

## Trade Arrangement With Chinese Eyed By Aboriginal Canadians

AHN Staff Toronto, Ottawa (AHN) - Canadian Indians wary of dealing with the white Canadians are looking at Chinese investors as to help them develop their natural resources. A group of over 100 Canadian native leaders are slated to arrive in China by mid November to search for potential business partners whom they will grant access to their timber, coal and other mineral deposits. They belong to the China-Canada Aboriginal Business Opportunity, the largest international native initiative in Ottawa's history, said Calvin Helin, a native lawyer and businessman who is helping organize the trip. Helin explained to the Globe and Mail, "The opportunity to bring investments into Canada on a scale like this is enormous for the whole nation... The problem in the aboriginal community historically is that we have resources and we have assets but we don't have any capital or expertise to develop them." Canadian investors often find it difficult to deal with the aborigines because of their premium on environmental protection or prolonged consultations which stands in the way of a faster pace of development. By dealing directly with Chinese investors, the aborigines hope to attract investments in their ancestral lands on their terms. Helin added, quoted by the Globe and Mail, "Dealing directly with the first nations essentially eliminates uncertainty... The Chinese are interested because it gives direct access to key players and their resources." Among the trade arrangements eyed by the Canadian Indians are coal and timber deals in northern British Columbia, a potash contract in Saskatchewan, forest product agreements at Manitoba and diamond deals at the territories. Previously, members of first nations have complained a 2003 accord failed to deliver key reforms in health care among Canadian aborigines.

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