

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

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The Editor  
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Since 2001, we have seen unprecedented progress in treaty negotiations in British Columbia. With three final agreements initialled, seven agreement-in-principles (AIPs) signed and many more treaty tables negotiating at the critical AIP stage, we're realizing some tangible successes.

We are aware of the interests of neighbouring First Nations related to a final agreement with the Tsawwassen First Nation and the federal and provincial governments have initiated the consultation process with them.

We're building a New Relationship with First Nations based on the principles of mutual respect, recognition and reconciliation of Aboriginal rights and title. We have committed to closing the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal British Columbians over the next decade.

Treaties will allow Aboriginal people to get out from under the confines and dependence of the Indian Act to build stronger, more self-reliant communities. The status quo, including lack of investor confidence and continued uncertainty, is far more expensive to British Columbians than negotiating treaties.

Michael de Jong  
Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation