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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

KELOWNA ACCORD IMPLEMENTATION ACT GRANTED ROYAL ASSENT

Ottawa, ON (June 18, 2008) – Métis National Council President Clément Chartier today thanked parliamentarians for their support of the Kelowna Accord, and welcomed the Royal Assent of an act calling for its implementation.

The Kelowna Accord Implementation Act, formerly known as Bill C-292, requires the Federal Government to implement the terms of the Accord, and make annual reports to Parliament on progress made fulfilling its obligations under the agreement. Governor General Michaëlle Jean granted the act Royal Assent today in Ottawa.

“I am very pleased with Parliament’s support of the Kelowna Accord, and hope the current government will clearly hear this ringing endorsement of the Accords goals,” said President Chartier.

The Accord was reached in November 2005 at the First Ministers Meeting on Aboriginal Affairs in Kelowna, BC. It was the culmination of over 14 months of collaborative work between Federal, Provincial and Aboriginal governments. The Kelowna Accord made specific commitments to Métis in the areas of education, housing, health care, economic development and recognized the special relationship between the Métis Nation and the Crown.

Originating as a private members bill, the Kelowna Accord Implementation Act cannot compel the Federal Government to spend public funds, but President Chartier is optimistic the current government will work to implement the Accord’s many worthy objectives.

“The Federal Interlocutor for Métis, Minister Chuck Strahl, has already agreed to start a dialogue on key Métis Nation issues. We can, hopefully, come together in a distinction-based approach which ensures the unique needs of the Métis people are properly addressed,” said Chartier.

President Chartier also thanked the Right Honourable Paul Martin for authoring and guiding the act through parliament. “Having a private members bill receive royal assent is a rare accomplishment. It’s a testament to Mr. Martin’s commitment to work with the Métis Nation towards a better life for all Canadians.”

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The MNC represents the Métis Nation in Canada at the national and international level. The Métis Nation’s homeland includes the 3 Prairie provinces and extends into Ontario, British Columbia, the Northwest Territories and the northern United States. There are approximately 350,000 – 400,000 Métis Nation citizens in Canada, roughly a quarter of all Aboriginal peoples in the country.