



UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS

OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

News Release

March 8, 2026

UBCIC Honours Chief Councillor Linda Innes as First Female Vice-President and Celebrates First Nations Women Leadership on International Women's Day

(xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətəł (Tseil Waututh)/ Vancouver, B.C. – March 8, 2026) In February 2026, the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) elected Chief Councillor Linda Innes, Gitxaala Nation, as Vice-President through acclamation, becoming the first female Vice-President of UBCIC since the Chiefs created the organization in 1969. Chief Councillor Innes joins UBCIC Secretary-Treasurer Chief Marilyn Slett and UBCIC President Grand Chief Stewart Phillip on the first majority-female UBCIC Executive. On International Women's Day, UBCIC invites elected officials and the public to join us in celebrating the accomplishments of First Nations women and calls for action to address gender inequity and violence that continue to target women.

Chief Councillor Linda Innes, UBCIC Vice-President, stated “I am immensely honoured to be the first female UBCIC Vice-President. UBCIC has been organized by women from the beginning, with the Indian Homemakers Association of B.C. opposing Canada's assimilationist White Paper in 1969 and President Dr. Rose Charlie working to bring chiefs together in B.C. for strategizing, at what would become the first meeting of the UBCIC, in Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc territory. Women are at the front lines of our land defense and in the background working to advance our priorities across all areas. UBCIC is well known for our title and rights work and our unwavering advocacy for First Nations women, including addressing the disproportionate and devastating impacts of gender-based violence, exacerbated by the intersecting impacts of colonialism. We have much work ahead of us, and I am truly looking forward to it.”

“I am so pleased to welcome Chief Councillor Innes to the UBCIC Executive and look forward to our time working together to uphold and advance the rights of First Nations women. I am grateful to have had the immense privilege of working alongside exceptional women leaders and advocates, among them members of the Indian Act Sex Discrimination Working Group,” stated Chief Marilyn Slett, UBCIC Secretary-Treasurer. “Alongside these incredible legal experts, human rights advocates and First Nations titleholders, we have successfully brought [international attention](#) to Canada's continued sex and race-based discrimination against First Nations women under the

Kamloops Office
209 - 345 Chief Alex Thomas Way
Kamloops, BC, V2H-1H1
Phone: 250-828-9746
Fax: 250-828-0319

Vancouver Office
Suite 401 - 312 Main Street
Vancouver, BC, V6A-2T2
Phone: 604-684-0231 or toll free: 800-793-9701
Fax: 604-684-5726

www.ubcic.bc.ca



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Indian Act. First Nations women are at the forefront of protecting our children and grandchildren, upholding our laws, and disrupting Canada’s ongoing forced assimilation.”

Katisha Paul, UBCIC Women’s Representative, stated “On International Women’s Day, I hold up my hands to the powerful First Nations women who have fought for our rights and our very existence, and to the First Nations women I have the privilege of standing next to, with a special acknowledgement to Chief Councillor Linda Innes as the first female Vice-President of UBCIC. Sadly, we are in the middle of an absolute crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, Two-Spirit, Transgender, and Gender-Diverse+ peoples. Families and survivors, and Indigenous women leaders are driving these efforts, and we need government and the public to implement the 231 [Calls for Justice](#) that came out of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. UBCIC remains concerned with the lack of prioritization across governments and within recent budgets, and with the slow implementation of the Calls for Justice. I am grateful to be part of an organization led by First Nations women, and I know we have a lot of work to do.”

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, UBCIC President, concluded, “I am so proud to stand beside First Nations women leaders who are unwavering in their pursuit of justice, equity and rights recognition. UBCIC originated thanks to the efforts of the Indian Homemakers Association and the First Nations women across the province who were ardent advocates in a heavily male-dominated political sphere. In my 27 years as President of UBCIC, this is the first time that there are more women around the table than men – it fills me with hope for the future of the organization and our people.”

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To learn more about gender-based violence and the MMIWG2S+ crisis see:

- The National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls – ([Canada website on National Inquiry](#))
- Dr. Stanton’s Independent Systemic Review: The British Columbia Legal System’s Treatment of Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence ([Download PDF](#))
- Red Women Rising: Indigenous Women Survivors in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside ([download PDF](#))

Media inquiries:

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, UBCIC President, 250-490-5314

Kamloops Office

209 - 345 Chief Alex Thomas Way
Kamloops, BC, V2H-1H1
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Fax: 604-684-5726



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Chief Councillor Linda Innes, UBCIC Vice-President, 604-802-5172
Chief Marilyn Slett, UBCIC Secretary-Treasurer, 250-957-7721
Katisha Paul, UBCIC Women's Representative, 236-986-9080

UBCIC is an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

For more information, please visit www.ubcic.bc.ca

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