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CHIEFS OF ONTARIO

FIRST NATIONS WOMEN TO ADDRESS UNITED NATIONS - WILL HIGHLIGHT WOMEN'S ISSUES, WATER AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Toronto (Feb 22, 2016) --- A First Nations women's delegation from Ontario is in Geneva, Switzerland this week to speak before the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

The group, led by Human Rights Watch, will focus on women's issues, water and climate change, and will recommend concrete changes to improve the lives of First Nations women in Canada.

"There are human rights violations throughout our First Nation communities, from a lack of access to clean water and sanitation to the drastic number of murdered and missing women," said Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day. "This is an opportunity for the First Nations to take Canada to task for abuses and to point the way to upholding human dignity and advancing human rights for all."

The UN Committee addresses a wide range of economic, social and cultural issues, including labor, healthcare, and education rights, rights to an adequate standard of living, and rights to engage in cultural practices. The UN Committee seeks to ensure that people are able to enjoy these rights without discrimination based on religion, gender, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

The committee's 18 experts meet twice a year in Geneva to consider the reports submitted by UN member countries every five years about their compliance with the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)

Human Rights Watch first met with the Assembly of First Nations and the Chiefs of Ontario in April and July 2015 to discuss how to document and bring about improvement in the historically poor water and sanitation conditions for First Nations in Ontario. The federal government provides the services.

Women from Treaty #3, Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Union of Ontario Indians, Six Nations and the Chiefs of Ontario have been involved throughout the process.

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The Chiefs of Ontario is a political forum and a secretariat for collective decision making, action, and advocacy for the 133 First Nation communities located within the boundaries of the province of Ontario, Canada. Follow Chiefs of Ontario on Facebook or Twitter @ChiefsOfOntario.

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