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PRESS RELEASE

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Justice for First Nations Children – Tribunal Ruling

Prince George, B.C. – Carrier Sekani Family Services Executive Director of Child and Family Services, Chair of the Provincial Aboriginal Delegated Agencies Forum and BC Board Member of the First Nation Child and Family Caring Society, Mary Teegee was overjoyed with the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal. The tribunal ruling acknowledged that the Federal Government provision of First Nation child and family services was discriminatory due to the inequity of funding between children residing on reserve and those residing elsewhere.

In February of 2007, the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society (FNCFCS) and the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) filed a complaint, alleging that the Federal Department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs' (INAC) provision of First Nation Child and Family service was inequitable and discriminatory under the Canadian Human Rights Act. The inequity in funding has been acknowledged by INAC through multiple reports, yet INAC has not created any meaningful or lasting change in the quality or quantity of funding services for First Nations on reserve.

“This is Canada’s chance to start righting the wrongs of the past in the spirit of truth and reconciliation. Canada had been known for their strong stand on Human Rights internationally, yet did nothing to ensure the human rights of First Nations were being upheld – this ruling will change that”, stated Teegee “Today is a win not only for First Nations but for all of Canada”.

The importance of this ruling for First Nations in Canada cannot be understated. It marks the first time in history that a developed Nation has faced allegations against racial discrimination against its own citizens. This ruling will set an important precedent for addressing inequitable Federal Government service delivery to First Nation peoples in other areas such as education, health, housing, and water.

“It’s a new Federal government, and hopefully a new era of positive changes to better the lives of our children and families. I hope that the Federal government responds quickly to the remedies identified in the ruling”, stated Warner Adam, Chief Executive Officer of Carrier Sekani Family Services.

We are forever indebted to the Caring Society, the AFN and most importantly, Dr. Cindy Blackstock. Dr. Blackstock has been tireless in her efforts to bring this case forward and to ensure a positive outcome.

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