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## Message from the Chair

# Specific Claims Tribunal Canada Tribunal des revendications particulières Canada

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### Message from the Chair

This is an update on the Tribunal's progress toward full operational capacity.

Bill C-30 (*Specific Claims Tribunal Act*) received Royal Assent in June, 2008. Speeches before the House of Commons and Senate, as recorded in Hansard, revealed the assumption that Superior Court Judges appointed to the Tribunal from the provincial superior courts would continue to be based in their resident courthouses, and be supported by staff and other services made available to them at those locations.

As courthouses and judicial support in the provinces are provided by provincial governments, arrangements with the provinces to permit members of the Specific Claims Tribunal, a federal Tribunal, to use these resources is necessary.

Mr. Raynald Chartrand has recently joined the Tribunal as Registrar. He has initiated discussions with officials of the provincial Ministries of the Attorney General in British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec, in order to make the necessary arrangements. The present focus is on these provinces, as each had its allowed number of judicial appointments increased to make up the time dedicated to Tribunal work by members appointed from those courts.

We are optimistic that the Registrar will be able to conclude the necessary arrangements with the provinces over the summer months. Assuming success, we will be better positioned to seek the appointment of the full complement of six full time Tribunal members, or the equivalent made up part-time Tribunal members, from the judges in the provincial superior courts. We hope to receive the full complement of three Superior Court Judges from British Columbia, as the history of claims before the Specific Claims Branch suggest that up to one half of the claims that qualify for filing with the Tribunal arise in that province.

Although the Registry is now open for the filing of claims, it is possible that the work of the Tribunal could be delayed pending further appointments. Until we see how many claims are filed in the ensuing months, and through case management gain a better understanding of the demands that those claims will place on our existing members and other resources, we will be unable to assess the workload and determine the number of Tribunal members required. The *Act* provides for up to 18

members. However, the time dedicated by judges serving on the Tribunal is not to exceed the full time equivalent of 6 judges. Once we have gained experience with claims, we will be better able to assess the efficacy of full versus part-time service on the Tribunal, and determine the optimal combination of both.

This message is not intended to discourage potential claimants from filing a Declaration of Claim. Now that the Registry is open for the filing of claims, potential claimants have a legitimate expectation that matters will proceed efficiently toward resolution. First Nations should not, therefore, be deterred from bringing claims forward. Be assured that we will strive to resolve any concerns we may have over the adequacy of resources available to the Tribunal.

Our present objective is to be in a position to commence with case management by the end of September, 2011.

Sincerely,

Justice Harry Slade

Chairperson, Specific Claims Tribunal

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