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FIRST NATION CROWN GATHERING NEEDS TO FOCUS ON THE ROOT PROBLEM

London, ON –The meeting with Prime Minister Harper and First Nations leadership on January 24, 2012 should be used to re-establish a foundational relationship that has become entirely flawed. The opportunity to restore an equitable and balanced relationship is the key to solving long-term issues such as housing, education, and health which now plague First Nation citizens.

The formation and consolidation of Canada was made possible through the cooperation and goodwill of First Nations. However, the creation of the Indian Act marked the beginning of an era of sustained, systematic oppression and subjugation of Indigenous nations and peoples. The time has come to bring this era to an end and return the relationship back to its proper foundations.

Hopefully, the Prime Minister is not simply looking at this meeting as a photo opportunity and a means to distract First Nations and the general public from the recently publicized crisis in Attawapiskat. It is expected that this gathering of minds will pave the way for establishing and scheduling on-going meetings with First Nations leadership and governments at the federal and provincial levels. "This government has a real opportunity to usher in a new epoch of First Nations relations and we sincerely hope they take advantage of it", stated Grand Chief Denise Stonefish.

Clearly, a one-time meeting will do little to address the many pressing issues that face First Nation citizens. Deputy Grand Chief Gord Peters contends, "A concerted and continued effort is required in order to begin to make appreciable progress in rectifying the relationship." Nevertheless, it is an effort that the AIAI will continue to make and one by which they have long stood.

Regular communications will be provided throughout the lead-up to this critical meeting as well as during and after on all of the AIAI's media outlets.

AIAI is mandated as a political territorial organization to defend and enhance the Aboriginal and Treaty rights of its eight member First Nations. Visit them online at www.aiai.on.ca , www.facebook.com/aiai.pto , [http://twitter.com/#!/AIAI Comms](http://twitter.com/#!/AIAI_Comms) , www.youtube.com/user/AIAIAdmin .

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