

**Speaking notes for  
Hon. Shawn Graham  
Premier of New Brunswick**

**Signing of Mi'kmaq, Maliseet, Province of New Brunswick  
Relationship Building Bilateral Agreement**

*June 22, 2007*

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Your Honour, Elders, First Nations Chiefs, cabinet colleagues, Members of the Legislature, honoured guests, ladies and gentlemen.

On behalf of the Government of New Brunswick, I want to thank you all for coming here to the provincial Legislature this morning to witness and be a part of this historic and important day for our great province.

The New Brunswick Legislative Assembly belongs to the people of this province. It's only appropriate that this historic accord, which will do so much for all New Brunswickers, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, is being officially enacted in the heart of our parliamentary democracy.

Together, we have made great progress in redefining the bilateral relationship between the Province and New Brunswick's 15 First Nations communities. Both levels of government have been committed to making our relationship work for the benefit of all New Brunswickers.

The signing of this agreement today by the Assembly of First Nations Chiefs of New Brunswick and the Province is a clear indication of the progress we've made in developing bilateral relations between our two levels of government.

It has been a personal goal of mine as a Premier and as a member who proudly represents a riding with two very vibrant First Nations to achieve a bilateral accord that provides real benefits to Aboriginal communities and a new way for us to work together.

Fostering a bilateral agreement with New Brunswick's First Nations is an important element of our *Charter for Change* commitment to improve relationships, and was a key commitment in our first Speech from the Throne and of the final report of the Self-Sufficiency Task Force.

In order for New Brunswick to become self-sufficient, all our communities - including all 15 First Nations communities - must have the means to become self-sufficient. The accord we have signed today will enable Aboriginal communities to reduce inequalities, improve services and promote economic development.

As Premier and as a proud New Brunswickers, I am very pleased the Chiefs have agreed to join with us in moving forward into this new era of bilateral relations.

Our new relationship will be one of respect, good faith and partnership, one where we will work together to reconcile First Nations and Crown issues and jurisdictions from this day forward.

It is my hope and my desire to take full advantage of this new relationship to move forward. I look forward to my first bi-annual meeting with the Chiefs and to continuing the dialogue we have begun here today.

Thank you all very much.