



# **DEHCHO FIRST NATIONS**

**BOX 89, FORT SIMPSON, NT X0E 0N0**  
**TEL: (867) 695-2355/2610    FAX: (867) 695-2038**  
**EMAIL: [dcfn@dehchofirstnations.com](mailto:dcfn@dehchofirstnations.com)**



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## **Negotiations Briefing Notes** **Hay River, NT, Feb. 19-21, 2008**

The first negotiating session of 2008 in the Dehcho Process with Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) meeting the Dehcho First Nations (DFN) team at the Dene Cultural Institute on the Hay River Reserve was opened with a drum prayer.

Participating in the solemn prayer ceremony was the newly chosen DFN Interim Grand Chief, Gerry Antoine, who addressed members of the three teams. Antoine expressed a number of concerns about Canada's intentions, stating that its record in other comprehensive land claims was not good, nor was the position honest. He referred again to Canada's recent rejection of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which passed the General Assembly last year by a vote of 143-4. Canada – along with Australia, New Zealand and the U.S. – voted against the resolution.

Antoine also demanded information on the secret talks which have been under way between Canada and the Northwest Territory Metis since 1996 and which has recently signed an interim land withdrawal agreement which could adversely affect and compromise Dehcho lands. Canada has a duty to keep the DFN informed of such developments. Antoine also noted that, unlike the Metis talks, Dehcho Process talks are always open to the public.

“Canada is two-faced. It heard what our Elders and people told the Berger Inquiry, what they told Judge Morrow in the Paulette case, what they have consistently and honorably told Canada since the Dehcho Process began, but Canada has not kept its promises since the days when the Treaties were signed up to now. Canada is not, and never has, walked the talk.”

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Canada's chief negotiator Tim Christian agreed to contact his counterpart in the Metis negotiations and later confirmed that an interim land withdrawal agreement had been initialled but stated it did not impact on Dehcho territory. The DFN responded that without a stated land area, without maps, without details, the Dehcho could not judge whether its interests were, indeed, compromised. Further, DFN Chief Negotiator Georges Erasmus said, Canada had “duty to respond” and to keep the DFN informed without waiting until the last minute to be asked.

The two sets of negotiations are separate and have different teams at the table.

Canada would not comment on the framework agreement negotiations going on with Chief Harry Deneron of the Acho Dene or on the KFN negotiations. Chief Alec Sunrise indicated that KFN is waiting for Canada to respond to its tabled documents.

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A number of documents were tabled by all three parties. Canada tabled Agreement in Principle chapters on land use planning, a Dehcho resource management authority, land, water and environmental regulation, access, and expropriation.

The GNWT tabled discussion drafts on adult education and training, post-secondary education, early childhood education, NWT core principles and objectives (with an appendix) and discussed an earlier chapter on kindergarten to grade 12 education.

DFN tabled chapters on expropriation and education.

NOTE: All tabled documents from the three parties at the main negotiating table are retained at the DFN office and can be obtained on request. All tabled documents are public and complete texts can be found on the DFN website:

[www.dehchofirstnations.com](http://www.dehchofirstnations.com) link to negotiations – tabled documents.

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The meeting also received a progress report from the Dehcho Land Use Planning Committee (DLUPC) from the chairperson and chief executive, Michael Nadli. The presentation included reports on workshops, technical sessions focusing on Conformity Requirements (CRs), zoning discussions, revisions to the Dehcho Land Use Plan and work under way towards an interim draft Land Use Plan.

NOTE: The text of Nadli's power point presentation is available on the DLUPC website:

[www.dehcholands.org](http://www.dehcholands.org).

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Canada's position that its land and monetary offer to the DFN was the most "generous" in history was countered by a news release regarding a deal signed between the Cree Nation of northern Quebec and Canada on Feb. 21 which was published as the Hay River talks were going on. The news release describes a compensation package of \$1.4 billion, the administration of Cree governance and an end to litigation over the 1975 James Bay Agreement.

Canada wants the Dehcho to undertake a land selection process which would not exceed 45, 810 sq. km with monetary compensation not yet determined.

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The next formal negotiations meeting is scheduled for Yellowknife March 25-28.

