



**NAHA-ANHA: NATIONAL ABORIGINAL HOUSING  
ASSOCIATION/ASSOCIATION NATIONALE D'HABITATION AUTOCHTONE**

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May 3, 2002  
Ottawa

**NAHA RESPONDS TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S TASK FORCE ON URBAN  
ISSUES INTERIM REPORT**

With more than half of all Aboriginal people today living off-reserve, Canada's urban strategy is of vital importance to the future health and quality of life for Aboriginal Peoples. "The government initiative in articulating an urban strategy must be commended," says Charles W. Hill, President of the National Aboriginal Housing Association (NAHA). NAHA is a national organization representing urban Aboriginal housing providers. "We are pleased that the Task Force has singled out the urban Aboriginal population with specific recommendations," adds Hill. "However, the lack of specificity of these recommendations concerns us."

The recommendations include strengthening educational supports; developing a more collaborative and co-ordinated approach to programs; partnering to improve housing, reduce poverty and better deliver services. In the area of housing, NAHA is concerned that the Task Force has not set production targets, nor has it called for an Aboriginal component in the new proposed *National Affordable Housing Program*. "Its great to say that we have to 'expand the stock of affordable housing' for Aboriginal people. But we know from past experience, if there are not specific Aboriginal programs, or targets, we will get left behind. The federal government, over the past fifty years, has funded almost 600,000 assisted housing units, but as the Task Force Report acknowledges, only 11,000 are specifically targeted to Aboriginal People. This, in spite of the fact that Aboriginal households make up a disproportionate percentage of Canadian who are homeless or in 'core housing need'."

Hill also cautions about the term 'partnering' with other orders of government to meet the needs of Aboriginal people off-reserve. Canada's urban Aboriginal peoples believe that Canada has the primary and fiduciary responsibility for all Aboriginal people, and rejects the notion that cities should shoulder responsibilities for Aboriginal housing. "We will continue to urge the federal government to work in partnership with the Aboriginal community to meet the needs of our People," says Hill.

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