**Land Acknowledgement**

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I am very glad to be with all of you in this location surrounded by the ‘Dish With One Spoon Territory’. According to Ryerson University’s land acknowledgement, the ‘Dish With One Spoon’ is a treaty between the Anishinaabe, Mississauga and Haudenosaunee peoples that bound them to share the territory and protect the land.

I was born in China and came to Canada in 1984 after studying and teaching in Inner Mongolia, where I lived in close contacts with Mongolian friends for many years and grew to love Mongolian culture and customs.

I first developed an interest in Indigenous peoples upon arriving in Vancouver to start my Master’s degree in Communications at Simon Fraser University located on the traditional Coast Salish territories. Two years later, I began my doctorate in Sociology at the University of British Columbia located on the traditional territories of the Musqueam people, and had an opportunity to satisfy my interest in Indigenous cultures. The famous Museum of Anthropology at UBC is right next door to Sociology. I spent several hours a week in the Museum reading, preparing my academic work and learning about cultures and history of west coast peoples.

My interest in west coast peoples led me to the honour of attending a Potlatch in a beautiful Longhouse on the Squamish land and joining a Meares Island protest against logging practices off the coast of Tofino in the traditional Haida territory in the early 1990s. During my participation in the project on Collaborative Research on Cooperatives and Cultural Issues in Development in the Lijiang Minority Areas, Yunnan Province, China and the Lytton First Nation traditional territory at the confluence of Fraser and Thompson Rivers also in the early 1990s, I had the honour to experience a sweat lodge ceremony at the site of the village of Kumsheen.

In 1993, I began to teach international development and sociology at the University of Victoria located on the Lekwungen-speaking peoples’ traditional territory, to which the Songhees and Esquimalt nations continue their historical relationship to this day. Then, I left Canada in 1998 to work for the United Nations Development Fund for Women as its Northeast Asia Gender Advisor based in Beijing, covering China, Mongolia and North Korea.

Upon coming back to Canada in 2010, I made a home in North Bay, Ontario and started teaching social welfare in Canada at Nipissing University and soon found myself drawn towards Indigenous people and culture in the traditional territories of Nipissing First Nation and Anishinabek Nation protected by the Robinson-Huron Treaty signed in 1850. As I am developing a collaborative relationship with the Anishinabek Nation, I am excited to learn, through a SSHRC-funded project in partnership with the Union of Ontario Indians and the North Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre, that Indigenous peoples have made remarkable progress in overcoming colonial oppressions and expanding their self-governing efforts at establishing Indigenous child welfare, education and other areas. I am pleased to join you as settlers in making efforts to work together with the First Peoples on building a more socially equitable and environmentally sustainable society on Turtle Island.