

# Nisga'a Nation | 2024

SPECIAL ASSEMBLY SUMMARY REPORT

*key issues, responses & action items from the assembly record of proceedings*

MAY 6 - 10 / GITWINKSIHLKW



Nisga'a Lisims  
Government

Sayt-K'ilim-Çoot  
one heart, one path, one nation

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# Introduction //

Special Assemblies of the Nisga'a Nation are provided for by the Nisga'a Constitution.

In May 2024, the Nisga'a Nation gathered for a Special Assembly in Gitwinksihlkw for several days to discuss central issues facing the Nation.

In respect of that Assembly, this report summarizes and identifies:

- + the key issues that were articulated by Nisga'a citizens;
- + the responses by NLG in relation to the issues identified; and
- + the particular actions items that were, from the record of proceedings, items which respondents indicated that Nisga'a citizens could expect to see some form of follow up.

Where possible, the report has attempted to incorporate the language of the speaker, (i.e., to use their words and expressions). Minor edits have been made for clarity, and some duplicated questions and responses omitted. Where there may appear to be ungrammatical expressions, this is often due to notes which attempt to capture the actual speaking style of the speaker or which occasionally capture comments in point form.

It is hoped that this report will provide:

- + a review of some of the key issues that arose from the conference to ensure that
- + the comments of Nisga'a citizens are afforded an opportunity to be heard;
- + information in response to these questions and comments; and
- + identify any action items to ensure that follow-up can be tracked.

Questions inconsistent with the rules of the Special Assembly are omitted. In some instances, following the Special Assembly, additional information has been included to provide further details in response.

## Question & Answer Session / Monday May 6

# NLG Executive Officers & Senior Management

**Q&A SUMMARY /** During this session, Nisga'a citizens raised a range of issues including mental health resources, assisted living, commercial fishers fund, feast protocol, economic development fund, treaty legislation and Gingolx road conditions. In addition, zoom participants expressed concerns about access to programs & services for citizens off Nisga'a Lands, Nations Royalty, and child protection legislation.



**SUBJECT / Mental Health Resources, Assisted Living**

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**Comments**

- + Madam President: Mental Health & awareness – when are we going to get a treatment centre detox centre, assisted living home?
- + When are we going to get a hotel, restaurant, pub, casino and bingo hall?
- + What's going to happen to Nass Camp – perfect place for these.
- + Back in the day each village had a Local – whenever (there was a) convention, that Local fundraised for convention. Any monies made went to those that traveled. No per diems were given.

**Response**

- + Understand the need of treatment centres. Until we get infrastructure in place the current use will happen – right now we are looking at after care
- + Encourage citizens to keep a look out for Mental Health Act
- + Assisted living: has been in the works for many years. Reports will be provided as we move forward – Stage 3 of Stage 9
- + We are 25 years of the treaty. Perhaps Nisga'a Growth Corporation to look into casino, bingo
- + CEO to compile a list of Nisga'a leaders before and current – Calder case

**SUBJECT / Economic Development Fund, Updated Treaty Legislation**

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**Comments**

- + Still get approached from entrepreneurs from outside – when is the economic development fund going to be operational?
- + Nisga'a Treaty legislation – is there a timeline for the updated legislation?

**Response**

- + CEO will respond when he makes his report.
- + Nisga'a Legislation is currently being updated.
- + Timeline: very soon.

**SUBJECT / Feast Protocol, Commercial Fishers Fund**

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**Comments**

- + Wrote a letter re feasts in our territory.
- + Young chiefs making a habit to overpower the House chief.
- + Matriarchs being seated in wrong place.
- + Commercial Fund – why inland fisherman not funded?

**Response**

- + Up to the Wilps to deal with these issues
- + Feasts: this particular matter raised at the Chiefs meeting a few weeks ago. The Chair of CoE will speak to this.

**SUBJECT / Online Fraud, Mental Health**

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**Comments**

- + Suggestion: like to see NLG and village governments follow suit to upgrade computer systems to prevent fraud, corruption and illegal stuff.
- + Mental Health – we should consider having a huge department developed for mental health.

**Response**

- + NLG and VG updating computers to prevent fraud – very good suggestion but it is a home-owner responsibility. We can look at public education around these.
- + See mental health response above.

**SUBJECT / Tahltan MoU, Pipeline, Commercial Fishers Fund**

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**Comments**

- + Tahltan MoU – what is that deal and how will our people benefit from that?
- + Purchase of Pipeline out of Prince Rupert, what was the cost and what will we benefit?
- + Commercial Fund: this was in 1998 by Calder and fisherman – was not part of the Treaty. Fishers are not benefiting. It's Nisga'a Nation that is deciding what to do with that Fund.

**Response**

- + Tahltan MoU: it is nonbinding for 2 nations to work together to look at keeping our territory intact. Tahltan recognizes Nisga'a Lands and vice versa. We are bringing certainty into the golden triangle.
- + Pipeline: The Nation will receive Capacity funding for the NLG technical team to do the work for the project.
- + The Nisga'a Nation will not expense any funding from its own finances of the Nation. All funding will come from investors of LNG.
- + Commercial Fund: I have not seen any information from 1998 on what the commercial fishers put in place with that assistance of Calder. I will ask our CEO of NLG to see if the information exists at NLG.
- + The Nisga'a Commercial Fishers Opportunities Fund is owned by the Nisga'a Nation as a whole. The fund was negotiated as part of the treaty.

**SUBJECT / Gingolx Roads**

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**Comments**

- + Urgent Matter: Gingolx roads are in a very bad situation – just doing patch work.

**Response**

- + Highway 113: this has been at the forefront of NLG. Very concerned about poor conditions and erosions happening under the highway.

**Q:** Good morning, my question is regarding our Lava Bed area. Is there any future plans of putting up a toll area to enter our beautiful nation? I think this would not only create jobs for our people who are looking for fulltime jobs, but also have a record of those who enter our nation whom are visitors. That money, if there is a small toll created, can be put back into paying for more staff for the toll booth. Buying security cameras, cost of internet to power those camera, buying solar panels to power the toll station. Can security cameras be placed within our streets of Gitlaxt'aamiks for the protection of residents? I appreciate you taking the time to read my questions. Hope you all have a great Assembly.

