

Gwich'inat Eenjit
 Gàdatr'igwìjilcheii Gidilii
*Gwich'in nan, nakhwèk'yùu ts'it gwitr'it
 tthak nakhwèdavee gwìheezàa eenjit*



Gwich'in Tribal Council
Gwich'in land, culture & economy for a better future

MEDIA ADVISORY

GTC Non-Supportive of Draft NWT Devolution AIP

INUVIK (October 18, 2010) – Leadership of the Gwich'in Tribal Council are not prepared to recommend approval and signing of the Draft NWT Devolution Agreement-in-Principle (AIP) reached between the Government of Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories.

"The Gwich'in Tribal Council wrote to the GNWT Premier on April 19, 2010 outlining several significant issues of concern to the Gwich'in and our intention not to support a process that ignores these fundamental issues." says President Richard Nerysoo.

Those issues included but were not limited to:

1. Division of power, responsibility and authority not being resolved between the Government of the NWT and the Aboriginal Governments.
2. Revenue sharing not properly addressed including revenue sources for the Aboriginal Governments plus revenues related to taxation or other sources of revenues.
3. Distribution of Revenues as per the existing agreement not reflecting population or the affects of resource development.
4. The Agreement suggesting that revenues are solely for programs and services without the ability of Aboriginal Governments to decide their priorities.
5. Future role of aboriginal peoples and governments to participate in negotiations, policy and legislative initiatives or proposals.
6. The NWT leadership agreeing to work together on developing a negotiation proposal that was to be submitted to Canada: this has not happened to date.

"We have not received any acknowledgement of our concerns and to the Gwich'in, this clearly indicates that the GNWT does not wish to address the issues of Aboriginal Leadership which is clearly necessary in supporting the transfer of jurisdiction and responsibility to the NWT."

Under the proposed devolution AIP, the GNWT would be able to pass laws regarding lands and resources but not extending into Aboriginal land claim regions. The draft AIP also sets out how resource royalties will be shared between the federal, territorial and Aboriginal governments.

The GTC supports a devolution agreement that respects the interests of all people in the North but it is unable to support the GNWT and Government of Canada proceeding in a unilateral process without agreement of all parties affected in the Northwest Territories.

"As part of the self-government process, a Gwich'in Government must be able to share in resource royalties, jurisdiction and responsibilities." says President Nerysoo. *"As the elected Gwich'in leader, I must protect the existing or future constitutional rights of the Gwich'in as established by the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement, Treaty 11, and Section 35 (1) of the Constitution Act, 1982, while trying to respect the role of respective governments."*

For more information, contact:

Richard Nerysoo
 President
 Ph: 86-777-7900

Wanda McDonald
 Chief Operating Officer
 Ph: 867-777-7932

Tel: (867) 777-7900 • Fax: (867) 777-7919

Chief Jim Koe Zheh, 1-3 Council Crescent, PO Box 1509, Inuvik NT Canada X0E 0T0

Website: www.gwichin.nt.ca