



NORTHWEST TERRITORY MÉTIS NATION

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**41<sup>st</sup> Session, World Heritage Committee (presented July 5, 2017)**

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.

I speak on behalf of the Northwest Territory Métis Nation with respect to Wood Buffalo National Park (Document WHC/17/41.COM/7B.Add p7 for your reference). We are a recognized aboriginal government representing indigenous Métis peoples from three communities in northern Canada, in and around Wood Buffalo National Park, which has been and continues to be a part of our traditional homeland.

The history of our indigenous Métis experience in WBNP has been a difficult one. In 1923, shortly after the establishment of Wood Buffalo National Park (a decision that was not supported by the Metis and other aboriginal people of the area), Métis hunters and trappers and their families were unwillingly removed from the newly-established Park. These were Metis that had engaged in their traditional practices and livelihoods for generations, and who are the ancestors of our current indigenous Métis members.

In our view, the State Party has recently only reluctantly acknowledged this history, as well as recognizing the challenges that WBNP faces and that a change in their approach is required. We therefore welcome and fully support the Committee's decision, and particularly that the State Party shall (quote):

*Ensure a process enabling fair, transparent and meaningful involvement of all legitimate stakeholders and rights-holders, including First Nations and Métis, based on mechanisms agreed by these stakeholders and rights-holders.*

Therefore, and in full accordance with the UNDRIP, we look forward to the State Party's engagement with us, the Métis Nation, on a respectful, transparent and meaningful government-to-government basis, addressing WBNP issues and along the path to reconciliation.

Amongst all the other important requests that are being made of the State Party, we also fully support the request that the State Party submit to the WHC a more refined response to the 2016 Reactive Monitoring Mission recommendations and a report on the implementation of the WHC requests.

Mr. Chairperson we appreciate the opportunity to address this Session and we also look forward to working with the State Party, in a timely manner, to provide for concrete implementation of the requests of the WHC.

BOX 720 • FORT SMITH, NT CANADA • X0E 0P0  
PHONE: (867) 872-2770 • FAX: (867) 872-2772