**Q:** As a citizen that lives off Nisga'a land I have a few concerns. Here in Prince George we have many citizens that have very little access to programs and services, which is very unfortunate, as we all know that the rising cost of living can make for difficult times. I'm very grateful that we have the ability to travel home to prepare our traditional foods and when we can, we help other out those that are unable to make the trip home. As Nisga'a people we pride ourselves on the statement that we look after each other and that no one gets left out, we look after our own.

Time and time again we see other communities receiving a distribution of fresh fish fresh oolichan, unfortunately some of these items pass through our community.

There has been a few people from home that have brought foods and distributed it to us and for that we are very thankful for your kind gesture.

Questions have been asked about a Nisga'a local office here to provide services for Prince George and surrounding area. When the questions are directed towards government we get the same response, that we need to get the numbers of citizens that live here, start a non profit organization along with other red tape just to meet the requirements for our government to recognize the need for representation.

The thinking here is that we are forgotten and that our government doesn't care for the people that live here would lisims consider helping set up a local in Prince George?

Thank you for your time.

**Q:** Aama Hiihlukw good morning from Laxgalts'ap here. First an appreciation for the opportunity to ask questions remotely from the BC/Alberta border while I'm working on Indigenous Food Sovereignty initiatives. I have a multi-faceted inquiry about Nations Royalty.

A. What is the current and 10 year projected amount of royalty payments we have for NR to access?

B. Considering the big players in Canadian Royalty companies consistently carry hundreds of millions of dollars in debt, what is the Nisga'a Nation comfortable with for NR debt levels year-to-year? What metrics will be applied to justify such precarious positions?

C. The verbiage and layout of all the Vega/Nations Royalties early press releases very closely mirrors ones used when Vega owners did this same type of transaction in South America a number of years ago. What was the outcome of that Royalty acquisition, given that the speculative nature of these financing schemes can quietly end with sell-offs of non-core operations what assurances do we have that a stock that recently was barely above 2 cents can grow and compete with Franco Nevada and many others once the shine of being indigenously owned dims?

**Q:** Question regarding moving beyond a delegated authority and the development of a Nisga'a solution to child protection, preservation of families, and instilling culture throughout that whole exercise. Legislation such as the CFCSA are rife with colonial lenses. I have worked to support grassroots advocacy groups across the country that are advancing indigenous world view by way gathering experiences from survivors of shared experiences such as the Millennial Scoop and doing it in ways that are not clinical or framed as community consultations.

What is NLG/NCFS doing to inform prospective legislation of our urban Nisga'a experiences with the predatory practices of current legislation? Surely with DRIPA we can chart our own path for every Nisga'a child and tell MCFD where to go! How can we support ALL Nisga'a children no matter where they live or which colonial institution is supposedly safeguarding them?



# Question & Answer Session / Tuesday May 7

## Programs & Services Committee

**Q&A SUMMARY /** During this session, citizens expressed concerns covering a range of issues. These included the need for additional services and supports to address drug and alcohol addiction as well as access to mental health services and social assistance. In addition, concerns were raised regarding illicit drug and alcohol sales, child protection and support for families and elders, as well as the need for a Prince George Urban Local Society and the cost of living and student living allowance.



**SUBJECT / RCMP & Penalties on Illicit Sales of Alcohol & Drugs**

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**Comments**

- + What is going to be done regarding illegal sales of alcohol and drugs?
- + To have more collaboration and discussions between RCMP

**Response**

- + Chair POPS Committee: Responsibility with Village Governments, have laws in place, care issues. Also to consider in addressing Mental Health side too.

**SUBJECT / Health Industry / Mental Health**

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**Comments**

- + The need of services provided between First Nations Communities and Urban settings. Mandates on funding and develop on resources we currently have and to improve on them.

**Response**

- + Acting Executive Director: In agreement with disparity; Advocacy for services, receiving funding for mental health. NVHA will be providing a presentation.
- + Nisga'a Lisims Government is underfunded for service delivery, in process in reaching an agreement between Nisga'a Valley Health Authority (NVHA).

**SUBJECT / Programs & Services Department Delivery, Harm Reduction, Elder Support Services**

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**Comments**

- + Comments regarding to Government; Programs & Services Department, insufficient resources available on Nisga'a Lands. To incorporate training opportunities and working together.

**Response**

- + Chair Programs & Services Committee: Nisga'a Village of Gitwinksihlkw invites one elder to regular council session meetings and one youth.

**SUBJECT / Children on Social Assistance, Drug & Alcohol Addiction, Lack of services (Healing Circle)**

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**Comments**

- + What is the strategic plan in place for Nisga'a Nations on drugs and alcohol.
- + Nisga'a Nation veterans, both past and present need a place to gather, to share their dedications and sacrifices for their services.

**Response**

- + Chair Programs & Services Committee: Reflections upon in creating a memorial plaque that took place in home community, citizens can bring forward names, is not off the table and bring forward onto a meeting.

**SUBJECT / Programs & Services Delivery in Urban Local areas (Distribution of Traditional Harvesting)**

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**Comments**

- + Would Nisga'a Lisims Government have considerations in setting up a Nisga'a Urban Local Society located in Prince George, BC?

**Response**

- + Acting Executive Director: Is under discussions and review, a group did go to Prince George and was unsuccessful due to insufficient numbers of people. Will be addressing this matter.

**SUBJECT / Social Issues – Drugs & Alcohol**

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**Comments**

- + Nisga'a Citizens residing in Urban Locals have challenges in learning Nisga'a Language. To have meeting invitations extended for Nisga'a Citizens of Ts'amiks to attend meetings located in Nass Valley.

**Response**

- + Acting Executive Director: Referred onto Chief Executive Officer.

**SUBJECT / Transfer of Children for Supervised Visits Between Parents, Support Services for Young Nisga'a Citizens**

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**Comments**

- + Children deserve to know all of family relations, and to push for more resources to keep families together.

**Response**

- + Acting Executive Director: Referred to contact Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) and Nisga'a Child and Family Services (NCFS), to request upon support services, and the office of the Designated Representative for the Nisga'a Nation to request support.
- + Chair Programs and Services: To provide after care for families who have been separated.

**SUBJECT / Child Protection, Preservation of Families and Legislation**

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**Comments**

- + What is Nisga'a Lisims Government and Nisga'a Child and Family Services doing to inform/support our Nisga'a Children, no matter where they reside.

