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PREMIER, GRAND CHIEF MAKE GAINS FOR YUKON FIRST NATIONS AT FIRST MINISTERS' MEETING

WHITEHORSE – A deal reached by the Prime Minister, 13 premiers and Canada's aboriginal leaders at the recent First Ministers Meeting in Kelowna will help improve the lives of Yukon First Nations, Premier Dennis Fentie and Council of Yukon First Nations Grand Chief Andy Carvill said today.

“Chief Carvill and I had a strong presence in Kelowna and one of our main goals was to make sure that nobody falls through the cracks in whatever deal we came up with at this meeting,” Fentie said. “I’m confident that all of the Yukon’s First Nations, including self-governing First Nations, have the ability to benefit from the products of this deal.”

The deal struck at the meeting includes more than \$5 billion over the next five years. The money will be spent on education, health, housing and economic opportunities with the goal of closing the gap between aboriginal peoples and other Canadians in these key areas.

“This collaborative, intergovernmental approach gave me the opportunity to go to Kelowna and speak on behalf of Yukon First Nation people,” Carvill said. “What was accomplished at this meeting is extremely significant for all aboriginal people in Canada, but it also recognizes the unique situation in the Yukon and goes a long way towards strengthening the self-reliance of our people.”

Fentie was one of two premiers who led the discussion on relationships on Nov. 25. He shortened his speech to allow Carvill to take his chair and address the Prime Minister, premiers and national aboriginal leaders.

“My main goal for this meeting was to impart upon my colleagues the unique situation in the Yukon in terms of the number of self-governing First Nations and the fact that these First Nations have constitutionally protected rights and benefits to land and resources as well as the right to govern their citizens and their settlement land,” Fentie said. “I thought that inviting Chief Carvill the opportunity to sit at the table and talk about our situation would go a long way in making that case.”

The full text of the deal reached in Kelowna is available at: http://www.scics.gc.ca/cinfo05/800044004_e.pdf

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