



NATION
huronne-wendat

255, place Chef Michel Laveau
Wendake (Québec) G0A 4V0
Téléphone : (418) 843-3767
Ligne sans frais : 1-877-712-3767
Télécopieur : (418) 842-1108

KONRAD SIOUI

GRAND CHEF DE LA NATION HURONNE-WENDAT
GRAND CHIEF HURON WENDAT NATION

PROGRESS REPORT – JULY 2020

Wendake, July 17, 2020

To all members of the Huron-Wendat Nation, Kwe Ni Atakwa, Akwekon,

This magnificent July evening peacefully sitting at the table in my camp is the perfect time to write and report to you to fill you in since our last update. Of course, our various news releases, discussions, Yakwennra newsletter and other social media postings are disseminated to you regularly in order to keep you informed of what is happening within our Nation. With our new electronic technology, we will be able to produce live broadcasts of public assemblies in the fall for the benefit of our entire population.

This past winter was not as harsh as the two previous years' winters, but spring was slow to melt the last layers of snow. Then, the coronavirus and its devastating effects were unleashed upon the world. Everything came to an abrupt halt, just as we were entering a new fiscal year on March 31st with so much determination and confidence. Our tourism industry was put on ice and our plans to expand the Hotel were put on hold just as we were starting construction.

Our medical centre project (FMG) located in the economic development sector designated for nationalized projects also slowed down considerably. Our offices had to close down except for essential services and we learned to use new ways of doing our jobs. Telework, Zoom and Teams have become part of our daily tools.

We quickly adjusted thanks to an extremely competent public administration that is determined to maintain a high level of delivery of services and programs to our entire population. We regularly reached out to our seniors who were more likely to have special needs: running errands, doing groceries, obtaining drugs from the pharmacy, coping with loneliness and its effects, etc. Now, with the light respite that comes with deconfinement, the construction of the Maison des Sages (CHSLD) has resumed and we intend to proceed with its official opening this fall. We are reopening our magnificent Sports Complex to the delight of our enthusiasts of all ages. An SAQ outlet will be part of the second phase of the expansion of our service station and convenience store, with a drop-off point for the delivery of bulkier furniture and equipment.

Due to the delays and uncertainties associated with the pandemic, we have cancelled the 2020 edition of Kwe! Meet with Indigenous Peoples, which aims to combat racism in all its forms.

We continue to urge the federal government to transfer land from the Department of National Defence to the Huron-Wendat Nation. My last conversations on the subject with various federal ministers, including Minister Jean-Yves Duclos, have been very positive and I am expecting a final answer in the coming weeks. Note that several other groups are trying through various means to appropriate our land. We are alert and determined.

Our historical research supports the legal steps associated with our political efforts which have endured for more than 400 years ever since we were stripped of our Seigneurie de Sillery. The same is true for our former Rockmont reserve. We are currently at the stage of receiving a final settlement offer from the federal government and everything will be submitted to our entire Nation for a decision to be made by referendum.

We held a special assembly in order to adopt the audited financial report of the Deloitte firm so that it could be submitted to Indigenous Services Canada by the end of July. I am proud to announce that our coffers are fuller than ever with a \$3.3 million surplus. We manage our finances responsibly while creating business and employment opportunities for our Huron-Wendat members and entrepreneurs. Our revenues have increased by almost \$1 million since 2019. We have reduced our line of credit by more than \$4 million and we have reduced our payroll to 28% of the core, which is significant.

We are closely examining all government and private initiatives that take place on the Nionwentsio. We will have a major battle to wage against the Gas Pipeline project that is looking to pass through the northern part of our national territory. We will be presenting a brief that we will defend in public hearings led by the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada. The most important issues that will be subjected to our approach are focused on the environment and the protection of our territorial and treaty rights. Our studies are very advanced and we are prepared. The same is true for the Lac à Moïse protected area, the *Ya'nienhonhndeh*. We are faced with a provincial government that is trying to please everyone and we are increasingly coming to the realization that foresters, with their lobbying efforts a hundred times richer than what we can invest as a Nation, want at all costs to enter the protected area and clear cut the last pristine forest that remains untouched since pre-contact and which we consider our national treasure. We surely need strong and loyal warriors to prevent this destruction of our collective heritage.

