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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Government of Canada and the Métis Nation sign historic Early Learning and Child Care Accord

March 6, 2019 (Ottawa, ON) – Today, the Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, and leaders of the Métis Nation signed the Métis Nation Early Learning and Child Care Accord. The Accord provides the Métis Nation with the authority and funding to create culturally relevant and supportive early learning and child care for Métis Nation children and their families.

“We are a proud, hardworking people, but many of our families struggle as the working poor,” stated David Chartrand, Vice-President and Minister of Social Development of the Métis National Council (MNC), and President of the Manitoba Metis Federation. “For over twenty-years the Metis have been left out of federally-funded Indigenous Early Learning Programs. During this time, the lack of federal commitment to reconciliation with the Metis Nation has hurt our children and our families. Today I stand here rejoicing with our hardworking mothers and fathers that have prayed for this day when our children would have their own Metis Head Start and early learning supports.”

For Minister Duclos, “this Accord solidified our ongoing joint commitment to supporting the Métis Nation vision for early learning and child care where Métis children and families throughout the Homeland are provided with culturally relevant, self-empowering early learning and child care programming and services.”

The Government of Canada has committed up to \$450.7 million to strengthen early learning and child care (ELCC) programs and services for Métis children and families in the Métis Homeland. This will be achieved through a flexible model that allows Métis Nation Governing Members to identify ELCC priorities such as to improve access to programs, integrate Métis culture, languages and values into ELCC services, and promote employment of Métis individuals as early childhood providers.

“The Canada-Métis Nation Early Learning and Child Care Accord marks another milestone on our path to reconciliation and filling the gaps in the availability of essential services to citizens of the Métis Nation,” said MNC President Clément Chartier. “I wish to thank Prime Minister Trudeau for his stewardship of Canada's nation-to-nation relationship with the Métis Nation and Minister Duclos for delivering on his commitment to ensure an autonomous Métis Nation designed and administered early learning and child care program for our children.”

The Accord recognizes that the Métis National Council and Governing Members are best placed to design, deliver and integrate Métis culture, languages and values into programs for Métis Nation children and families. It builds on the considerable collaborative work that was undertaken on a distinct Métis Nation Framework within the Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework which was released by the Métis National Council, Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, and the Government of Canada in September 2018. It also marks another concrete step in the implementation of the Canada-Métis Nation Accord which identified early learning and child care as a priority.

Vice-President Chartrand concluded: “Thanks to Prime Minister Trudeau’s and Minister Duclos’ vision, a vision based on reconciliation with our People, we will now have affordable, Metis-specific, child-focused programs with support for recreation, education, and early learning development. Today we have made history and ensured a legacy for our children and families. This is reconciliation in action.”

Quotes from other Governing Member Presidents:

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The MNC represents the Métis Nation in Canada at the national and international levels. The Métis Nation’s homeland includes the 3 Prairie Provinces and extends into the contiguous parts of British Columbia, Ontario, the Northwest Territories and the United States. There are approximately 400,000 Métis Nation citizens in Canada, roughly a quarter of all Aboriginal peoples in the country.