**Response**

- + Acting Executive Director: Under agreement between the Nisga'a Nation Delegated Authority (NDA). Nisga'a Nation can provide own services on Nisga'a lands regarding to jurisdiction.

**SUBJECT /** Nisga'a Citizens Overcoming Addictions, Participation in the Elders Council

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**Comments**

- + Urban Nisga'a Citizens on proposed resolution to participate in the Elders Council.

**Response**

**SUBJECT /** Wills & Estates and Power of Attorney (POA) in Urban Locals

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**Comments**

- + Personal planning and Power of Attorney for Nisga'a Urban Citizens.
- + Adequate Elders assistant health care and housing and proposal resolution to financially support on Wills and Estates/POA

**Response**

- + Chair Programs and Services: We have a team of people to inquire if possible or not.

**SUBJECT /** Social Assistance

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**Comments**

- + Social Assistance rates vary between Terrace vs. Nisga'a, all are entitled to same rates.

**Response**

- + Chair Programs and Services: Need an after-care program.

**SUBJECT /** Treaty Loan / Roles & Responsibilities to Their Own Wilp

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**Comments**

- + Mentorship, we look around, we meet our young people to begin fully participating within our Nisga'a Governments.

**Response**

- + Chair Programs and Services: What can help us with Nisga'a practices.
- + Acting Executive Director: Nisga'a language and culture presentation provided on Day 3 of Special Assembly. Have received funding for language revitalization, and compiling information. Language and culture department now located at Raven House in Gitlaxt'aamiks (formerly group home housing for NESS).

**SUBJECT /** Recognition of Gitlaxt'aamiks Village Government, Transportation Services Provided to Citizens.

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**Comments**

- + Delegating communities in bridging the gaps who face hardships, who possibly do not receive services in other communities.
- + Post-secondary that are online courses, how can we not have those ones that are not condensed. A 9-month course condensed into two weeks.

**Response**

- + Chair Programs & Services Committee: Gitlaxt'aamiks always accept our children and thank you on your input.
- + Acting Executive Director: Condensed courses, see discrepancies, should follow syllabus, and important to review the program. Most condensed courses are not a complete diploma program, most so as a pre-program. Our post-secondary funding is reviewed under the Nisga'a Village Governments.

**SUBJECT /** Student Sponsorship for Living Allowances Rates

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**Comments**

- + Nisga'a citizens who reside in Urban Locals attending post-secondary, face different dynamics associated with costs of living.

**Response**

- + Chair Programs and Services: Is for every Nisga'a Citizen and is policy driven, on "assisted" program, not meant to fully fund students living away from home.

**SUBJECT /** Trauma Associated with Addictions

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**Comments**

- + To hire professional trauma people (therapists, psychologists). There are inadequate resources for Nisga'a citizens within the Nass Valley.

**Response**

- + Acting Executive Director: Under review with NVHA - once beginning in addressing their trauma, anticipates in seeing a decrease.
- + Inquiring into a detox center to be brought into the Nass Valley (feasibility study). In discussions with First Nations Health Authority (FNHA - Terrace).
- + Manager Access to Justice: Utilize Simgigat and Sigidim-haanaḡ as a guide, prevention does work. Provided presentation at school with partnership with NVHA, on internet safety.
- + Chair Public Order Peace and Safety Committee (POPS)
- + Support of all community
- + Chief Executive Officer: Regarding to Offenders List - we cannot dictate where they live and to ensure process is followed through. The Nisga'a Village Governments may provide to alternate processes.

**Q:** Wilxo'osgum Hlbin Hlway  
Gingolx y Gitwinksilhkw wil w'itgwiy  
Ts'amiks wil jogay.

Thank you for this opportunity as it is very near and dear to me as I have lost so many to addiction and have so many loved ones still lost in their addictions. We keep on going back to getting rid of the drug dealers and the boot leggers. We need to get in and support those who are dealing with the addiction because until we find a way to heal our people they will continue to always find a way to get what they need to feed their addiction. So what is in place to make our mental health a priority as well as treatment centers? What is going to happen if it comes to FNHA cutting off coverage for treatment as they have cut off mental health coverage?

**Q:** I am a student in NVIT taking Indigenous Holistic Wellness and Addictions program (IHWA). A concern I have is that of the amount we receive for off reserve students, \$2000.00 helps but with inflation I'm sure some sort of increase in the living allowance would greatly help, FYI I know that some other nations provide \$3000.00, I'm hopeful that a change can be made to support all off reserve students with the cost of living in the city I presently am in Vancouver BC and it is a total different dynamic of living.

**Q:** I am from Gingolx and live in Gingolx. There are many questions about addictions, what are we doing? What are we going to do? As a nation and voting Nisga'a citizens we have the right to put a motion/mandate forward that gives the elected the authority to move forward with this as an urgent matter.

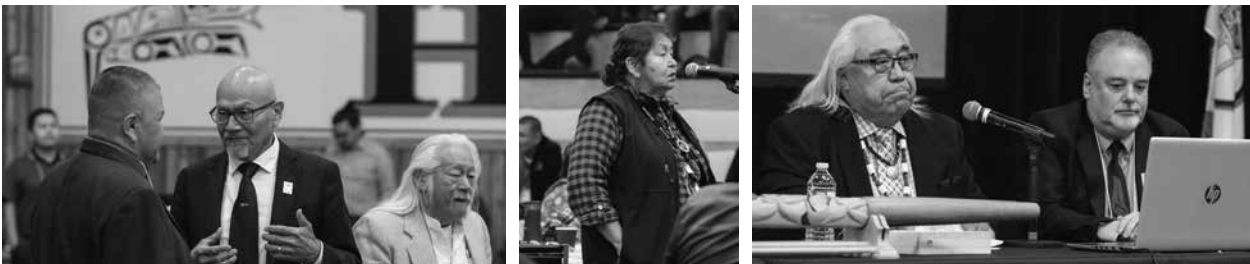
We have heard from many that have addressed this same concern and it's been asked at previous assemblies, how much longer are we going to wait for answers on what happens next when we can give the direction to make things happen today? We have many trained professionals that work away from home, it's time to bring them back to help their own people, to work alongside the knowledge keepers and the land based camps that are being implemented. These are few resources that can go into building the program for fighting addictions. Let's put a motion forward today to start getting our own Nisga'a treatment centre, that involves all of the land based programs that are already happening.

