

SPEAKING NOTES FOR SHEILAGH MURPHY
NATIONAL INDIGENOUS FORESTRY SECTOR MEETING
Hilton Lac Lemy, Gatineau, Québec
March 8, 2018

- First of all, I would like to thank Bradley Young, Executive Director of the National Aboriginal Forestry Association (or NAFA) for the invitation to speak at this National Indigenous Forestry Sector meeting and to acknowledge that we are on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin people.
- I am pleased to be here and speak on behalf of both the department of Crown–Indigenous Relations & Northern Affairs, and Indigenous Services Canada.
- I would like to commend NAFA as a national organization that promotes and supports Indigenous participation in the forestry sector while advancing the concept of sustainable development of forest resources
- We have supported this institution since its inception in 1989. This is in part because Canada has long recognized that forests and their many resources are essential to the well-being of the country’s environment, communities and economies.
- It is well understood that Economic Development provides a path towards self-sufficiency and self-government. Promoting partnerships that could lead to more self-reliant Indigenous communities is a priority for the Government of Canada and consistent with the Truth and Reconciliation

Commission's Calls to Action (92 and 53), the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

- Enabling the right conditions for self-determination requires a focused and enhanced investment in programs that recognize the unique needs of Indigenous communities, the provision of adequate resources into community-centric economic capacity, and the leveraging of the right partnerships to strengthen business capacity and build vibrant local economies.
- Economic development is interlinked with self-determination. While geographic endowment is typically more crucial to the success of Indigenous communities compared to municipalities, strong governing Indigenous institutions are essential for prosperity and participation in economic markets. Federal programs cannot single-handedly build an economy; but they can and should aid in closing socio-economic gaps, contributing to stronger economic growth and fostering opportunities for Indigenous communities and businesses.
- The government is working to achieve these through:
 - A strategic approach to Indigenous economic development that includes not only an injection of cash, but also the development of partnerships, expertise, and implementable/measurable economic development plans;

- Ensuring that Indigenous businesses are linked into the mainstream economy, by proactively connecting them to major developments in surrounding areas; and,
 - Social policy reforms that help drive determinants of Indigenous economic development such as income assistance, education, housing, and health.
- The Department anticipates transforming its role to be a strategic enabler of policy and capacity development, while at the same time, continuing to rebuild trust with Indigenous peoples, institutions and stakeholders to further drive development that embraces Indigenous contributions to Canada's economy.
- The creation of two federal departments to serve Indigenous people is an important step in building a true nation-to-nation, Inuit-Crown, and government-to-government relationship with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples in Canada.
- The Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs will guide the Government's forward-looking and transformative work to create a new relationship with Indigenous Peoples. The Minister has been tasked with better whole-of-government coordination on nation-to-nation, Inuit-Crown, and government-to-government relationships, to accelerate self-government and self-determination agreements based on new policies, laws and operational practices, and to develop a framework to advance recognition of rights approach that will last well beyond this government.

- The Minister of Indigenous Services will continue the important work of improving the quality of services delivered to First Nations, Inuit and Métis people. This will include ensuring a consistent, high quality, and distinctions-based approach to the delivery of those services. Over time, one fundamental measure of success will be that appropriate programs and services will be increasingly delivered, not by the Government of Canada, but instead by Indigenous Peoples as they move to self-government.
- Today, with a legal framework that is among the most robust in the world, Canada is a world leader in sustainable forest management and Indigenous Peoples are important partners in sustainable forest management.
- You all know the statistics about Canada's forest sector and the number of jobs it provides. And while the forestry sector is the largest private sector employer of Indigenous people, there remains a lot of opportunity to increase the number of Indigenous people in this sector.
- The two departments that formally comprised Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada are working with Indigenous communities and individuals to maximize their economic development potential by investing in community readiness, entrepreneurs and businesses, land management and strategic partnerships.
- I am going to take a few minutes to touch upon some of our programs that help Indigenous Peoples increase their involvement in the forest sector.

