

STATEMENT BY PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL PREMIERS REGARDING THE NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION

As the National Day of Action approaches on June 29, we wish to express the support of our governments for the important goal of raising broad public awareness about the historical place of First Nations in our country and the rich contribution that they have made and continue to make to Canadian society.

This day is an opportunity to strengthen public knowledge and understanding of First Nations culture, history, traditions and aspirations, and to rededicate ourselves to the work ahead in forging new and meaningful relationships. We are mindful of past injustices that have fuelled disappointment and frustration for too long within Aboriginal communities. At the same time, it is also a day to pause and reflect on the very real progress we are now making in addressing long-standing First Nation demands and in raising the quality of life for First Nations people.

Premiers from provinces and territories were proud to work with the leadership of Canada's Aboriginal organizations and the federal government on the 2005 Kelowna Accord. The Accord provided a comprehensive strategy for working in partnership with Aboriginal groups to raise the standard of living in First Nations, Inuit and Metis communities. Provincial and territorial governments continue to support these measures.

A major obstacle to enhancing economic opportunity for Aboriginal Canadians is long-standing land claims issues. We support the federal government's recent decision to work with First Nations to take action on specific land claims and to introduce a speedier and more effective land claims settlement process. As Premiers, we are committed to doing our part to ensure progress in this important area is realized.

Together with other Canadians, we respect the right of Canada's First Nations leadership to organize a National Day of Action. At the same time, we ask that leaders ensure that all actions are peaceful and law-abiding. A day that builds bridges between First Nations Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people and contributes to building trust and mutual respect is the surest route to making continued progress, together. Our hope is that history records June 29 as a day of promise, one that affirms our shared goal of building a higher quality of life for First Nations people and a stronger Canada for all.

Signed by:

Dalton McGuinty
Premier of Ontario

Jean Charest
Premier of Quebec

Rodney MacDonald
Premier of Nova Scotia

Shawn Graham
Premier of
New Brunswick

Gary Doer
Premier of Manitoba

Robert Ghiz
Premier of
Prince Edward Island

Lorne Calvert
Premier of Saskatchewan

Ed Stelmach
Premier of Alberta

Danny Williams
Premier of Newfoundland
and Labrador

Joe Handley
Premier of
Northwest Territories

Dennis Fentie
Premier of
Yukon Territory