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### **A historic Protocol for the Four Host First Nations and VANOC Sets new standards for Aboriginal partnership with an Olympic Organizing Committee**

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Vancouver - The Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games (VANOC) and the Four Host First Nations (the Lil'wat, Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh) signed a historic Protocol today, defining the relationship and commitment to work in partnership to achieve successful 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. The protocol is the first of its kind and follows up on an initial protocol agreement signed on November 24, 2004 among the Four Host First Nations, building on several years of relationships initiated during the 2010 Bid.

The Protocol encompasses a number of areas in which the Four Host First Nations will work cooperatively with VANOC and its partners. Meaningful Aboriginal participation opportunities include:

- \* Increased showcasing of art, language, traditions, history and culture;
- \* Skills development and training related to the Games;
- \* Lasting social, cultural and economic opportunities and benefits;
- \* Improved health, education and the strengthening of the communities through sport, economics and cultural development;
- \* A youth sport legacy;
- \* Arts Festivals and Events;
- \* Medal Ceremonies and Opening and Closing Ceremonies.

"If it hadn't been for the full support of the Four Host First Nations in our bid, we likely wouldn't be talking about Vancouver 2010 today," said Jack Poole, VANOC Board Chairman. "Inclusive Aboriginal participation makes us stronger and in formalizing this relationship, we again show the importance that both parties attach to recognizing and respecting the role of Canada's Aboriginal peoples in the planning, staging and hosting of the 2010 Games."

To date, a number of important initiatives have already been taken by VANOC and the Four Host First Nations, including the formation of an Aboriginal Participation Department within VANOC. Partnerships have been developed through the presence of Squamish Chief Gibby Jacob on VANOC's Board, participation by the Four Host First Nations in the Vancouver 2010 Olympic emblem launch and various IOC events. All four of the Four Host First Nations Chiefs will also participate in the Torino 2006 Observation program.

Poole signed the Protocol during a ceremony today along with Lil'wat Nation Chief Leonard Andrew, Musqueam Nation Chief Ernest Campbell, Squamish Nation Chief Bill Williams and Tsleil-Waututh Nation Chief Leah George Wilson. Both governmental levels support extensive Aboriginal participation and Hon. Tom Christensen, BC Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation witnessed the signatures along with Grand Chief Ed John of the BC Summit. Federal government representatives were unable to attend due to election commitments.

"This is a great opportunity for our children and our youth to be involved in the Olympic and Paralympic Games and beyond the Games," said Lil'wat Nation Chief Leonard Andrew. "I think this will be a learning experience whether you want to participate in sport, to be a

volunteer or to be a good host because this may be the only time we will be able to be involved in the Olympic and Paralympic Games in our territory."

Musqueam Nation Chief Ernest Campbell outlined the unique exposure the Games will provide. "Not only are our people enhancing the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, we believe it will give the world the opportunity to see and understand the First Nations a lot better. It will showcase our youth and our people, particularly in the Opening and Closing Ceremonies, but it will put First Nations front and centre for Canadians and the world."

"As hosts of the traditional and shared traditional territories in which the 2010 Winter Games will be held, our intent is to ensure that the long-term interest of the land will remain intact so that our children and our children's children will be able to feel and walk on the land in the same fashion as my grandfather and my great grandfather have been able to walk on the land," said Squamish Nation Chief Bill Williams.

"It is important for our children to participate in sport so not only will we have taken part in the planning leading up to the Games, but hopefully our youth will participate as athletes in the Games," said Tsleil-Waututh Nation Chief Leah George Wilson. "It is our hope, along with the rest of Canada, that we win more gold medals than this country has ever won and that Aboriginal youth is represented on the podium."

"This agreement sends a message that we are united and ready to welcome the world in 2010," said Tom Christensen, B.C. Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation. "The level of Aboriginal involvement in the 2010 Winter Games is unprecedented and reflects the spirit of respect and trust of the New Relationship with First Nations in British Columbia."

VANOC is responsible for the planning, organizing, financing and staging of the XXI Olympic Winter Games and the X Paralympic Winter Games in 2010. The 2010 Olympic Winter Games will be staged in Vancouver and Whistler from February 12 to 28, 2010. Whistler will host the Paralympic Winter Games from March 12 to 21, 2010.

A copy of the Protocol will be made available at [www.vancouver2010.com](http://www.vancouver2010.com)

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