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Office of the Premier  
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada  
Maa-nulth First Nations

## **FINAL AGREEMENT INITIALLED WITH MAA-NULTH FIRST NATIONS**

VICTORIA – Premier Gordon Campbell, the Honourable Jim Prentice, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, and five Chiefs representing the Maa-nulth First Nations on Vancouver Island witnessed the joint initialling of the third Final Agreement reached under the British Columbia treaty process today.

“I want to thank the Maa-nulth First Nations for the dedication and commitment they have shown in working with us to complete a final agreement that will increase certainty for the region, strengthen their respective communities and help close the social and economic gap between First Nations and non-First Nations on Vancouver Island,” said Campbell. “This final agreement will define the rights and title of the Maa-nulth and provide them with the tools to become active participants in the economy. The benefits of this agreement will be felt throughout the region for generations to come.”

“The initialling of this Final Agreement holds tremendous promise for the Maa-nulth-aht and the people of Canada,” said Minister Prentice. “This Agreement is the first in British Columbia to be concluded with multiple First Nations through the B.C. treaty process, and is evidence of the Government of Canada’s strong commitment to concluding treaties with First Nations.”

The five Maa-nulth First Nations are Ucluelet First Nation, Huu-ay-aht First Nations, Toquaht Nation, Ka:'yu:k't'h'/Che:k'tles7et'h' First Nations, and Uchucklesaht Tribe, all located on the west coast of Vancouver Island. The Maa-nulth First Nations have a combined population of approximately 2,000 people, many of whom live near Bamfield, Port Alberni, Ucluelet and Campbell River and in Kyuquot Sound.

The Final Agreement includes a land package as well as funding in the form of a capital transfer, annual resource revenue sharing payments, and ongoing and time-limited funding for each Maa-nulth First Nation. The cost of the Final Agreement will be shared by the federal and provincial governments. The Final Agreement also includes self-government provisions and defines each Maa-nulth First Nation’s rights to resources such as wildlife, fish, timber and sub-surface minerals.

“The Final Agreement provides a tool box for our people to make our own decisions on our own terms,” said Charlie Cootes, President of the Maa-nulth Treaty Society. “Today represents a lot of hard work and co-operation between all the parties and an end to the negotiations. It also signifies the beginning of a process that will see us fully inform our membership. Nothing is finalized without membership approval.”

The initialling of the Final Agreement allows the Maa-nulth First Nations to proceed with community votes on the Final Agreement. If the Maa-nulth First Nations ratify the Final Agreement, British Columbia will then proceed through its ratification process. A minister from the provincial cabinet must recommend the agreement for approval, and settlement legislation will then be introduced into the Legislative Assembly for debate. If British Columbia ratifies the Final Agreement, Canada will proceed through its ratification process. A federal cabinet minister must recommend the Final Agreement, and settlement legislation would be introduced in Parliament for debate. Once enacted through legislation, the Final Agreement will become a treaty and will be brought into effect on a date agreed to by the parties.

The Province of British Columbia and the Government of Canada recently initialled Final Agreements with Lheidli T'enneh Band near Prince George and with Tsawwassen First Nation in the Lower Mainland. Agreements in Principle have also been signed with Sliammon Indian Band, Yekooche Nation and Yale First Nation. Final Agreement negotiations with these First Nations are ongoing.

More information about the Maa-nulth Final Agreement is available online at [www.gov.bc.ca/arr](http://www.gov.bc.ca/arr); [www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/bc/treapro/ston/nwdev/nwdev\\_e.html](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/bc/treapro/ston/nwdev/nwdev_e.html); and [www.maanulth.ca](http://www.maanulth.ca).

For more information, please call the toll-free line for the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, 1 800-880-1022.

1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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