



## **Press Statement**

### **Budget 2021 Indigenous Funding: “Impact Will Depend on Access”**

April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021 (Ottawa, ON) –

On Monday, Canada’s Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland released Canada’s first full budget in two years. This budget signals the largest increase in federal spending in history, totalling over \$100 billion in new initiatives and programs. This includes a range of measures termed support for “Strong Indigenous Communities” with a total of \$13 billion in announced new spending measures under that category.

Not a single dollar has been allocated solely to off-reserve Non-Status, Métis and Inuit Indigenous communities of Canada, which represent over 70% of all Indigenous peoples. Indigenous funding is allocated through a “Distinctions-Based” process, where spending initiatives for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit reach communities affiliated with organizations holding permanent bilateral mechanisms with the federal government, while others face significant barriers.

“This budget could make a difference for our communities, but only if our people can access the funding. Giving preferential treatment to certain selected Indigenous organizations, the Assembly of First Nations, Métis National Council, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, while excluding others is just another form of divide and conquer colonialism” said CAP National Chief Elmer St Pierre.

Within the 2021 Federal Budget, only the COVID-19 Indigenous Community Support Fund measure explicitly designates “off-reserve” Indigenous communities as being an eligible recipient. Funding under that stream is through a competitive application process that pits Indigenous communities against one another. CAP has applied for and administered funding under this stream across Canada, reaching communities from coast to coast, however the funding continues to fall far short of our needs.

“We call on the government of Canada to explicitly ensure that funding for Indigenous peoples will be available to all Indigenous communities without discrimination,” said National Chief St Pierre “Indigenous people are done being set against each other.”

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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 70% of Indigenous people live off-reserve.