

SPEAKING NOTES
for
Dayna Jongejan, ARDG ISC-AB Region

**FIRST NATIONS TECHNICAL SERVICES ADVISORY GROUP INC. (TSAG)
CHIEFS GATHERING**

**August 15, 9AM MDT
Doubletree by Hilton West Edmonton
16615 109 Ave NW, Edmonton, AB T5P 4K8**

- Tansi/Good Morning.
- Thank you, [MC name] AND Elder for the prayer and for starting us off in a positive way with open minds and hearts.
- I want to acknowledge that we are in Treaty 6 territory today; lands I am very fortunate to live and work.
- Thank you so much to TSAG's CEO, Vaughn Paul for the invitation today and for taking the lead in organizing this event. I know many individuals were involved to make this event a reality so want to acknowledge everyone who has played a role.
- When I was thinking about what I was going to say today; I reflected back on an ice breaker I have done a few times over the years – it's the one where a group of people survive a plane crash and must work together to live on a deserted island and as a team you have to collectively decide what to do first – build a well for clean drinking water, build shelter, build a raft, etc.
- But reality, particularly for First Nations is not so simple. You don't just get to make a list and build everything in a set order with the magical tools that just so happened to be available on the island.
- The infrastructure needs for Nations are significant and growing and interdependent; you can build a water plant but need good roads for water trucks to drive on; you need schools and training facilities to provide an educational foundation for the water plant technicians; you need safe and secure housing; medical facilities...well the list goes on.

- A decade ago, the Government of Canada did a study that identified a \$30 billion dollar infrastructure gap on reserve across the country.
- Last year, you may recall we worked with every Nation to gather data under (yet another study) called Closing the Infrastructure Gap. Collectively for the 48 Nations across Treaty 6, 7 and 8 within the Alberta region; Nations identified infrastructure needs totaled 26 billion dollars over the next 7 years.
- Now another dose of reality; regionally we have an annual capital budget in Alberta region of \$300 million annually. Further that \$300 million is provided in siloed funding streams; limiting what types of infrastructure can be invested in each year.
- Further the existing funding streams do not always align with the priorities identified by communities such as road repairs and paving, recreational and cultural facilities, treatment and detox facilities, and elder care homes.
- Now lets add to the capital picture we are painting; often funding is application based, infrastructure projects have to follow government of Canada tendering policies, any surpluses have to follow the rules of fixed and flex funding...again this list truly goes on.
- I think what becomes clear; is that there has to be a better way. The status quo whether it be our funding levels or policies or program terms and conditions are clearly not meeting the needs of your community and the Crown's commitment to Treaty.
- To be true Treaty partners through the lens of infrastructure we need to rethink the infrastructure program and explore new and novel solutions.
- These next few days are just the start to that conversation; a chance to ensure that a new and transformed infrastructure approach takes into consideration the views and realities of Nations across Treaties 6, 7 and 8

- The presentations that are coming in the next couple of days have the opportunity to embark on this transformative change and open up the discussion on “how can we do this different”. And I want to thank all of you in advance for your participation, honesty and fresh ideas.
- Thank you/Hiy Hiy