



NORTHWEST TERRITORY MÉTIS NATION

April 7, 2017
Press Release

Northwest Territory Metis Nation's Response to MSR's Report

The Northwest Territory Metis Nation (NWTMN) is appreciative of the Minister's Special Representative's report — "A Path to Reconciliation," from Thomas Isaac and made available to the public April 6, 2017.

NWTMN President Garry Bailey says, "It's been a long time coming to have a refreshed mandate with a new offer. We're very optimistic that this new offer in mid-May will give us the tools to finalize our agreement within the next 18-24 months."

The MSR Report provided a recommendation that negotiations be refreshed based upon core principles for negotiations, including the objective of reconciliation, having flexible negotiation mandates, and for the coexistence of Aboriginal rights. The report emphasized the importance of Aboriginal groups working together to address overlapping rights, particularly on the basis that rights of the Indigenous Métis and First Nations coexist.

"Reconciliation, as a principle of priority, addresses our inherent rights — the rights we've always had since before government has entered our territory," says President Bailey.

This report highlights the need to redefine the focus in this new era, to "reflect the legal, social, and political realities of the Southeast NWT." We look forward to holding Federal Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories accountable to the terms laid out in the Minister's Special Representative's report.

The NWTMN is looking forward to developing a workplan to conclude our Final Lands and Resources Agreement on an expedited basis with GNWT and Canada.

Importantly, the NWTMN is awaiting the refreshed negotiation mandate of government to address substantive outstanding issues. The NWTMN remains optimistic that government will honour the recommendation that NWTMN harvesting rights north of Great Slave Lake need to be addressed.

"I believe it is possible to conclude negotiations within the next two years if the Federal and Territorial governments come to the table having the authority to negotiate with these new recommendations and a new mandate," says President Bailey.

The MSR Report confirmed the importance of continuing enumeration work to identify eligible Indigenous Métis for enrolment in a resulting final agreement.

With respect to achieving our Final Lands and Resources Agreement, the process of Self-Governance, and serving the needs of our membership and shared lands and waters, the NWTMN looks forward to continually building bridges and cooperating with our neighbouring Aboriginal Governments.

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