Following many years of discussion and negotiation, we have reached a very important agreement with the Port de Québec as part of the Laurentia project for the expansion of the Port. This agreement will result in many economic benefits for our Nation, workers, enterprises and businesses. In addition, this project fully meets our environmental requirements.

In the context of the closure of the regions due to the coronavirus, I immediately began negotiations with the ministers responsible for Public Safety and Indigenous Affairs as

well as with the office of the Premier of Quebec, M. François Legault, in order to continue to allow all our members to occupy the Nionwentsïo without zone restrictions. I signed numerous letters of attestation for our members who used them to deal with the roadblocks of the Sureté du Québec. Accompanied by Chief René W. Picard, I travelled to the roadblock at the entrance to the Laurentides Wildlife Reserve in order to speak directly with the police officers on site. Everything took place according to what we had negotiated: respect for our rights, free circulation and access to our camps in respect of our customs and traditions.

Since the signing, in January 2019 with the federal government, of a bilateral consultation and accommodation agreement, we have increased our efforts among the RCMs and municipalities located throughout the Nionwentsïo. I signed no less than 300 personalized letters specifying our intention to protect our territory, while remaining open to development that is respectful of our rights and in harmony with the protection of the environment. This is a monumental undertaking that requires time and effort on our part, in a spirit of good neighbourliness and diplomacy. We are already reaping very positive results and partnerships have already been established for everyone's benefit. We are simply no longer to be taken lightly. We exercise our rights in an authoritative and diplomatic fashion.

We have been working on Wendake South, in Ontario, for over 42 years now. Already in 1978-1979, we were present at various Huron-Wendat archaeological sites and our teams of young people have learned quickly, through archaeology and history, the exact nature of the greatness of our Wendat civilization. We learned things the right way. Today, we have made great strides in terms of protecting and defending our ancestors in Ontario. More than a dozen Huron-Wendat supervisors are monitoring different sites where industrial or commercial development could destroy the remnants of our former villages and also affect the graves of our ancestors. We protect these sacred sites at all times and we have earned everyone's respect. We maintain excellent relationships with mayors and other First Nations in places where this type of development could affect our ancestral cemeteries. Indeed, we count on allies who associate with our approach and regularly consult us on our history and our civilization from Stadaconé to Toronto. Today, not only does our Wendake South – Ontario department bring in millions of dollars for the Nation, it also allows for the permanent occupation of our ancestral territories. We can be proud of the work accomplished. In fact, I plan to travel to Wendake South in August to conduct a surveillance tour and meet with different players including the mayor of Vaughan, Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua.

We must also secure the future of our Nation from a demographic perspective and prepare for the coming decades. Thus, for approximately forty years, the Huron-Wendat Councils have succeeded one another in terms of addressing the issue of our own national constitution and by seriously questioning our membership and how to acquire our own citizenship code.

We all want to continue to belong to our noble and proud Nation and we do not agree that it is the responsibility of the Register of Indigenous Affairs to unilaterally decide who has or does not have the right to be registered knowing that its policy aims to exterminate our peoples. For a very long time now, the fact that we live in an urban environment has more often than not resulted in mixed unions between Huron-Wendat and other non-Indigenous people. We are not going to blame ourselves for this situation. We are who we are.

With that in mind, the Huron-Wendat citizenship committee is continuing its work while ensuring that all of our members have the opportunity to express themselves freely on the issue. Our collective future is at stake: band transfers, moratorium lifting, children born from previous relationships, right of residence, land inheritance, etc. Therefore, once the coronavirus allows us to gather and have respectful discussions together, we will then be able to continue our necessary and wise reflection. In the meantime, the members of the committee are welcoming all suggestions, ideas and questions from our people. One thing remains certain: our rights are inalienable and we are the guardians and protectors.

