



For immediate release January 4, 2023

www.fsin.ca

FSIN is proud to mark the first National Ribbon Skirt Day

Treaty Six Territory Saskatoon, SK - The Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations is proud to celebrate our nation's first National Ribbon Skirt Day.

“We applaud parliament’s decision to designate a National Ribbon Skirt Day from coast to coast. We salute the bravery and action of Isabella Kulak for standing up to racism and helping to create meaningful social change that will be felt by generations of First Nations people to come. Women hold an honoured place in First Nations culture and the ribbon skirts are a symbol of identity and pride for First Nations,” said FSIN Chief Bobby Cameron.

The designated day passed unanimously into law by Parliament last month. It was first introduced by Canadian Senator Mary Jane McCallum in March of 2021 after a young member of Cote First Nation was shamed at school by an educational assistant for wearing her handmade ribbon skirt to formal day at her Kamsack Elementary School. Isabella Kulak was ten years old and in grade five in December 2020 when she was told her ribbon skirt wasn’t appropriate. The ribbon skirt was made by her aunt and was a gift to Kulak. Her aunt says she had made ribbon skirts for her nieces as gifts.

FSIN believes the occurrence shed light on the lack of respect and education about First Nations culture and the continuation of racism and discrimination endured by another generation of First Nations people. Good Spirit School Division formally apologized to the family a few weeks after the incident.

FSIN Third Vice-Chief Bear attended the celebration for National Ribbon Skirt Day at Kamsack School with Isabella Kulak on January 4. The Chief Gabriel Cote Education Complex was filled with school children, First Nations and Metis leaders and representatives from the school division to acknowledge the apology and creation of National Ribbon Skirt Day.

“It is a historic day and a day to celebrate courage and reliance. Kulak’s story is not uncommon, and we applaud the positive change Kulak and her family were able to spark. We encourage

schools and communities across the nation to hold their own events on January 4 to mark National Ribbon Skirt Day now and for years to come,” said Cameron.

Ribbon skirts are a centuries-old symbol of identity, adaptation, and survival for Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people and represents a direct connection to Mother Earth. The skirts can be worn formally to ceremonies and are also for everyday wear among First Nations and Metis people.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau issued a statement about National Ribbon Skirt Day.

“This National Ribbon Skirt Day, I invite everyone to learn from Indigenous Peoples about their cultures and histories – from languages to traditional ceremonies and regalia to ancestral ties to the land. Together, let us amplify Indigenous voices and stand up against racism and discrimination to build a better society for everyone.”

PMO Media Relations: media@pmo-cpm.gc.ca
This document is also available at <https://pm.gc.ca>

About FSIN

The Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations represents 74 First Nations in Saskatchewan. The Federation is committed to honouring the spirit and intent of the Treaties, as well as the promotion, protection and implementation of the Treaty promises that were made more than a century ago.

-30-

For more information or to coordinate interviews please contact:

Lisa Risom
Director of Communications
Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations
#10-134 Kahkewistahaw Crescent
Treaty Six Territory
Saskatoon, SK S7R 0M9
Cell: 306-987-0505 | FSIN Office: 306-914-6815
communications@fsin.com