

**MEETING OF MINISTERS OF ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND LEADERS OF
NATIONAL ABORIGINAL ORGANIZATIONS**

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to report on the results of last week's meeting between Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers of Aboriginal Affairs and Leaders of the five National Aboriginal Organizations.

This meeting marks the renewal of a national process involving all levels of government and National Aboriginal Organizations to advance Aboriginal issues. Aboriginal Affairs Ministers and the Leaders of the National Aboriginal Organizations came together for the first time in more than four years to find ways of working together in an effort to address a broad range of issues facing First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples today.

At the 2009 Council of the Federation meeting, Provincial and Territorial Premiers held a pre-meeting with National Aboriginal Organization Leaders and announced their intention to form a Ministerial working group with national Aboriginal leaders and the federal government.

This working group was directed to examine how governments and National Aboriginal Organizations can work more effectively to improve the quality of life for Aboriginal peoples living in all parts of Canada. At this time, the focus of this working group is on results-oriented action in the areas of Education and Skills Training and Economic

Development, with the intention of having this action serve as the foundation for a possible First Ministers Meeting on Aboriginal Issues in 2010.

I believe that this meeting marks a significant milestone in addressing the difficult and complex socio-economic conditions often encountered by Aboriginal people in Canada. Participants acknowledged that the area of health and well-being is fundamental to achieving progress in education and economic development. It will be of utmost importance that the federal government works with its provincial, territorial and Aboriginal partners for this process to succeed.

At the meeting, I was pleased to share some of our success stories, showing how we have worked with our northern partners to support the aspirations of our Aboriginal population. I also took the opportunity to learn from others about the good things going on all over this country. It was agreed that we will meet again early next year to advance work in the identified priority areas and I look forward to reporting further progress at that time.

Thank you.