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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 20, 2021

(amiskwacîwâskahikan) The Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations is extremely disappointed to learn that the debate ended on Bill C-15 – *An Act Respecting the United Nations Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples* (CANDRIP). As a further insult, the Budget 2021 proposes to provide \$31.5 million allocation over two years, starting in 2021-22 to support the co-development of an Action Plan with Indigenous partners to implement this fundamentally flawed legislation that undermines the provisions under Treaty Six, our Treaty relationship and the United Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP).

Canada drafted this Bill with the assistance of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN). “As Treaty Peoples, we have never given our consent to Canada or the AFN to make decisions for our peoples. The Crown entered into Treaty with our ancestors - The Queen did not make unilateral decisions on who represented our Peoples”, said Grand Chief Vernon Watchmaker. The decision to provide funds and work exclusively through the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) violates every aspect of our Treaty relationship with the Crown. AFN does not have a mandate to undertake this work. This organization is to work under direction of the Chiefs, however, increasingly we see them working under the direction of the Government of Canada.

When the Standing Committee in the House of Commons set the schedule of speakers, they preferred AFN and other Indigenous Partners rather than representatives of our Nations. This is wrong. The Treaty Peoples started to organize to appear before the Committee to voice our concerns and at that time, the hearings were stopped. This process has been flawed and continues to be flawed.

“Bill-C15 will have a negative impact on our Treaty Rights” states Grand Chief Watchmaker. Canada is unilaterally attempting to change the international nature of our relationship and place us into a domesticated realm. During a time when discussions ought to be about reconciliation, respect, and sovereignty, we’ve reverted back to the government’s old assimilation and undermining tactics.

We appeal to the Senate and the members to correct this injustice and not accept Bill C-15.

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