



# **DEHCHO FIRST NATIONS**

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**PRESS RELEASE**  
**For immediate release**

Fort Simpson, NT

The Dehcho First Nations have come out of a three day strategic workshop with a renewed commitment to collectively move forward in their negotiations with Canada. The workshop was held in Ft Simpson last week.

Since the Kakisa Assembly last summer Canada has refused to negotiate because the resolution passed at the Assembly was outside of its mandate.

About 35 Community delegates which included Chiefs and a number of former Chiefs expressed strong interest in ensuring their position enables continuing negotiations of the substantive issues of a Dehcho Land Use Plan, self government and land rights continue so that all outstanding issues are resolved as soon as possible. Delegates acknowledged the need for some flexibility in their approach in negotiations.

Grand Chief Gerry Antoine says. "These three days reaffirmed the Dehcho members commitment to protecting their lands and remain united, speaking with one voice in their discussions with Canada."

The workshop, which was led by staff of the Banff Centre for Management, confirmed the frustration members have with the current impasse in negotiations. Delegates remain hopeful that their interests can be achieved in a final agreement through the current process, even if the Dehcho First Nations has to use different approaches and explore different options.

Kakisa elder Sarah Chicot, in her closing comments reflected the attitude of those attending the workshop, "We need to work together to get this done. We need to really trust each other."

Senator Nick Sibbeston noted in a letter to the conference, "The future well-being of the Dehcho people increasingly depend on reaching an acceptable agreement that will protect them in advance of development pressures. Finding a balance between pragmatism and principle is difficult but it should be your central focus."

The Dehcho leadership will formally look at the recommendations of the workshop in two weeks at their quarterly meeting being held in Ft Simpson.