



**For immediate release
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**TREATY CHALLENGES SURMOUNTABLE SAYS TREATY COMMISSION
IN SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT ON THE TREATY PROCESS**

VANCOUVER - The Treaty Commission said today that treaty negotiations are continuing despite predictions of their impending break down.

"Although there are many challenges, it is our view that negotiations will continue at a number of tables throughout the province," said Chief Commissioner Miles Richardson. "There are opportunities to make progress, and perhaps, to reach agreements on some treaties or parts of treaties in the month's ahead."

Richardson said the Treaty Commission will work with the parties to break the impasses that are affecting all negotiations in the province. He said there are hopeful signs that while negotiations on the tough issues are continuing, there will be a more concerted effort to conclude interim measures and promote economic opportunities in the short-term.

"The Treaty Commission is urging the parties at each negotiation table to identify appropriate interim measures and to put them in place immediately," said Richardson. "This will demonstrate that the new relationship being sought in treaties has begun."

Many First Nations have presented detailed proposals of what they are looking for in a treaty. The governments of Canada and BC have presented joint offers at five negotiating tables. The chief commissioner said, "These detailed proposals and offers put in stark relief the gap in expectations between the parties. First Nations rejected those offers, but negotiations are continuing to try to bridge the gaps."

Richardson said the Treaty Commission is encouraged by recent expressions of commitment to negotiations from First Nations leaders, federal Indian and Northern Affairs Minister Robert Nault and provincial Minister of Aboriginal Affairs Dale Lovick. The willingness of the parties to find solutions through negotiations will be the determining factor, notes the Treaty Commission in its seventh annual report on the treaty process.

The 2000 Annual Report is being released today at simultaneous news conferences in Vancouver, Victoria, Prince George and Kelowna. The report sets out the challenges and opportunities facing the parties in these negotiations, provides a progress report on each of the 42 sets of negotiations, as well as information on the operations of the Treaty Commission.

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