



**NEWS**

Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs

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## **CANADA, ONTARIO AND FIRST NATIONS WORK TOGETHER FOR STRONGER FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES AND A STRONGER ONTARIO**

**NEWS**

January 15, 2010

**THUNDER BAY, ONTARIO** – First Nations government and economic development leaders gathered together this week with the governments of Canada and Ontario on a coordinated approach to build more sustainable economies in First Nations across Ontario. Productive partnerships, thriving businesses and good jobs are crucial to improving the quality of life in First Nations communities.

The two days of discussions and working sessions focussed participants on the three areas considered most important to First Nations economic development: resource development, socio-economic development and relationships and partnerships between First Nations and Ontario business and industry. Participants focussed on developing practical tools and sharing information that will directly support the First Nation economy.

The Ontario First Nations Young People's Council, representing the youth of all First Nations in Ontario, sent 12 participants to the event. They took an active role in discussions on key issues affecting the First Nations economy and led a panel discussion on increasing economic opportunities for young First Nation people and building sustainable communities for the future.

All parties have committed to maintaining an economic development forum to work out the details of the approach over the next few months. A First Nation Economic Development Progress Report will be released in six to eight months. The report will track results, providing an important tool for all parties to identify gaps and measure successes in supporting the First Nation economy.

### **QUOTES**

"The Ontario First Nations Economic Forum has been a tremendous opportunity for federal, provincial and First Nation representatives to share best practices and initiate discussions on the future of economic development in Ontario. Our Federal Framework for Aboriginal Economic Development is setting a new direction for how we are going to address economic development challenges and opportunities, and we look forward to continuing working with Aboriginal people across the country to ensure that First Nations, Métis and Inuit can more fully share in economic opportunities across Canada."

-The Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians

"Healthy local economies are essential for First Nations communities, and Ontario as a whole. The Ontario government is working with First Nations and our federal government partners to improve economic opportunities, create jobs and encourage economic sustainability for Aboriginal communities in Ontario."

- The Honourable Brad Duguid, Ontario Minister of Aboriginal Affairs

“This forum has changed the course of First Nations economic development away from the old patterns of unilaterally developed programming, and towards new approaches that recognize the need for full First Nations engagement at every stage of the process and support for our solutions to the First Nation economy.”

- Angus Toulouse, Regional Chief for Ontario, Assembly of First Nations

## QUICK FACTS

- The unemployment rate for Aboriginal people in Canada aged 25 to 64 is almost three times the rate for non-Aboriginal people.
- Aboriginal youth is the fastest growing segment of the Canadian population.
- Bringing Aboriginal peoples' quality of life up to standards enjoyed by non-Aboriginal people could improve Canada's GDP by an average of about \$16 billion per year over 25 years. (Centre for the Study of Living Standards; November 2007)

## LEARN MORE

- About Ontario's support for [Aboriginal economic opportunities and sustainability](#).
- About the [Chiefs of Ontario](#).
- About [Indian and Northern Affairs Canada](#).

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