



**ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS  
PRESS RELEASE/COMMUNiqué  
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**First Nations Priorities Require Sustained Attention and Action by New Federal Cabinet - AFN National Chief**

(Ottawa, ON) – Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Chief Perry Bellegarde encourages continued attention, action and direct engagement with First Nations to advance priorities and reconciliation as new federal cabinet portfolios were announced yesterday.

“First Nations priorities are this country’s priorities, and regardless of who leads each portfolio we want to see action and momentum from cabinet members and all of government,” said AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde. “I encourage continued and enhanced efforts to work directly with First Nations to advance priorities based on respect for and implementation of rights, title, jurisdiction and the overall goal of reconciliation.”

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced changes to the federal cabinet at Rideau Hall in Ottawa yesterday. Changes impact 10 members of cabinet. It was noted that Minister Pablo Rodriguez is replacing Mélanie Joly as Minister of Heritage and Multiculturalism. That Ministry has been overseeing work with First Nations and Indigenous peoples on the Indigenous Languages Initiative and the Indigenous Languages Act. As well, Minister Carolyn Bennett is now Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, with the Northern Affairs portfolio under Minister Dominic Leblanc.

“I acknowledge Minister Joly’s work with First Nations to revitalize and strengthen First Nations languages, and the efforts to co-develop Indigenous languages legislation expected to be tabled this Fall,” said National Chief Bellegarde. “We need to continue sustained efforts and engagement in this area to ensure legislation is ‘distinction-based’ and supports the diverse approaches of First Nations. The changes to the Crown-Indigenous Relations file can allow for more focus on this important priority, but we still need to ensure there is coordinated work for First Nations in the north both in cabinet and across the bureaucracy. First Nations Treaties and our rights, title and priorities cut across all cabinet responsibilities and all of government.”

*The AFN is the national organization representing First Nations citizens in Canada.  
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