



**YUKON
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AFN Yukon Regional Office Regional Chief Kluane Adamek

April 21, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AFN Yukon Regional Chief Kluane Adamek Statement on 2021 Federal Budget

Whitehorse, Yukon – AFN Yukon Regional Chief Kluane Adamek released the below statement following Monday’s announcement of the 2021 Federal Budget.

“This week, the federal government released its 2021 Budget, which they have understandably based around ending the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and beginning a recovery strategy. As First Nations, we know that this fight has disproportionately impacted the mental and physical health, social, and economic welfare of Indigenous communities and I was pleased to see the government’s historic commitment to investing \$18 billion over the next five years in Indigenous health and safety, climate action, and economic growth opportunities.

The acknowledgement that the pandemic has had disproportionate impacts on First Nations, Inuit and Metis communities and economies is crucial in ensuring that Canada’s recovery from COVID-19 is equitable and inclusive. The economic recovery outlined within the 2021 Budget identifies specific supports for Indigenous entrepreneurs, a \$117 million renewal of the Indigenous Community Businesses Fund, and \$33.4 million of support towards the First Nations Finance Authority pooled borrowing regime. I was encouraged to see that the innovation and economic contributions of Indigenous peoples is being recognized within this budget as a component of the country’s overall economic recovery.

Further, I was pleased to see the federal government’s acknowledgement of the climate leadership and action being taken specifically within the Yukon Territory through its investment of \$25 million to support the Yukon Government’s climate change work with Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada and Environment and Climate Change Canada. This investment signals that the work being done in the Yukon, which is largely being led by First Nations, will continue to be recognized, supported and valued by federal partners.

I am disappointed, however, to see that this budget does not include funding for two key priorities that are extremely important to Yukon First Nations and to the North, specifically modern treaty implementation and First Nations housing. The 11 Self-Governing Agreements that exist in the Yukon distinguish it from other regions, yet the need for continued support in implementing modern treaties is



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not acknowledged nor accounted for within this budget. Similarly, the quality of housing in the North remains distinct and incomparable to the rest of Canada with significant overcrowding, homes in need major structural repairs, and higher housing costs than the rest of the country. While infrastructure funding is available to First Nations through other funding pots, the unique needs and costs associated with housing in the North require specific attention and investment. It is disappointing to see that the 2021 Budget does not create discreet funding for these key areas which remain priorities for Yukon First Nations governments and citizens.

Despite these two shortcomings, the AFN Yukon remains committed to working with the federal government to ensure that COVID-19 recovery efforts are carried out in a way that is equitable and just. The federal government's investments in Indigenous communities signal that they are committed to reconciliation, and the AFN Yukon remains committed to this path forward as well.

Recovery from COVID-19 will not be successful unless the distinct needs of Indigenous peoples are accounted for and supported by the federal government, and it is my expectation that the federal government will ensure that this is the case."