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Releases

# BCFED celebrates National Aboriginal Day

**Vancouver** – The following is a statement in recognition National Aboriginal Day from Irene Lanzinger, President of the BC Federation of Labour:

“This year marks the 20th Anniversary of National Aboriginal Day.

It’s a day to celebrate the rich and diverse culture and history of indigenous peoples across Canada. It is also an opportunity to promote awareness and education so we never forget Canada’s past.

In this past year we have experienced some important milestones as we move towards a shared vision of reconciliation for our communities and country.

In 2015, Justice Sinclair delivered the Truth and Reconciliation Report. This report has opened up critical dialogue into our history and the devastating impact of residential schools, and sets a path for reconciliation. One remarkable outcome is the introduction of this history into our public education system, and the creation of curriculum that reflects and recognizes this difficult past.

In 2015, the first indigenous woman took a seat within the federal government cabinet when Jody Wilson-Raybould was appointed as Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada.

And in 2016, British Columbians elected Melanie Mark, the first First Nations woman to serve as a Member of the Legislative Assembly.

After more than a decade of fighting for recognition and action, a National Inquiry into the Murdered and Missing Aboriginal Women and Girls was established in December of 2015. This inquiry is vital to uncovering the root causes of violence perpetrated on indigenous women and girls, and to setting out a roadmap towards safe communities.

The BC Federation of Labour is a proud partner of the Murdered and Missing Aboriginal Women and Girls Coalition.

And in April, over 600,000 people were given back their indigenous identity with a landmark Supreme Court of Canada decision to bring Metis, Inuit and Non-Status Indians into the legal definition of “Indian.”

On this National Aboriginal Day, we honour the path of reconciliation, and celebrate the achievements of indigenous peoples and communities across the country.

However, our collective work is far from over. The road to social and economic justice is long, and we must recommit to our partnership in this effort.

As part of this effort, the BC Federation of Labour continues to advocate for Aboriginal Day to be a national holiday, so that across the country people can come together to acknowledge our history and celebrate our future.”