



SPEAKING NOTES OF GRAND CHIEF DR. ABEL BOSUM

CREE NATION PORTFOLIO ANNOUNCEMENT

RAPID HOUSING INITIATIVE – PROJECTS STREAM

PRESS CONFERENCE

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17, 2021

1. Minister Hussen, Minister Miller, on behalf of the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee, I wish to thank the Government of Canada for its investment, announced today, of \$17.4 million through the Rapid Housing Initiative for the immediate construction of 55 affordable modular homes in nine Cree communities in Québec.
2. This effort will directly benefit the most vulnerable members of the Cree communities of Whapmagoostui, Chisasibi, Wemindji, Eastmain, Waskaganish, Nemaska, Waswanipi, Ouje-Bougoumou and Mistissini.
3. At a time when the Covid-19 pandemic brings into sharp relief the dangers to health of overcrowded housing in First Nations communities, we are heartened by this tangible effort by the Government of Canada to help address the problem.
4. We are also encouraged by Canada's adoption, through the Rapid Housing Initiative, of a human rights-based approach to housing in order to serve the most vulnerable, including Indigenous peoples and elders.
5. This investment by Canada complements the efforts of the Cree Nation to meet the critical need for more than 2,000 housing units over the next few years. It marks an important step in Canada's partnership with us in implementing our Cree Nation Housing Strategy to meet this need.
6. Housing needs vary for different sectors of the Cree population, so different solutions are required for each. Our Cree Nation Housing Strategy comprises both social and private components.
7. Our Cree Social Housing Program addresses the special needs of Cree elders, youth and lower-income persons through social and rental housing. This Social Housing Program will remain a key component of our overall Cree Nation Housing Strategy, and we will strengthen it further in the years to come.

8. We recognize, however, that social housing alone will never fully address the need for housing in our communities. That is why we have developed our Cree Private Housing Initiative, an innovative program that will enable Cree citizens who wish to do so to own their own homes in the Cree communities.
9. Over the past several years, we have taken a number of measures to make our Private Housing Initiative a reality. We have enabled Cree citizens to have a true property right in their homes, without time limit. We have eased the formalities required for Crees to obtain home loans and mortgages from financial institutions.
10. We have established a special fund of \$100 million, from our own resources, to provide prospective Cree homeowners with an affordability subsidy to cover the difference in house construction costs between the Cree communities and more southern towns. And we are committing very significant resources to cover the cost of infrastructure to service residential lots.
11. In short, the Cree Nation is taking a proactive approach to address both social and private housing needs in Eeyou Istchee. We are deploying our own human, technical and financial resources to this end. And we are doing so in partnership with Canada. Today's announcement marks another step in building our housing partnership with Canada, and we look forward to advancing it further with Canada in the months to come.

Thank you / Meegwetch.