- Our *Aboriginal Entrepreneurship Program* has been successful in increasing the number of financially-stable Aboriginal-owned and controlled businesses. In partnership with the National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association's network of Aboriginal Financial Institutions, 37,000 loans worth close to \$2 billion dollars in leverage have been generated since the late 1980s.
- We manage the *Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Business* which aims to increase Indigenous business participation in federal procurement through set-asides, joint ventures and subcontracting criteria. In support of the Government of Canada's Procurement Modernization agenda, we are preparing an Indigenous Procurement Modernization Strategy with the goal of maximizing the participation and benefit of Indigenous People, businesses and communities from federal programs, expenditures and investments.
- The *Lands and Economic Development Services Program (LEDSP)* and the *Community Opportunity Readiness Program (CORP)* are supporting capacity building efforts to improve the delivery of economic development services thereby increasing the number of communities participating in and benefitting from economic development opportunities in their regions.
- In the last 10 years these two programs – CORP and LEDSP, have provided \$4.9 million in funding to support 106

Indigenous forestry projects situated across Canada. These projects have ranged from feasibility studies on acquiring saw mills to funds for the creation of wood pellet plants and bio-energy centres.

- The *Strategic Partnership Initiative (SPI)* brings together 16 federal departments and agencies to coordinate efforts and investments to forge partnerships with industry and support Indigenous participation in complex economic development opportunities in areas such as forestry, fisheries, mining, energy and agriculture sectors. NRCan is one of the signatories to SPI.
- Since 2010, SPI has invested approximately \$14 million in support of the following forestry initiatives:
 - Aboriginal Forestry Initiative – In partnership with NRCan, the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Employment and Social Development Canada and the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, the Initiative identified and supported projects designed to meet the unique forestry opportunities of First Nations. Thirty projects were supported with diverse approaches to meeting forestry opportunities across Canada, leading to the development of 36 partnerships aimed at strengthening the capacity of 117 First Nations and Indigenous Organizations in the forest sector.
 - Forestry Major Opportunities – In partnership with NRCan, this initiative supported Indigenous communities in

engaging with industry to pursue more advanced business development opportunities in the forest sector in British Columbia and Ontario.

- Northern Biomass Strategy – In partnership with the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, the Strategy focused on emerging economic development opportunities associated with biomass energy in the Northwest Territories. This initiative helped strengthen the development of a viable northern forestry industry based on growing markets for wood fuels.
- A project that I am particularly proud of because it demonstrates how Government of Canada departments can work collaboratively with provincial departments is the Whitesand First Nation Biomass project in northern Ontario.
- It involves the development of an industrial park that will be the home for a biomass co-generation facility, a wood pellet plant and a wood merchandising yard. Project funding of \$4.8 million was provided by NRCan, SPI, the Community Opportunity Readiness Program, the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario and the province of Ontario through its Northern Ontario Heritage Fund.
- This Whitesand Initiative will promote economic reconciliation by supporting a strong socio-economic future for the First Nation, creating meaningful employment, and building a robust local economy.

- I encourage more multi-partner collaboration and Indigenous involvement in the forest sector as it benefits Canada's sustainable forest management and helps to build strong economically prosperous First Nation communities.
- Moving forward, the Department will continue to support innovative projects that leverage private sector investment and lead to increased First Nation community revenues and employment. We will do that by:
 - Improving collaboration with other federal departments and regional development agencies on promoting strategic partnerships;
 - Exploring a differentiated approach to community economic development to better assist First Nations in pursuing economic opportunities;
 - Modernizing Indigenous Procurement and supporting Indigenous businesses and employment opportunities; and
 - removing legislative barriers to ensure large-scale projects on reserve promoted by First Nations, can proceed.

- We are committed to working with partners to foster the right conditions for economic growth which in turn will help close the socio-economic gaps for Indigenous Peoples.
- I look forward to answering any questions you may have and wish you well in the remainder of your conference here today

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