



## **Press Statement**

### **Favoritism in COVID-19 Indigenous Funding Will Cost Lives**

**March 31, 2020** (Ottawa, ON) - The announcement of Indigenous COVID-19 funding shows with the stroke of a pen that the Trudeau government has written off hundreds of thousands of First Nations, Métis and Inuit people from receiving adequate help in this time of need.

“The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples denounces this biased allocation of resources, and the ‘Distinctions-Based Approach’ that produced it” said CAP National Chief Robert Bertrand. “What we are witnessing is nothing short of the weaponization of disease and neglect against Indigenous communities, ignoring some while favoring others.”

Of \$305 million in funding, \$215 million for Assembly of First Nations (AFN) members will be available to the 334,385 First Nations individuals living on-reserve. \$45 million for Inuit will be available to 47,330 living in 4 Inuit homeland regions affiliated with Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK). \$30 million allocated for Métis National Council (MNC) communities will be available to 42,000 members of MNC in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia.

Under the announcement, 642,850 First Nations individuals living off-reserve, over 500,000 Métis not affiliated with MNC, and 17,690 Inuit outside of 4 ITK regions, a fund of \$15 million will be shared between all remaining Indigenous communities threatened by COVID-19, to be made available at an indeterminate point in the future.

While funding for AFN, ITK and MNC membership has already begun to be allocated, the application process for the remaining funding has not yet been established, and communities cannot even begin to apply for support.

“We at CAP have reached out to government repeatedly, both in past years to demand they change the ‘Distinctions-Based Approach’ that favors certain Indigenous communities over others, and over the last few weeks to demand inclusion in the COVID-19 response to ensure all communities can access funding.” said CAP National Chief Bertrand. “The misallocation and favouritism on display is going to cost lives.”

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*The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples is the national voice representing the interests of Métis, status and non-status Indians, and Southern Inuit Indigenous People living off-reserve. Today, over 80% of Indigenous people live off reserve.*

