Councils

Part Two:

Land Claims Settlement Initiatives

Of The

Oweekeno-Kitasoo-Nuxalk Tribal Councils

To The

First Nations Summit Meeting

Vancouver, British Columbia

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Today, on the subject of the land claims question in British Columbia, we are honoured to share a few words with all the Heriditary Chiefs, the Chief Councillors, the Band Councillors, the Tribal Council Chairpersons, the Executive members of the Indian political organizations, and the native people who are observers at this meeting. We are grateful to be a part of these round table discussions on land claims.

In the beginning the Creator bestowed upon our forefathers all the lands, waters, air and all its natural resources. This is a fact that we all know as it has been handed down to us for generations and generations. With the blessings of the Creator, which today we now call Aboriginal Title and Rights, our First Nations cultivated our tribal terrorities in harmony with nature and perpetually sustained all natural resources and our peoples through good government, peace and order. Before we talk about land claims today, let us all stand so that we may all share with you a few words with the Creator:

"Great Spirit, guide our thoughts as we speak, for we are weak and need Your strength, Your courage, Your knowledge, and Your wisdom.

Great Spirit to the east, Great spirit to the west, Great Spirit to the South, Great Spirit to the North, Great Spirt on the Mother Earth, Great Spirit in the rocks, Great Spirit amongst all the four-legged, Great Spirit amidst the plants, and Great Spirit amongst the sun and stars we ask You to hear our prayer and help us for we are weak and need Your good ways of living.

Great Spirit, we ask that You watch over all our First Nation peoples throughout our land now called British Columbia and Canada. For each of us here today, we ask that You bless all our families, all our relatives and friends in our villages and elsewhere. We ask that You take away any pain that is hurting our First Nation peoples and place that pain where it will no

longer hurt any other person. We ask that You help our First Nations people to keep our villages strong based on Your good ways of living.

Great Spirit, we ask that You bless all the tribal territorial lands, waters, air and all its natural resources both within and on it. For each of us First Nations represented here today and all the many other First Nations throughout this land we ask that You protect our tribal territories from harm. We ask that You help our tribal terroritial places to be strong based on Your harmonious ways with Mother Earth.

Great Spirit, we ask that You bless all the living things throughout our villages and territorial lands and all over the world. We ask that You protect all the birds, all the fish, all the four-legged animals, all the insects, and all the plants that are on the Mother Earth.

We ask that You help all these living things to be strong based on Your harmonious ways with Mother Earth.

Great Spirit, we ask that You bless all our ancestors and those yet unborn. We ask that You pass on to our forefathers the sincere appreciation for the traditional customs, cultural ways, spiritual ways and the many other ways that they handed down every generation. We ask that You pass on to our First Nation peoples yet unborn our committment that we will keep those ways of our ancestors so that it may help us in our future dealings with ourselves and all living things. We ask that You help us keep our ways passed down from generations to generations so that we may pass them to our future First Nations peoples yet unborn.

Great Spirit, we ask that You bless all the peoples throughout the world and protect them from any pain. We ask that You help the Canadians, the Americans,

the South African peoples, the Chinese, the South Americans, the South Pacific nations, the Irish, the British, the French, the Russians, the Iraqis and other Arabs, the Jewish people, and all the peoples throughout Mother Earth. We ask that you take away the wars and its pain that hurt all these people and place it where it will no longer hurt anyone anymore.

Great Spirit, we ask that You bless all the First Nation leaders at this land claims meeting. We ask that You help us in our plans for a better future. We ask that You help us work together with one mind. We ask that You help us build a stronger alliance as First Nations. We ask that You show us, through our discussions, Your good ways which we can learn to use when we look after our lands, waters, air, and all its natural resources. We ask that You enter this room today and for the next few days and help us to keep a strong mind so that we will not hurt our fellow First

Nations. We ask that you show all our First Nation leaders how we can keep Your good ways of living on Mother Earth.

Great Spirit, we ask You for all these blessings with the knowledge that it is only You who can help us here today and all our First Nations in the future. Great Spirit, we are weak and need Your strength, Your courage, Your knowledge, Your wisdom and the many other good things that You provide to all living things on Mother Earth. All my relations."

When we talk land claims we must never forget the fact that the Creator provided all our First Nations with tribal territories adjacent to each other. We must never forget the fact that the Creator also taught our ancestors how to manage and control the lands, waters, air and all its natural resources on a perpetual renewable basis. We must never forget the fact that the Creator also taught our ancestors how to maintain self-reliance,

self-sufficiency, and self-determination values through our own traditional forms of good government, peace and order. We must never forget the fact that the Creator also taught our ancestors how to keep own spiritual values, our own cultural values, our own languages, and many other customs and ways that keep our First Nations together for all the generations yet unborn. Today, all these things that were given to us by the Creator we call them "aboriginal title and rights".

