



Nishnawbe Aski Nation

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **REMOTENESS QUOTIENT TABLE TO ENSURE EQUITY IN DELIVERY OF FIRST NATIONS CHILD WELFARE FUNDING**

**OTTAWA, ON:** Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler joined with Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) Minister Carolyn Bennett today to announce a Remoteness Quotient Table (RQ Table) to address the unique costs of providing child welfare services in NAN First Nation communities.

“This RQ Table is a commitment by NAN and the Government of Canada that will begin to fill the gaps and break down barriers built by a history of discriminatory funding of child welfare services for NAN First Nations. While significant compliance issues on the part of Canada as raised by our Indigenous partners still need to be addressed at the March 22 tribunal hearing, this represents an important step forward. The development of a remoteness quotient is to address the inequity in the delivery of services in NAN First Nations. This is a positive step towards reconciliation with the Government of Canada,” said Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler, who signed the Terms of Reference with Minister Bennett this morning. “The underfunding of child welfare and preventative mental health services has been putting our children at risk. By working together in the spirit of reconciliation, I believe it will bring us closer to achieving equity.”

The RQ Table allows NAN and the Government of Canada to collaborate in the spirit of reconciliation on solutions to the deficiencies in funding for Indigenous child welfare found by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT). It will ensure that the same levels of child welfare services are available in NAN First Nations as in the rest of Canada, despite the additional costs of remoteness.

“The RQ Table is a unique opportunity to build a long-term relationship with our federal Treaty partner that can be applied to the medium and long-term relief phases of the child welfare proceedings, including the development and implementation of a long-term remoteness quotient,” said Fiddler. “We are encouraged that INAC is supportive of the development of a remoteness quotient that could represent an economic model capable of application to remote communities across the country to adjust not only for child welfare funding but also for funding in areas such as health, education and policing.”

NAN intends for the RQ Table to become a permanent element of the national child welfare funding formula, and believes that this work can pave the way to looking at how all other programs and services in NAN will be resourced. Access to data that reflects the true reality of living in a northern or remote First Nation will ensure that programs and services are resourced properly.

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