Respectfully, thank you for taking my question and suggestion.

# Question & Answer Session / Tuesday May 7

## Nisga'a Fisheries & Wildlife Committee

**Q&A SUMMARY /** In this session, the effects of the Gitanyow fishery on fish stocks was raised as a frequent issue of concern. Additional issues raised included the effects of mining on fisheries, sport fishing, fisheries and wildlife enforcement, halibut fishery monitoring and the Gilgolx fisheries enhancement program.



**SUBJECT /** Loss of big sockeye, Inland fishing damage to Chinook, Conservation

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**Comments**

- + Commercial fishermen never took those big fish, it wasn't until the FW's were introduced that they started being affected.
- + Since Inland fishing started the fish sizes and numbers have reduced.

**Response**

- + There has been no fish taken off the the wheels
- + In terms of size of sockeye, whitenose and bluenose fish are typically 5 year old fish.

**SUBJECT /** Alaska Fish & Wildlife / 8% private land – Gitanyow, Sockeye at Meziadinn

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**Comments**

- + In our treaty we are supposed to have first priority to fish.
- + 1994 we did a protest towards Alaska regarding them taking too much of our salmon that were coming back into the NASS and Skeena.
- + We have an inherent right.

**Response**

- + Yes I was involved with that Alaskan protest as well.
- + Ground fish commercial fisheries intercepting juvenile fish.

**SUBJECT /** Gitanyow Fishery, Charts from Presentation

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**Comments**

- + Suggestion to post the charts online so we can study them more.
- + All your work is defeated when the Gitanyow fish out the fish with all the eggs, it's embarrassing that we allow that to happen.
- + Should shut down the Gitanyow fishery, maybe ask them to come here to fish our fishery.
- + Gitanyow damaging our fishing stocks.

**Response**

**SUBJECT /** Fisheries, Mining up North

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**Comments**

- + Gitanyow – the federal and provincial governments have breached our treaty.
- + How is fisheries intertwined with the mining companies?
- + Who sits with the mining companies to make sure they are not damaging our fish stocks?

**Response**

**SUBJECT / Fisheries, Halibut fishing**

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**Comments**

- + If we don't look after the land the land doesn't look after us.
- + Encourage the Nisga'a fishers to continue to advise the monitors of their catches.
- + I was taught that if you take a halibut over 100lbs you are taking a female out of the river.
- + Halibut and prawn licences, who's administering these licences?

**Response**

**SUBJECT / Sport Fishery, Halibut, Crabs, Gitanyow**

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**Comments**

- + Why is no one questioning the sport fishers when they come in Kincolith?
- + Use your enforcement officers more often with the sport fishers
- + I measured fish on one boat and their halibut were all undersized.
- + Fishers come and fish anytime they want but we have to get a licence anywhere else we go, that needs to change and stop.
- + Why don't we have a plan in place to protect our food harvesting areas?
- + I would like our Nation declare an area where our own people can fish and hunt, 10 mile up should be protected for our people where no one else can go.

**Response**

**SUBJECT / Enhancement in Gingolx, NNFC Licences**

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**Comments**

- + Will the Nisga'a be taking over the enhancement program in Gingolx?
- + What kind of licences do the Nisga'a have? Can we convert them into halibut licences?

**Response**

**SUBJECT / Fisheries/Gitanyow**

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**Comments**

- + We still haven't hired cultural guardians to protect our fishing and hunting.
- + We have fisheries officers and wildlife officers that have no power. Give our officers power.

**Response**

- + The Nisga'a enforcement team is working on getting their credentials.

**Additional Responses from Committee**

- + Escapement goals are science based.
- + Another study we are involved in is on-route mortality
- + Escapement plan is under review right now, the NASS escapement
- + Sport fishery, hoping the Yukon chinook fishery is shut down for 7 years, DFO shut down the Skeena to protect the Skeena chinook but have not shut down the NASS for Sport fishing.
- + It cost a lot of money to run a hatchery, it's unfortunate DFO shut down Gingolx's hatchery

Question & Answer Session /  
Wednesday May 8

# Lands & Resources / Contracting & Economic Development

**Q&A SUMMARY /** In this session, forestry came up as a topic of concern a number of times, including logging in Gitlaxt'aamiks, and the impact of forestry on Nisga'a Lands, fish & wildlife. Other concerns were raised regarding highway 113 road conditions, fisheries at Meziadin, Hlgu lsgwit, conservation, and enforcement of the environmental act. Additional issues discussed involved educational opportunities at WWNI for both vocational and professional job training, as well as mental health supports for mine and LNG workers.



**SUBJECT /** Logging in Gitlaxt'aamiks

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**Comments**

- + Logging beside Gitlaxt'aamiks, who authorized that, and what did you get out of that?

**Response**

- + The Block was harvested by the Nisga'a Nation-owned corporation K'alii Aks Timber Corp (KATC)

**SUBJECT /** Poles for Welcoming Home Dinner

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**Comments**

- + Welcoming Home dinner for Ts'amiks, will you help us out with two poles for this dinner?

**Response**

- + Forestry Manager, Rodney Moore can follow up.

**SUBJECT /** Fisheries at Meziadin

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**Comments**

- + Fisheries at Meziadin, referring to the statement by the late James Gosnell "Lock Stock and Barrel" It would be prudent to provide information of the Lands Nisga'a own in fee simple.

**Response**

**SUBJECT /** Highway 113

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**Comments**

- + Concerned with the road condition between Laxgalts'ap and Gingolx
- + Classification of Highway 113- related to LNG project and equipment.
- + GIS Map provided to Nisga'a public along Highway 113 to show the hazard areas (predict natural disasters)

**Response**

**SUBJECT /** Hlgu Isgwit

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**Comments**

- + Story of Hlgu Isgwit is wrong. Need to connect to the family to tell the right story.

**Response**

- + Urged citizen to work with our staff to ensure messaging at site is appropriate.

**SUBJECT / Lands Use, Forestry Concerns**

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**Comments**

- + Suggestion:
  - a. Lands and Land Use, we should have a review board to move things forward.
  - b. Forestry, we should have a Nisga'a Business Alliance-better communications for logging opportunities regarding cut blocks.
  
