

PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**UNPRECEDENTED GATHERING OF FORMER AFN NATIONAL CHIEFS TO TACKLE PRESSING ISSUES
FROM RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT TO RECONCILIATION**

OTTAWA (February 9, 2016) – Former Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Chiefs Georges Erasmus, Ovide Mercredi, Phil Fontaine, Shawn A-in-chut Atleo and Matthew Coon Come will convene at The Fairmont Queen Elizabeth Hotel in Montréal Thursday February 18 to discuss the way forward at a moment of renewed hope and optimism in Aboriginal communities, following the election of a new federal government led by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

Titled *“Building on Experiences and Taking Our Capacity to the Next Level,”* the National Chiefs panel will begin at 8:30am in Le Grand Salon of the Queen Elizabeth Hotel, Montréal as part of a three-day national conference hosted by the (AFOA) Canada (formerly The Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of Canada) Former Prime Minister of Canada, The Right Honourable Paul Martin, will moderate this historic panel.

The conference will take place in the wake of recent game-changing events, including Supreme Court and Canadian Human Rights Tribunal decisions. *“This is a critically important time,”* states Terry Goodtrack, President and CEO, AFOA Canada. *“Our 16th Annual National Conference will bring together 1,000 of Canada’s most prominent Aboriginal finance management and business professionals and elected leaders, at a moment of great challenges as well as great opportunities.”*

About AFOA Canada

AFOA Canada is a membership driven not-for-profit organization. The organization supports Aboriginal professionals through a focus on enhancing finance, management and leadership practices and skills. AFOA Canada promotes the finance, management, and leadership skills of Aboriginal people with innovative services and products, including community workshops, Aboriginal finance and management certification, and its flagship magazine, the *Journal of Aboriginal Management*.

AFOA Canada has become the centre of excellence and innovation in Aboriginal finance, management and leadership. It is the largest and only organization in Canada that focuses on the capacity development and day to day needs of those Aboriginal professionals who are working in all areas of these areas. Our products and programs are developed by Aboriginal professionals for Aboriginal Professionals.

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