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# News Release    Communiqué

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## **NINETEEN FIRST NATIONS SIGN FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT TO FIRST NATIONS LAND MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE**

**OTTAWA (March 31, 2003)** - Nineteen First Nations are signing the *Framework Agreement on First Nations Land Management* today, announces Robert Nault, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Chief Robert Louie of the Westbank First Nation and Chair of the Lands Advisory Board.

One year ago Minister Nault and Chief Robert Louie announced the opening up of this initiative to interested First Nations, in addition to the original 14 signatory First Nations. Today we are celebrating as more First Nations take advantage of this initiative. Signing the Framework Agreement marks the first step in a commitment between these First Nations and the Government of Canada in their move towards increased self-governance.

“Signing the Framework Agreement today with these new communities demonstrates just how successful this initiative can be in improving the quality of life in First Nations communities by building capacity and increasing economic development opportunities,” said Minister Nault.

“I am very pleased to provide this support to this First Nations led initiative.”

“The Lands Advisory Board and Resource Centre welcomes these new First Nations to our group. We look forward to working with these communities towards fulfilling their vision of community based lands and resources management.” said Chief Louie.

The 19 First Nations include: from British Columbia, Beecher Bay, Tsawout, Tsawwassen, Songhees, Pavilion, Burrard, Sliammon, Osoyoos, Kitselas, and Skeetchesn; from Saskatchewan, Kinistin, and Whitecap Dakota Sioux; from Ontario, Garden River, Mississauga, Whitefish Lake, Dokis, Kettle and Stony Point, and Moose Deer Point; and from New Brunswick, Kingsclear.



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The *Framework Agreement* and the *First Nations Land Management Act*, was originally open to only the 14 signatory First Nations. This government to government Initiative provides participating First Nations with the opportunity to come out from under the land administration sections of the *Indian Act* and establish their own regimes to manage their lands and resources, providing for more decision making at the local level.

The First Nations Land Management Initiative allows participating First Nations the opportunity to develop their own modern and/or traditional tools to manage and protect their reserve lands and resources. The Initiative enables First Nations to make timely business and administrative decisions and to accelerate progress in areas such as economic development, resource management, and land use planning. This Initiative also enables First Nations to enact and enforce sound environmental management and protection laws.

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This release is also available on the Internet at <http://www.inac.gc.ca>.

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