- + Suggestion:
  - a. Job Fairs – Hire summer students for succession opportunities, to gain interest.
  - b. Environmental Monitoring – teaching our youth to understand the land.
  - c. Find ways to mitigate forestry wood waste instead of burning it.
  - d. Forestry concerns:
    - i. Impact to wildlife harvesting
    - ii. Impact to visual quality
    - iii. Impact to fish habitat
    - iv. Forestry development should be kept at a minimum to ensure the quality of biodiversity.
      - Work towards Net Zero waste.
      - Invest in agriculture, we have so much land.
      - Invest in WWN to bring trades course to the institution.
      - Invest in Marine habitat to bring back the population of black cod.
  
- + To the extent they are applicable to Lands and Land Management, the rest of the questions are points taken. I addressed the issue of the accusation of me telling the eagles adaawak at the Special Assembly and also had a brief word of support from the family's head chief.

**SUBJECT / LNG Ksi Lisims, Northern Transmission Line & Prince Rupert Gas Reports**

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**Comments**

- + LNG concerns, where are the location of the camps (where are the people/workers going to live)?

**Response**

**Q:** Laxgalts'ap wil jogay'

They are finally making an Environmental act but what about the laws to enforce the act? Why is it so important we develop our land for Industries? We have been here before industries and our people should have had better power long ago. What are the plans to help with the loss of our wildlife plants (ie berries, cedar trees and mushrooms) and the areas of development for the LNG and Transmission line? The area logged off near Aiyansh was a very good area for most mushroom pickers.

Our GIS technician needs to start making maps for areas for danger zones along the highway. The areas of natural erosion need to be mapped out for the highway and it will be easier to mitigate natural erosion that will create a man-made natural disaster (ie rockslide, mudslide and avalanche.) We only have one way out of the Valley. With GIS mapping we can predict natural disasters and prepare for them properly.  
Thank you.

**Q:** Hello, I currently reside in Prince George to attend the university. I am from Laxgalts'ap. What type of internships does the NLG have for Post secondary students in land and resources department? I am close to finishing my science degree. I am constantly asked if I am I contact with the nation to start projects that could potentially help with planning an conservation efforts.



**Q:** Ama sa as nisim, Yaga Txaa Lo'ophlway, Bert Azak. I come from the communities of Gitwinksihlkw (father) and Gitlaxdamix (mother). I currently live in Vancouver so I give thanks to the Squamish, Musquem and Tseil-Waututh nations for allowing me to work, live, and play on their traditional territory. I am responding to our Secretary Treasurer's comments of being a "Fully self-sustaining governing nation."

Education is important in building the nation. This is an opportunity to build on and negotiate the funding to WWNI in the programs that are currently being delivered. Back in the 90s a question was asked of the political body of what funding would look like for the educational future of the Nisga'a Nation and everyone saw Wilp Wil xo'oskhl Nisga'a Institution as potential Nisga'a Education Institution, growing to be a multi-level institution with many degree programs.

WWNI was the main institution that was discussed for the delivery of university programs along with Nisga'a culture and language, but education seems to have taken a back seat to vocational high-paying jobs. Future post-secondary education opportunities in industry are needed as well to be a part of the future in mining and for the Nisga'a People. This is what would build a better nation and education at WWNI was at the forefront of the discussions. Funding WWNI in offering associate degrees as well as degrees directly relating to future employment within the Nisga'a Lisims Government. Would be a great start. We deal with forestry in our government means there is a requirement for forestry tech personnel and forestry professionals, we deal with hunting on an ongoing basis, we need Nisga'a conservation officers, eventually we will have a Nisga'a Police Service much like the (Statlium) Stl'atl'imx Nation Police Service near Whistler BC. This may lead to Nisga'a Police Inspectors and Nisga'a Police Chiefs leading the nation's Nisga'a Laws in the future.

I am the coordinator for Indigenous Justice Studies at Native Education College, a criminology-based program. This program transfers to many of the institutions and universities within BC. I would love to see criminology offered at WWNI because the program offers a first-year introduction to the Canadian criminal justice system that can lead to employment in resource enforcement, policing, restorative justice, forestry and fisheries enforcement, and advancement in management in our government. I have seen so many consultants go into the Nisga'a Territory to manage the nation's business while the Nisga'a Professionals sat on the sideline with their expertise, and I want to commend the Nisga'a lawyer who spoke her mind earlier in the day. I would also like to see individual investment opportunities for Nisga'a Peoples. Collective is great but I would love to see some self-made Nisga'a millionaires. T'ooyaksiy Nisim.

**Q:** Aama Sa As Nisim, Jessica Azak hl was ii Noxs Galga Hl way Ksim Gisk'ansnaat niiy Wilps Galga wil witgwiy Gitlaxt'aamiks wil witgwiy ii wil Jogayt. Has Nisga'a Lisims government actually met with other LNG organizations? And I do not mean the boss and managers, the upper head workers. I mean the actual workers on the ground of the worksites? What is the impact of our people's mental health going to be?

We have people working in camp, then getting out instead of investing money towards their own land and home ownership, they need to de-escalate themselves from being at work. Money to live, work for money, money to cope.... what system is in place for the workers mental state? I've met and have friends and family within mining businesses and have lost friends on sites in Brucejack. Is the OH&S going to be a strong committee and ready for this? HR employees is one thing, but mental health and well being of our people is a major concern especially after covid, mental health has become a big focus for OH&S. Mental health workers and OH&S workers should be a push for all organizations because there are many workers that are silent. For reasons of what they've witnessed or experienced themselves. HR majority times on favorite of management and workers aren't heard.

I do hope this will be a different assessment addressed so our people can be ready for this project. I am 50/50 for it, I support benefits but I also do think as my elders and ancestors think.... When all money runs out and source that brought the money. Will we still be able to harvest from our land and our waters?

I look forward to the environmental impact, and do wish to see a OH&S and mental health assessment. This may give a higher perspective for our people to see and understand more of what to look forward to.

T'ooyaksiy nisim,  
Gabii Hliy

## Question & Answer Session / Thursday May 9

# Language & Culture Directorate / Council of Elders

**Q&A SUMMARY /** In this session, speakers expressed a range of concerns including the loss of language and the legacy of residential schools as well as ideas for language & culture revitalization. Citizens spoke of the importance of early language & culture learning among children and the responsibility of teaching the next generations. There were suggestions for more educational resources, including books and materials for children, as well as more language classes. Additionally, speakers raised questions about language vetting, copyright, and Nisga'a Ayuuk.



