

Hey all -

Reporting to you live from Prince George following a three-day session with key boreal BC and Alberta chiefs organized by the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council.

As you may have read in the papers, as a 'national' meeting it failed to materialize. However, there were about 100 FN representatives from BC, Alberta, NWT and YT present, and although many people expressed disappointment at 'having been left out of the deal' in terms of the CBFA, there was solid support of the need for First Nations to work constructively together to maximize the opportunity that the CBFA represents, and to move forward in their discussions with ENGOs and FPAC members about key issues.

A declaration on the Boreal was drafted and is now being considered by delegates, and a proposal has been put forward by the BC boreal chiefs to enter into a letter of agreement (LOU) towards a protocol with CBFA signatories.

A copy of the proposed LOU is attached and will be discussed at the next Aboriginal WG with FPAC representatives. **I strongly urge all ENGO organizations to support it, as it will provide positive evidence of a positive relationship being established with FNs towards realizing the vision and goals of the CBFA. Please send comments and indications of support to Faisal, Pierre and Larry ASAP, as we'll need to report back to the chiefs next week.**

I've also been invited to Alberta to meet with the North Peace Tribal Council in early Nov, who want to host a meeting similar to that held here in BC for Treaty 8 and Treaty 6 FNs in that province. Early indications are that there are good prospects for a similar outcome possible in Alberta.

The media coverage was a bit disappointing, but it is an opportunity for us to tell our side of the story. Steve Kakfwi, who did the opening speech at the meetings here, has agreed to pen an op-ed as a former Dene Nation grand chief and territorial premier to basically say 'get over it and take the opportunity'

All in all...we did ok.

Staying calm, being brave and watching for the signs...

Larry & Faisal

[As a bit of background to the Globe article and the NAN/MKO/AS release. When this meeting was first proposed in Winnipeg at the AFN national assembly, there was widespread agreement among FNs, including those critical of the CBFA, that such a meeting was necessary. Commitments were given to CSTC that folks would attend. Between the jigs and reels, however, some key speakers (ie Ovide Mercredi, Stan Louttit) were unable to hold the dates due to other commitments. That, together with the AFNLQ resolution to not attend meetings on the CBFA until there the chiefs have received a legal and technical review of the CBFA created an ideal opportunity for the 'Scrap the CBFA' campaign being undertaken by Russell Diabo and some of our other 'friends' to drive wedges between FNs in the East and West.

As you can expect, the NAN/MKO/AS statements are not being taken particularly well by BC FN leaders. There were strong statements from the floor and the podium, including from Union of BC Indians Grand Chief Stewart Philip and AFN Regional Chief Jody Wilson-Raybold that they supported this meeting, and supported the dialogue taking place. Even though they weren't 'impressed' with the agreement, they weren't impressed at being 'dismissed' by NAN/NKO/AS either.

We'll be circling back to AFN to try to get the National Chief to take a more active hand going forward, and continuing our outreach work in MB, ON and QC]