We are always on the front lines in terms of defending and protecting our territorial and treaty rights. The pandemic may have prevented us from meeting directly with our counterparts among other levels of government as well as the political leaders of other First Nations, but our extensive correspondence proves that we are at work at all times since we cannot afford to take a break. With the Innu of Mashteuiatsh regarding classes featuring cultural activities, we have returned to the spirit of the 2012 agreement and the children and chaperones of the two Nations will be able to freely enjoy a danger-free cultural experience of hunting and tradition. Thus, zone 12 will be exclusive to the Huron-Wendat Nation and zone 70 will remain exclusive to the youth of Mashteuiatsh. This is an example of peaceful coexistence and mutual respect as we have always advocated. We strongly urge the Innu of Mashteuiatsh and Essipit to respect the spirit of the 2012 agreement for both hunting and the construction of camps. To do otherwise can only worsen our relations by disrespecting our Nation, which we will not tolerate.

We have now developed and established a school of thought that is the subject of consensus within our public service and throughout our entire population. In this sense, in the coming weeks, we will be publishing a manifesto so that each and every one of us can feed into and learn about our political positions, share our fundamental values, re-examine our decolonized history and redefine our collective and inclusive future.

As for the big game hunting draw for this fall, everything went smoothly and more than 130 Huron-Wendat groups found an area allowing them to enjoy a cultural and family moose hunting experience. Of course, we must strictly enforce safety rules at all times.

I would like to congratulate all our students, regardless of their academic level, for having demonstrated very strong resilience during this year filled with hardships. We are very pleased with their ability to succeed. We will continue to financially support our

students at the post-secondary level and facilitate their success. They are our future and our source of pride. The same is true for our graduates at the elementary and high school levels. I would like to express my sincerest congratulations to all our students and I encourage them to continue to work towards the goals they have set for themselves with their parents. Again, we are so very proud of all of them.

One of the most important characteristics that highlights our collective strength as a Nation is our army, our public service, which represents the backbone of our people. In this sense, we have taken the necessary steps to negotiate, with the union, working conditions that are respectful of our workers and equally respectful of our ability to pay. As a result, I am pleased to report that the General Assembly voted 84% in favour of the agreement.

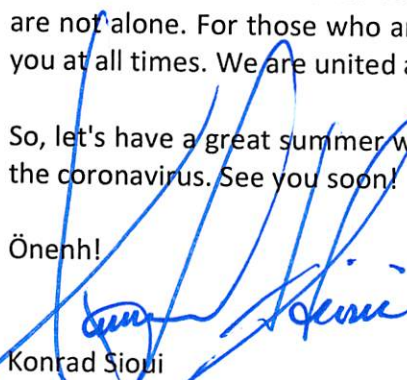
As for our commendable Wendake Police Services, negotiations are underway and we are hopeful that the settlement will be equally satisfactory for both parties. The stability this will provide within our army of workers will allow us even more to achieve our goals and objectives in the best interests of our beautiful and strong Nation. Together, we can achieve anything.

Our fabulous hotel, including our museum, restaurant and tourist attractions, has now reopened since July 1st, and we will be proceeding with its expansion as we were in the process of doing last March, prior to the pandemic. Our artisans are waiting for you with high quality products. Our tourism industry has some wind in its sails and is making progress in accordance with our revised, adjusted and implemented strategic plan.

In closing, I would like to offer my sincere condolences to all those who have lost a loved one since the start of 2020. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and know that you are not alone. For those who are sick or suffering, our help services remain available to you at all times. We are united and among family.

So, let's have a great summer while being careful and aware about the consequences of the coronavirus. See you soon!

Önenh!



Konrad Sioui
Grand Chief