**SUBJECT / Silent Speakers, Residential School, Language & Culture Criteria**

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**Comments**

- + Was fluent before going to Indian Residential School, where I was put in the corner and called names for not knowing English.
- + Consider myself a silent speaker and attended WWNI before late husband got sick, and never completed fourth year.
- + Reflected on teachings from mother's teachings on importance of attending Wilp feasts and other wolf feasts. When you support their feasts, they will support ours.
- + Expressed interest in the Nisga'a Language & Culture Authority (aka vetting committee) and asked what the criteria is.
- + Do not say we're losing our language and culture, we are not. If you don't attend, then we are losing our language and culture. Encouraged everyone to attend your feasts and support other Wilps.
- + Commended the committee – doing a great job.

**Response**

- + We continue to be gentle with our silent speakers, our language and learning, and pay attention to the needs to each individual.
- + The criteria for a member of the authority: we have our interim members who are fluent speakers and knowledge keepers, so that is generally the criteria.
- + We're developing a Terms of Reference once we formalize the authority, and the criteria will consider silent speakers too.
- + We want to make sure we build a strong community including membership to the Language & Culture Authority, there's a learning process within that work.

**SUBJECT / Language in Schools, Nisga'a Lands & Churches**

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**Comments**

- + Thanked Sim'oogit K'eexkw for agreeing with what he said the day before (Sim'oogit K'eexkw thanked him during opening comments for his wisdom)
- + Asked how come our students are not using our language in the schools, on Nisga'a lands, and in the churches.
- + Acknowledged this assembly is our Nisga'a Nation's longhouse and must respect that, as we fell off the path.
- + Educate our generation, we have lost the pathway of our renaissance through this new technology of this era.
- + Part of yesterday – a negative mind set will never give a positive life and we need to correct that.
- + Encouraged each other to listen without judgement.

**Response**

- + Thanked Sim'oogit for his wisdom.
- + We continue to take concerns very seriously, especially in relation to our feasting system and on how we use our language.
- + We're supporting SDg2 with their land base learning project and infuse the language in their activities.

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**SUBJECT / Educational Resources for Schools, Teaching Language & Culture to Children**

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**Comments**

- + Thanked the panel for the report. It's good to see how we continue to strengthen our Nisga'a language and use of it.
- + Work for the pre-school and recommend making pre-school books for us to use and read to our children.
- + Also, resources we can share with our parents so the language will continue at home to strengthen the language. It will only work for our little ones, who are sponges where they absorb and understand right away.
- + Recommended to hire youth workers to job shadow (at Language & Culture Directorate) so our next generation will continue.
- + Thanked the language teachers Rose Robinson and Verna Williams for teaching at the pre-school.
- + Invited elders and parents to join at the pre-school to share stories and language.
- + Asked who to contact to authenticate Nisga'a language words they use at the school.

**Response**

- + Our culture is very vibrant, and good to see culture in motion. Appreciated seeing the kids yesterday. Learn the best through song and dance.
- + We need to catch up with the language component of our culture.
- + Our business cards at our table have a direct line 633-3014. Destinee will direct you on your inquiry for learning resources. We're revitalizing the language materials from the Bi & Bi.

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**SUBJECT / Proceedings from Chiefs & Matriarchs Meeting**

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**Comments**

- + Happy to hear of the Sayt wanhl Simgigat ganhl Sigdimhaanak' meeting. Received updates on the meeting and ask if there's proceedings to share and look forward to taking part in the work needs to be done.

**Response**

- + We did proceedings of Chiefs and Matriarch's meeting and will have that published distributed shortly after this assembly.

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**SUBJECT / Language Revitalization, Validating Nisga'a Words**

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**Comments**

- + Working hard to revive our language and utilizing my business and crafts to restore our culture. Need somewhere to validate (Nisga'a words used), and yet still end up with criticism on the clothing. Appreciate the panel.

**Response**

- + Can contact our office to get correct spelling or phrases, there are many already vetted.

**SUBJECT / Language Classes, Nisga'a Dictionary**

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**Comments**

- + Every year it's the same thing, we just keep discussing it. Liseexw means discussion, not gossip.
- + Feel very supported in our authority group and thanked George (Williams) for teaching all the Nisga'a language and pushing for us to learn the language.
- + Shared teaching opportunities at urban locals and thanked daughter for accompanying her.
- + At each language class, encourages the class not to laugh at each other while learning, but do still have fun at class.
- + Still working on dictionary, up to 5000 entries with linguistic terms and translation. Once done, will go on website.

**Response**

- + Si'aamhl wilin, we really appreciate that.

**SUBJECT / Use of Nisga'a Names/Words**

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**Comments**

- + When we talk of our Nisga'a names, that belong to our lands, word of caution. When we have our feasts, we notice strangers are coming in and writing. Now we're noticing our names are being called in different nations. Why is this happening? When Nisga'a address something, they do not agree with, they use the word k'amaliiskw, that means to me, we have to do a little better. We do not use the name to point out to hurt anyone.
- + Thanked the many people who do the work for the Nisga'a, who spend many hours away from families.

**Response**

- + Feasting system, we try to keep within the Wilp to encourage our practices within the culture. We do recognize there is a gap, and we're preparing to provide resources to fill gap and help chiefs and matriarchs and fit into their position and level of authority.

**SUBJECT / Language Learning**

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**Comments**

- + Thanks to the cultural presenters and hope to get a list through Q&A report.
- + Learn the language and speak fluently. There are so many documents we can learn from and recalled Haymaas wrote a book that was not accepted. And now, there's lots of books that of same nature with full support of publishing.
- + Sent a question yesterday and referred to WWNI.
- + Love to see textbooks offered to students and possibly receive micro credits.

**Response**

**SUBJECT / Online Language Learning**

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**Comments**

- + To keep our language thriving, wondering of possibility of Zoom language online. We're all busy with our lives and children. Suggestion to teach evenings and weekends. Also, for a chance for all elders to contribute to teach our youth.
- + Who do we speak to when language and culture laws are not being followed. What review board do we speak to?

**Response**

- + We support online learning, there are 382 followers with Peter McKay's Sim'algax 101. Encourage all to connect. Weekly zoom and pilot project and hope to expand and bring on fluent speakers to assist in that.

