



For Immediate Release

## Press Release

### Budget Day announcements still not enough for Aboriginal women

**Ottawa, ON (February 26, 2008)** – The third budget announced by the Conservative government still did not provide enough for Aboriginal women in Canada. The President of the Native Women’s Association of Canada (NWAC), Beverley Jacobs, was in Ottawa today to listen to budget deliberations.

Of importance to NWAC, today’s budget included a few investments for First Nations peoples in Canada, including improved child and family services on reserve, as well as increased health and education outcomes. Further, the announcements to improve access to safe drinking water for First Nations were welcomed; however, there are over 600 First Nations communities in Canada and the amount of the investments are no where near what is needed.

“This budget is a far cry from what is needed for Aboriginal peoples in Canada,” said President Jacobs. “What is the point of improving standards for drinking water on reserve, when there is a housing crisis with no access to water? When this government chose not to honour the *Kelowna Accord*, it promised an alternative plan for Aboriginal peoples. This budget delivers small investments, but we are still awaiting a ground-breaking strategy to finally pull the most marginalized segment of the Canadian population out of its current mire and onto a path towards prosperity. The commitments that were announced today are welcomed and are much needed; yet, in my perspective they are handouts and not strategically invested.”

President Jacobs hopes that the hiring of 2,500 more police officers will assist in resolving the hundreds of unresolved murder cases of Aboriginal women across the country. She hopes NWAC will have the resources to work with Correctional Services Canada to improve the human rights issues for federally sentenced Aboriginal women and reduce the highest percentage of the prison population.

These investments are still lacking in addressing the many issues facing Aboriginal women in Canada. President Jacobs added: “Like last year, I am disappointed that this budget contained no new commitments towards advancing the equality of women with no reference whatsoever to Aboriginal women or Métis. Work towards a new Action Plan was announced, but it comes as no surprise that we are seeing no immediate advancements and still do not experience equality today from the recent cuts to the Status

of Women. A culturally relevant gender based analysis is crucial to all programming of the federal government.”

“What I find the most stunning is that Canada is doubling international aid to \$5 billion, which is honourable. But why is it not doubling its efforts in combating poverty in its own back yard?” commented President Jacobs.

President Jacobs expressed caution on the idea of toppling the government. “While the government is still not doing enough and Minister Flaherty is playing petty politics in refusing to allow amendments to the budget, the defeat of the government and an election would delay important legislation that needs to be passed, including C-21, the long awaited amendment of the *Canadian Human Rights Act*.”

NWAC is an aggregate of 13 native women’s organizations and is the national voice of Aboriginal women in Canada.

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