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### **For Immediate Release**

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### **Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, and the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan call for Federal Action Plan**

SASKATOON – The Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission (SHRC), the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN), and the Métis Nation - Saskatchewan (MN-S) are asking the Federal Government to create an action plan to prevent violence against Aboriginal women and girls to mark the observance of the 2013 International Women’s Day (IWD). The United Nations has declared the theme for this annual March 8 event as, “A promise is a promise: Time for action to end violence against women.”

In our society, Aboriginal women and girls persistently and disproportionately experience violence. For example, Statistics Canada reports that Aboriginal women reported being victims of spousal violence in 2011, more than two and a half times the rate for non-Aboriginal women.

“There is an urgent need to put an end to the violence against Aboriginal women and girls in Canada,” said David Arnot, Chief Commissioner for the SHRC. “We are calling on the Federal Government to work in partnership with Aboriginal organizations to develop and implement a national action plan that will address the root causes of violence against Aboriginal women and girls – including poverty and systemic discrimination.”

The Native Women’s Association of Canada also reports that an alarming number of Aboriginal women and girls have gone missing or have been found murdered in communities across Canada. While Aboriginal women represent 4% of the Canadian population, Statistics Canada reported that in 2011 8% of all murdered women, aged 15 years and older, were Aboriginal.

“Across the country, the cases of hundreds of missing and murdered women remain effectively unresolved,” says FSIN Chief Perry Bellegarde. “This is a national tragedy and a time for action. The FSIN continues to call for a National Public Commission of Inquiry on ending violence against Indigenous women and girls.”

There is also an important need for closure for the people who have lost their loved ones to needless violence. Establishing an inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in Canada would provide an opportunity for healing.

“The current violence Métis Nation, First Nation and Inuit women and girls face on a day to day basis is unacceptable. Having lost a sister to an act of violence, it is important for me as a husband, brother, father and now a grandfather of three daughters and two granddaughters to see the federal government is serious about the issue of violence against Aboriginal women. I call on the federal government to move quickly on establishing the inquiry on missing and murdered Aboriginal women and work with Aboriginal governments to improve the standard of living for all Aboriginal women across this country,” said Robert Doucette, President of the Métis Nation - Saskatchewan.

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