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**SUBJECT / Teaching of Culture**

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**Comments**

- + Culture dying out is not the fault of young people, it's your duty to teach your nephews and nieces.
- + Question to delegates: how many chiefs and matriarchs of your Wilp know your Wilp songs?
- + Late uncles who taught our Wilp. We were privileged in our Wilp, Jems and Joe, Emma telling our story of our Wilp, and teaching our songs.
- + If your chief and matriarch do not know your family story, when they should know, is important. How are you going to teach our culture if the chief and matriarch don't know?
- + Remember late Ben Gosnell, first time spoke in feast hall. Late uncle James tells Ben, when we spoke in public, he stood behind us, telling us what to say in the feast hall and stone moving feast, that was their duty. The uncles.
- + To the young lady asking about language and books – recalled his wife translated to Nisga'a, a Winnie the Pooh book, and would like to know where it is at WWNI.

**Response**

- + Appreciate your sharing of how you learned and family learning. It's a very valuable learning process. Describing when hlgu wilksihlkw just learning and uncle stood behind to guide with public speaking. It's an example of mentor apprentice.

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**SUBJECT / Copyright Protection for Stories**

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**Comments**

- + Want to know if the stories collection have copyrights, or can be reproduced by anyone. Read an adaawaḱ from a killerwhale house, mentioning Sga'wo and Wii Seeks. The story told how they started the killerwhale house and surprised to see where the social media came from – Gitsegukla. They're calling all the killerwhales home. Why are they using it? Asking if the info collected before pre-Treaty, can it be used by other nations?
- + Challenge the elected officials, if you can't speak language, go take the course at WWNI and pass it. Lead by example.

**Response**

- + It's a concern with our elders, we need to finalize and copyright as soon as we can. And move forward to put language out there on our website.

**SUBJECT / Teaching Language to Children**

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**Comments**

- + Encourage all to speak our language to the children, even if they don't understand or speak it. Eventually, they will understand.
- + Shared a story that happened during negotiations – when the Nisga'a were going to caucus, they didn't need to ask the federal negotiators to leave, as the Nisga'a team all spoke in our language.

**Response**

- + We appreciate your encouragement, it is our responsibility as moms and dads, aunts and uncles to bring language to our children in the homes

**SUBJECT / Ayuuk, Feast Protocol**

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**Comments**

- + Concern for when men attend feasts still wearing their hats. It's disrespectful to the Chief hosting.
- + Shared teachings from late uncle Reg Percival of how to behave, including, do not tell the host where you want to sit. That is disrespectful too. It's our uncles that teach us.
- + A young child does not get a chieftain name, it's usually the oldest sister or brother that gets the chief name, next in line.
- + When one *kaats'*, they do not get a chief or matriarch name. A lot of that is going on and it needs to stop. We should go back to our Nisga'a laws way before the white man came into our lives.

**Response**

- + We appreciate the reminders to us with our *ayuuk* and our responsibilities

Sim'oogit K'eexkw, Chair Council of Elders

- + Concurr with speaker to take action and to use ourselves as examples – if we want to see change in the community, we need to learn our language and culture.
- + Sharing with you this one value from our ancestors – si'galts'ap. The community builders. If you want someone to change their ways, show them how to do it with your life. That's the way the ancestors did things.
- + Our language doesn't get old. We should say "Speak sim'algax" versus "speak Nisga'a." Asked the Chieftains, Larry Derrick to define sim'algax. Sim = very or true, algax = words or speech. True speech or true words. Let us use Sim'algax when speak of our language and begin to live the truth.
- + Another one, Wahlin Sim'oogit Hleek went to first AFN meeting and spoke Sim'algax and dove right into English. He said, in Nisga'a – hold that feeling that you have when you speak sim'algax before you start speaking English, otherwise your words drop right in front of you. Thank you to Kathleen, for no longer being a silent speaker. When you were sharing about your grandmother, could just see her. Your whole heart was in there. Thank you for that.
- + See the difference in how sim'algax changes your thoughts. Encourage all of you to start speaking sim'algax.
- + Be trusting to yourself.
- + One more bit of advice, Wahlin Wii Sgagums, late Peter Clayton—\*\*in Sim'algax. Before you offer what you see the community needs a little more, set aside all of other things that could cause you to bring forward what you don't want to hear. All of that comes from listening to sim'algax.
- + Thank you for willingness and bravery continue to be brave, continue to be true and continue to be pure in your thoughts.

**Q:** It has come to my attention that the only people who do not get to have a say during the assembly are our village government councillors. Those chairing get to say their peace of mind, officers of NLG also. Our councillors are Nisga'a citizens as well. Let them speak too. Thank you.

**Q:** Good morning, My concern is how today, Friday May 10 2024, the chairs interrupt the people asking questions and rushing everyone. I suggest the assembly go a full day on the last day or have it every year. The assembly is for the people right? Let them speak. Thank you.

**Q:** Good afternoon. First of all, thank you to all the government officials for the update on all of the Nisga'a government responsibilities. I like the idea of having more time allotted to hear the nation's concerns.

I have a suggestion for future special assemblies. I attended the First Nations Justice Council Forum here in Vancouver and enjoyed the presentations that took place within the main auditorium. After the presentations, the question and answer period came after a nutrition break and was a breakout process following the presentations. The breakout rooms focused on specific topics discussed throughout the presentations and allowed for many questions to be asked without time limits and a certain time frame to hear from those in attendance. The breakout rooms were in four separate rooms which allowed people to choose the discussion that they wished to speak to and say what was in their hearts.

I believe this can be a process for future assemblies, possibly an opportunity to build on the expansion of meeting rooms in the Nisga'a auditoriums in the nation. T'ooyaksiy Niin.



