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Indigenous Survivors to Canada: Proposed Sixties Scoop Settlement Provides Needed Healing Funds, Fails Métis and non-Status Indians

Press Conference: *October 10, 2017 – 10am. Parliament of Canada- Centre Block -Charles Lynch Room (Ottawa, Algonquin Territory, October 10, 2017)* The National Indigenous Survivors of Child Welfare Network is holding a press conference this morning to express its disappointment in Canada's first offer for an Agreement-in-Principle on the Sixties Scoop on the grounds that it does not apply to Métis and non-status Indians. The Network welcomes Canada's announcement of a \$50 million healing foundation for Sixties Scoop Survivors but are working to ensure Survivors are at the table throughout this process.

Co-Founder and Network Director Duane Morrisseau-Beck states: “It feels to me that Canada is playing divide and conquer with this Agreement by locking Métis and non-status Indians out of this proposed settlement. This falls far from a national settlement and is playing out extremely negatively in the Survivor community. We are concerned for the well-being of all Survivors.”

Network Director Vicky Boldo elaborates “There are tens of thousands of Indigenous people impacted by the child welfare system who are hurting right now and are triggered, who don't fall into the categories laid out in the proposed settlement. This brings to the forefront the impacts of the Indian Act and how it has always divided and conquered our communities.”

The settlement offer was proposed to compensate over 16,000 First Nations and Inuit children removed from their families and placed into the custody of non-Native families by Canada during the Sixties Scoop – but does not include thousands more Metis and non-status Indians who endured the same policies and programs- such as the Adopt a Indian/ Métis (AIM) program in the prairie provinces.

Network Coordinator Colleen Hele-Cardinal states: "Any settlement or healing program needs to reach the most marginalized survivors of colonial child welfare policies- those incarcerated in Canada's prisons, those living with addiction, mental health issues, homelessness, HIV/AIDS and chronic illness. The 60s scoop colonial child welfare policies have contributed to the deaths of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, trans and Two Spirit people, and men who died violently or went missing due to state negligence, lack of supports and dehumanization.”

The proposed settlement does not address punitive damages from abuse or sexual violence. The Minister at no time promised Canada would comply with the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal

order to the federal government to alter First Nations Family and Child Services. Morrisseau-Beck states: “A lot of our people are still not home. We need commitments from Canada on funding repatriation and supporting Indigenous children in the system now.”

The Network looks forward to working with all stakeholders in ensuring that all Survivors feel included in any national settlement or healing programs going forward. Network Director Elaine Kicknosway concludes: “This work is never going to end until we find each other —that means all of us, including those who have died.”

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