Today, because the leaders of both the Government of Canada and British Columbia, who we will call the "Crown", want to totally eliminate our claim to traditional tribal territories, there are efforts made that appear to be dealing with the resolution of land claims, self-government and whatever other "aboriginal title and right" the First Nations claim to still hold. We must not forget the fact that our ancestors managed to gain international recognition that the Crown must gain the consent of the First Nations if they want to take our traditional tribal territories. We must not forget the fact that the Crown, in spite

of treaties with many First Nations throughout Canada, have consistently imposed cultural genocide policies and practices on all our First Nations. It is these two key facts that prove the Crown is still trying to eliminate our claim to traditional tribal territories while appearing to that they are trying to resolve the Indian problem.

If the Crown is serious and sincere about resolving the land claims question with all our First Nations, then it must consider the following recommendations:

1. THAT "aboriginal title and rights" as defined by the First Nations must be entrenched within the Canadian Constitution. The Crown, to show its good faith to all First Nations, should re-establish the First Nations/First Ministers conferences within the Canadian constitution on the basis that negotiations will continue until aboriginal title and rights is defined and accepted by all parties. This will ensure that all future land claims

negotiations are guided by principles that cannot be arbitrarily changed by the Crown. Today, the Crown can easily change the negotiation policies and regulations for their advantage. The Crown uses federal land claims negotiation policies and practices which are to their full advantage and they force First Nations to borrow money to claim their land back. Therefore, without our definition of aboriginal title and rights entrenched within the Canadian constitution the First Nations are going to be involved in land claim negotiations for decades -- the Crown will wait until the First Nations' position weakens (as the Crown can wait with all its financial resources backing them up).

2. THAT First Nations and the Crown agree to establish a First Nations/Canada Territorial Land Claims Trust Fund which will protect all revenue accrued in unceded traditional tribal territories of First Nations until such time a final land claims resolution is established. The First Nations and the Crown should entrench this interest

bearing trust fund within the Canadian constitution so that no legislative assembly can eliminate its existence. The interest accrued from this fund should be provided to the First Nations for their land claim activities and related work. All corporate taxes, all royalities, all income taxes and any other revenue accrued from land claim areas will be placed in this First Nations/Canada Territorial Land Claims Trust Fund. There should be no worry whatsoever about the "third party interests" as all the revenue they pay will go into this trust fund. This trust fund should be managed by First Nations, the Crown and selected people from the international world community. The political lobby for this trust fund should be mainly international.

3. THAT the First Nations and the Crown establish a First Nations Natural Resources Allocation System and protect it within the Canadian constitution. In the interim, without prejudice to land claims and while the land settlement still needs to be finalized, the First Nations

Natural Resources Allocation System should provide all First Nations at least a miminum base of fifty per cent of all the natural resources on Crown land (excluding Indian reserves). If a First Nation can utilize all its natural resources then the First Nations Natural Resources Allocation System should not prevent that type of arrangement being established with the Crown. This system should allow both the First Nations and the Crown to conduct comprehensive integrated sustained land-use management plans in order to collectively develop sound legislation and regulations concerning the natural resources. This system should permit the First Nation to establish arrangements with third parties in order to fully utilize its minimum base natural resource allocation. All revenue from this system will go to the trust fund detailed above.

4. THAT in the interim, and without prejudice to comprehensive land claims of all First Nations, there should be established a British Columbia Special Indian

Reserve Commission. The allocation of Indian reserves by the Crown as result of the McKenna-McBride Indian Reserve Commission during the early 1900s was unfair to the coastal First Nations of British Columbia as well as the interior. This Commission should negotiate with the First Nations today and establish Special Indian Reserves that would supplement the present Indian Reserves. The First Nations and this Commission should deal with key areas including: all the fishing stations; all the hunting stations; all the gathering stations; all the trapping stations; all the traditional village sites; all the land transportation routes; all the historical sites; all the archeological sites, and; all the settlement sites. The British Columbia Special Indian Reserve Commission will permit the First Nations to establish land bases that should adequately help the existing communities as well as bring some justice to all parties.

5. THAT the Comprehensive Framework Treaty proposed by the Union of British Columbia Indian

Chiefs be recommended for acceptance to the Crown by the British Columbia Land Claims Task Force. The Task Force should relate all its findings and recommendations to the proposed Comprehensive Framework Treaty. Where its findings and recommendations can make improvements, subject to the approval of each First Nation, it should be meticuously detailed. The Task Force should use the Comprehensive Framework Treaty as the basis for the final land claims settlement agreement. The Task Force should examine ways of using the Comprehensive Framework Treaty to set the foundation for Comprehensive Sub-Framework Treaty agreements in the area of natural resources, especially with forestry, fishing, trapping, etc. The Task Force should determine ways to establish a Secretariat that will advise and support the First Nations and the Crown on how to utilize the Comprehensive Framework Treaty for the resolution of land claims.

We wish to thank everyone here for the opportunity to speak and share our thoughts on the land claims question. Now we will listen carefully to the reply of the Heriditary Chiefs, the Chief Councillors, the Band Councillors, the Tribal Council chairpersons, the Executive members of the Indian political organizations, and the native people who are observers at this meeting. When every First Nation has stated their concerns and recommendations in these round table discussions we will be anxious to hear the comments of the representatives on the British Columbia Land Claims Task Force. We appreciate very much the round table discussions today and look forward to deciding on whether or not we can deal with the land claims question through the British Columbia Land Claims Task Force.

All my relations.