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## **MINISTER STRAHL HEARS COMMON MESSAGE FROM YUKON, FIRST NATIONS**

WHITEHORSE – Yukon’s political leaders demonstrated unity in purpose at yesterday’s Intergovernmental Forum meeting.

Premier Dennis Fentie and Council of Yukon First Nations Grand Chief Andy Carvill told Indian and Northern Affairs Minister Chuck Strahl that successful implementation of Yukon First Nation final and self-government agreements should be a priority for all governments.

“I was pleased with the discussions and outcomes of the meeting,” Fentie said. “Addressing the nine-year implementation review report and its recommendations will require continued collaboration amongst our governments to fulfill the spirit and intent of the treaties.”

Representatives of Canada, Yukon, the Council of Yukon First Nations and each of seven Yukon First Nations undertook extensive reviews of the agreements, which have now been in place for over 10 years, and of related Yukon First Nation financial agreements.

“The active support and encouragement of the previous Indian and Northern Affairs Minister Jim Prentice was instrumental in keeping the reviews on track and concluding them,” Carvill said. “Self-governing Yukon First Nations and the Yukon government want to nurture this positive relationship with the new minister and build upon the foundation that has been laid over the last four years.”

The implementation review report contains recommendations to build on successes and constructively advance in coming years. The review findings will help governments move forward on implementing the agreements and to build strong ‘government-to-government-to-government’ relationships.

The reviews confirmed that the settling of land claims and the establishment of self-government in Yukon have had a positive impact on the lives of Yukon First Nations and Yukoners. They also identified two key areas needing improvement: the level of funding and the need to change some federal policies and practices that are inconsistent with the agreements.

Carvill and Fentie were also happy to hear Strahl’s suggestion for a Yukon Day, when Yukon political leaders can meet to raise the profile of Yukon in the nation’s capital.

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