



Aboriginal Housing Management Association

For Immediate Release:

AHMA Meets with the Leilani Farha, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing to discuss an Urban Indigenous Housing Strategy in Canada.

AHMA and Indigenous housing leaders from across Canada challenge the newly formed government to respond to five demands in the first 100 days of government to meet the needs of Urban Indigenous Peoples.

Squamish Nation Territory/West Vancouver (December 11, 2019) - CEO of the Aboriginal Housing Management Association (AHMA), Margaret Pfoh joined a formal discussion this week in Toronto on the dire need for an Urban Indigenous housing strategy in Canada. The meeting was coordinated by Leilani Farha and included the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres and Indigenous Housing Leaders from across Canada.

The dialogue at the meeting was central to Farha's report to the United Nations General Assembly in October 2019 where she examined the right to housing of Indigenous Peoples across the globe. The meeting was critically timed on the heels of British Columbia's historic passing of Bill 41 to align BC legislation to the United Nations Declaration Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in late November.

Though AHMA applauds the Federal Government's efforts in the National Housing Strategy to address the needs of Metis/First Nations/Inuit groups on a distinction basis, it has failed to recognize the majority and the most vulnerable; the urban Indigenous peoples. AHMA urges Canada to address this major gap in the National Housing Strategy. "The fact that in Canada 79.7% of Indigenous Peoples live in urban centres is unacceptable that an Indigenous Urban Housing strategy has yet to be developed. Given the recent election results, now is a strategic moment to push for action by the federal government on this issue" said Farha when asked if the timing of the meeting played a role.

"In order to truly be aligned with UNDRIP, the Truth and Reconciliation Act and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Canada must ensure that Indigenous peoples have accessibility and the power to exercise their rights to adequate housing. This can only be done through an inclusive and culturally appropriate National Indigenous Urban Housing Strategy created for Indigenous Peoples by Indigenous peoples. Meeting with Leilani Farha and the United Nations is crucial for AHMA because our provincial government has taken huge steps in leadership but now, we require the same leap in support and commitment from our Federal Government with an Indigenous National Housing Strategy" said Pfoh.

The public statement written below was created collectively by AHMA, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Housing Leilani Farha, and a variety of Indigenous Housing Leaders from across Canada. Presented on December 10, 2019 at public press conference in Toronto at the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres.

"As the newly formed federal government opens parliament, on International Human Rights Day – we share this statement in the sincere hope that urban Indigenous housing conditions and homelessness are prioritized in the federal government's implementation of the National Housing Strategy, as a matter of human rights and consistent with the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Therefore, we demand the federal government:

1. As the tenth largest economy in the world, recognise that urban, rural and northern Indigenous housing and homelessness conditions are egregious and unacceptable and that these must be addressed on an urgent and priority basis, consistent with international human rights law;



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2. Recognise the right to an adequately resourced National Urban and Rural Indigenous Housing Strategy developed and implemented by urban, rural and northern housing and service providers;
3. Recognise urban, rural and northern housing and service providers as expressions of Indigenous self-determination, as recognised by the Federal Court of Appeal in Ardoch Algonquin First Nation (Misquadis) and as per articles 4, 21 and 23 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
4. Create new legislation, mirroring the rights and accountability framework articulated in the NHSA, which recognises culturally relevant housing as a human right for Indigenous people in urban, rural and northern areas; and,
5. Domesticated and implement the United Nations Declaration on Indigenous Peoples in Canadian law.

Finally, we challenge the newly formed government to meet these four demands in the first 100 days of government. Together we expect to be immediately engaged by government authorities in this regard. “

The statement was signed by the following:

Sylvia Maracle, Executive Director of Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres

Justin Marchand, Executive Director of Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services

Margaret Pfoh, Chief Executive Officer of Aboriginal Housing Management Association Marc Maracle, Executive Director of Gignul Housing Ottawa

Tanya Sirois, Executive Director of Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec

Marcel Lawson Swain, Chief Executive Officer of Lu'ma Native Housing

Patrick Stewart, Chair of Vancouver Indigenous Community Advisory Board on Urban Indigenous Homelessness

Pamela Glode Desrochers, Executive Director of Mi'kmaw Friendship Centre

Damon Johnston, Executive Director of Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg

Leilani Farha, UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing



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About the Aboriginal Housing Management Association

AHMA is an umbrella organization composed of 41 Members that are each Indigenous Housing providers. Our members represent over 5000 Indigenous families living in urban, rural and northern regions of British Columbia. We are direct partners with the provincial government and a leading voice that supports, advocates and responds to the needs of our Indigenous Housing Providers and the Indigenous communities they serve. AHMA is the first Indigenous Housing Authority in Canada and only second in the world and we were created for Indigenous communities by Indigenous communities.