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WORK CONTINUES ON CHILDREN'S ACT REVISION

WHITEHORSE – With the public consultation phase seeking input into new *Children's Act* revision project now completed, Yukon Premier Dennis Fentie said today that the Yukon government and the Council for Yukon First Nations will move forward with the next steps in development of new legislation.

The two parties have agreed to establish a working group to finalize the policy discussions with representatives from both the Yukon government and Council for Yukon First Nations. Planning work is presently underway for a targeted consultation with First Nation officials, First Nations' health and social directors and Family and Children's Services.

"There has been a tremendous amount of work undertaken over the past 24 months," Fentie said. "We are now ready to move to the next phase. We all want to see a new *Children's Act* in place that addresses the needs of children in this territory."

Grand Chief Andy Carvill said that the work done previously will inform the next stage in the process. "We are very lucky to have had so many people participate and share their experiences and knowledge of the child welfare system in the Yukon, and in other places, with our project panel members. This openness has been very valuable and will be useful in improving the legislation to better serve all Yukon children," Carvill said.

Health and Social Services Minister Brad Cathers said the commitment to completing the revision is strong on both sides. "We want to complete a new act that will serve all Yukon children," Cathers said.

All three stressed their appreciation of the work done by the revision panel. All parties "did an incredible job of bringing together people and information to give Yukoners a chance to speak out on their interests and issues," Fentie added.

Draft legislation, once developed, will go back to the public for a final round of consultation.

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