Concluding Remarks /  
Friday May 10

# Reflections from the Executive Officers

**Brian Tait**, Executive Chairperson  
**Charles Morven**, Secretary-Treasurer  
**Herbert Morven**, Chairperson, Council of Elders  
**Eva Clayton**, President



**Brian Tait, Executive Chairperson**

- + Thank you to Gitwinksihlkw for your hospitality.
- + Same concerns re presentations, Q & A, had breakout sessions before.
- + There's a lot of room for improvement. That will come from us in leadership, including administration to improve on our delivery of services.
- + Our constitution is written to give a lot of weight to abide by rules of conduct and order as elected officials.
- + NTC days – we are not taking away rights of the people we serve;
- + Our parents teach us not to judge even in times of anger, poverty and grief. A lot of us are not chiefs and matriarchs; my Dad was elderly and he told me what the stone in your mouth means; In public speaking he told me that his mother was the stone in his mouth – all he had to do was look at my Mom.
- + Thank you to all the speakers who presented your concern with respect. We're supposed to be making decisions for the betterment of our people and we make sure the voices are heard at our tables.
- + Madam President gets your messages every day. She gets emails and phone calls and she addresses them.
- + You have to be strong, otherwise you're going to get terribly sick.
- + With our rules that guide us – I'm proud to be a part of that – they're not written in stone, your Chairperson has discretion to amend a rule.
- + I am grateful to hear all of your voices and see your faces; I learned a lot this week, but I'm learning every day.
- + We have to work together; not in silos.
- + I'm glad to hear our people reminding us of what our work is.
- + We can only get better – we've improved a lot as you heard from the reports, and we can do better.

**Charles Morven, Secretary-Treasurer**

- + Thank you to the Nisga'a Citizens for making the time to be here.
- + Thank you to Gitwinksihlkw for all your hard work and hospitality, especially the respect you've shown to the bereaved family over the week.
- + We have done a lot of things that were good; created opportunities to work towards financial independence. Those things are overshadowed because we spend a lot of time not getting along.
- + When Govt makes decisions it's the majority of Govt that rules at the end of the day. If we vote against something, but majority wants it – that's the law. We can't go outside of the decisions, when we do it's disrupts the progress of the Nation.
- + Gitwinksihlkw – the smallest community in the Nation has been underfunded since Treaty; they worked hard to get where they are now.
- + We respected our oath of office to keep the peace; as elected officials that's our job.
- + We put our Nisga'a citizens first and foremost. When we spend our time fighting with each other, we're putting ourselves first not the citizens.
- + That's one of the reasons I'm having a hard time making a decision to run again. I wanted to make sure that we achieve a lot of things in harmony but that didn't happen.
- + I'm not left with a decision to make whoever may come into this position to take the work a little farther.
- + Fighting takes a lot of our energy. We hear it also about what gets questioned on the floor.
- + I just wanted to share my reflections.
- + I just have to make sure that those who have to report to NLG do so in a timely manner.
- + Thanks to those who supported me during this term – I may return, I may not.

Thank you

### **Herbert Morven, Chairperson of Council of Elders**

- + First I would like to thank Gitwinksihlkw for their hospitality to allow us to do what we came here to do.
- + We didn't come here to harm your hearts; we came here to work together;.
- + I would also to like the Simgigat who ensure our words were not harsh when someone pointed fingers at us.
- + When we went away for soccer tournaments – our elders would sit us down and say be careful in your behaviour, as it's a reflection of your community. When we want respect we have to live it – thank you all for the way you behaved.
- + I also would like to thank our mothers for the resolution they brought forward.

### **Madam President, Eva Clayton**

- + Thank you for your attendance and participation in the Special Assembly.
- + I want to thank the host community, all the cooks and all the behind the scenes staff who made this assembly a success.
- + I want to acknowledge the youth for your participation;
- + Thanks to the Gitwinksihlkw Food share program – what an amazing program.
- + You heard the report from Telus re connectivity; Fishery Bay has coverage.
- + SD 92 – thank you so much for your presentation. We are working with current superintendent to bring up the level of standard for education for our children. It's important that as we move forward we have more parental involvement;
- + Thank you Gitwinksihlkw Elementary for performing for us.
- + We've had under the organization of our CEO – it was the first in-camera session for Nisga'a citizens.
- + Language & Culture will always be at the forefront of NLG responsibility; It's in the Constitution; thank you to L & C directorate for your presentation.
- + Thank you to WWNI.
- + Thank you to Nisga'a Growth Corporation for your presentation.

- + I want to speak about the commemoration ceremony we had last night re the Calder Case, it was an emotional time last night – it's important that we pay ourselves respect in everything we do.
- + Jeffrey Benson – and his family.
- + Many of our leaders sacrificed themselves and time with their families.
- + We have people making claims on our lands so we need to start printing our history.
- + Thank you to Nisga'a village governments; and Nisga'a local societies for your presentations.
- + It's important to note you as VG and UL are movers and shakers – who makes things happen for your people.
- + I want to thank Ms. Febril for providing us with that kind of information in terms of what you experienced.
- + What she experienced was lateral violence, Government is here for our people.
- + Nisga'a access to information act is under way.
- + It's important to hear how our elected representatives are doing.
- + It's about elections – as we move forward it's important to understand that you have ability to evaluate your elected.
- + Facebook – yes Facebook is not a medium where Nisga'a Govt must participate; I have myself been the subject of attacks on social media. It belongs to the people who attacked me. If you have any comments or concerns – don't make assumptions – come and see me – my door is open. You are saying you don't respect your government when you do that.
- + The question about the mines: I want to assure the citizens that we will visit the mines.
- + Boundaries of locals in urban areas are on the radar of executive.
- + Re the lawsuit – we cannot speak about the lawsuit, nor can I take your advice on how to move forward.
- + There's also a move by all entities to accountability and transparency.
- + Housing will always be a concern – it's a global concern – what we will be doing as a government – is how to incorporate the housing review.
- + Emergency management – I have been asking the villages to ensure their emergency plans are up to date; where are the muster points in an emergency.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS / Reflections from the Executive Officers

- + We are aware of the state of Gingolx highway and we are working with Treaty partners.
- + Thank you for the question about the audit.
- + I want to speak about the rules – there’s always room for improvement; we should have had a suggestion box about how to improve special assembly procedures.
- + Status cards: can VG administer the status cards? Yes – agreements can be set up – this was after our meeting with CIRNA.
- + You heard our CEO report that we had a teleconference with LCAC – 21 years it took to get that commissioner – it will hold Canada responsible for implementing treaties.
- + Ksi Lisims LNG - thank you to Bartek, Adam and their team.
- + In June there will be community consultations on jobs – I would really like to encourage your attendance at these meetings.
- + You will also hear information about training – we have been encouraging the villages to get this up and some have been doing this for some time.
- + Thank you to the Chairs for all the work you have done this past week.
- + I want to thank the CEO and staff for making sure the assembly was a success.

