



Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.

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Statement on Manitoba's Cabinet Shuffle: MKO Urges Government Leaders to Improve Relationships with First Nations

Treaty Five Territory, Thompson, MB – Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) Inc. is issuing this statement to respond to today's announcement that the Premier of Manitoba has shuffled his cabinet. New Ministers have been appointed into a variety of new roles.

Grand Chief Garrison Settee shared the following:

"First Nations citizens continue to be disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and there are severe outcomes for First Nations people who have COVID-19 in Manitoba. We are also disproportionately impacted by chronic health conditions and poverty.

Leaders at all levels must work together in unity on an urgent basis to respond to these issues and my hope is that we will be a part of an improved working relationship with the province as a result of this shuffle. Perhaps with two people now at the helm of health in Manitoba, we will see more efficient movement towards improving health and wellness for all Manitobans.

I would like to congratulate Audrey Gordon on becoming the first Black Cabinet Minister in Manitoba. This is a historic accomplishment and it is encouraging to have a Minister who has background experience working within health systems to tackle the significant issues for mental wellness and recovery. There is an urgent need to focus on mental wellness as the pandemic continues.

It is also positive to see more women taking on leadership roles within the provincial government. As the first inhabitants of Manitoba, we look forward to a day when we see more First Nations people being appointed as Ministers in the provincial government.

Communication from the Province of Manitoba with First Nations has been sporadic and absolutely needs to improve. Although the pandemic has required a significant amount of energy and attention from First Nations leaders, there are many issues we need to address with the Government of Manitoba on an urgent basis. I continue to urge leaders within the provincial government to focus on improving the relationships and communicating clearly and regularly with First Nations leadership."

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For more information:

Melanie Ferris, MKO Communications

Phone: 204-612-1284

Email: melanie.ferris@mkonorth.com

Web: <http://mkonation.com/>

Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. (MKO) is a non-profit, political advocacy organization that has represented 26 First Nation communities in Manitoba's North since 1981. The MKO represents more than 72,000 First Nations people.