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**POLITICAL LEADERS MUST ACT ON RECOMMENDATIONS  
SAYS TREATY COMMISSION IN NINTH ANNUAL REPORT**

VANCOUVER—As most treaty negotiations resume following the province-wide referendum, progress hinges on the success of talks among political leaders expected later this month.

Chief Commissioner Miles Richardson said today, "The challenges and obstacles to progress have been examined and re-examined over the past year. Options to move negotiations forward have been set out. It is now time to turn political will into action."

Richardson said it is up to the senior ministers and the First Nations' leadership to consider recommendations and make the crucial decisions on next steps in treaty negotiations. Expectations are high among many in the treaty process that the leaders will deliver long-awaited options to negotiators—options that are necessary for negotiations to succeed.

"Recent legal decisions provide an added incentive to negotiate now," said Richardson, in releasing the Treaty Commission's ninth annual report.

Recommendations in the Treaty Commission's 2001 annual report inspired an intensive re-examination of the treaty process. Tripartite talks have produced a report made public in May pointing the way to more effective treaty negotiations with earlier achievement of incremental and other agreements. Many treaty tables continue to defer resolution of substantive issues until new options emerge.

The Treaty Commission continues to be positive about opportunities for progress. Where the parameters for negotiations were once seen as too narrow, there now appears to be a willingness to discuss the full range of issues. For example, early access to land, resources and other economic measures, land protection, compensation, revenue sharing and cooperative management are being discussed for the first time.

Two working groups involving senior officials from First Nations, the governments of Canada and BC and the Treaty Commission are continuing to address major issues seen as obstacles to progress. A third working group has considered changes to the treaty process that will be needed to make an incremental approach work. The incremental approach advocated by the Treaty Commission in 2001 is likely to result in many smaller agreements that become building blocks for a comprehensive treaty.

It is anticipated the working group recommendations will be considered at the next meeting involving the ministers for Canada and BC, the First Nations Summit leadership.

\* This article is included within the Treaty Commission's November issue of Update.

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