

PRESS RELEASE: For immediate release

Indigenous Representatives Denounce Canada's Obstructionist Position at COP10

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Nagoya, Japan

In Nagoya, Japan, Canada has come under severe criticism in the current Convention on Biodiversity negotiations on an international regime on Access and Benefit Sharing from the use of genetic resources. Canada stood alone in its shameful opposition to preambular text "Taking into account the significance of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples" (UNDRIP) in the proposed ABS Protocol. Reminding parties that it did not endorse the UNDRIP, Canada insisted that the reference to the UNDRIP be both bracketed and deleted. Indigenous Peoples insist the ABS Protocol must take into account the significance of the UNDRIP.

Armand MacKenzie, Executive-Director of the Innu Council of Nitassinan (Innu Nation), stated that, "You cannot claim to be a champion of human rights on the one hand and at the same time oppose the most widely accepted international charter in relation to Indigenous Peoples' rights. With such strong arm tactics undermining Indigenous Peoples' human rights, it is no wonder Canada lost their bid for a seat on the UN Security Council."

"Canada has contradicted its speech from the throne when it stated it would take steps to endorse the UNDRIP. The apology from the Prime Minister of Canada for the Residential School system was a positive move towards reconciliation between Canada and Aboriginal Peoples. This obstructionist position is an enormous step backwards, is unacceptable and undermines all Indigenous Peoples' collective rights" states Ellen Gabriel, president of Quebec Native Women.

"The Canadian government has been undermining the human rights of the world's Indigenous Peoples since 2006, both at home and internationally", emphasized Paul Joffe, lawyer representing the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee). "Such conduct severely tarnishes Canada's reputation globally and puts in serious doubt Canada's stated intention to endorse the UNDRIP in good faith."

As the holders and owners of much of the world's biodiversity and traditional knowledge, Indigenous Peoples have much at stake in these international negotiations.

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Contact: Aurélie Arnaud, Communication Officer Quebec Native Women's Association, tel. 1-450-632-0088 ext 227, cell: 1-514-239-0088