



PUBLIC STATEMENT

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Legislation on the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples: Coalition urges Canada to stand by commitment to implement UN Declaration

The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* is a consensus international human rights instrument elaborating standards for the survival, dignity, security and well-being of Indigenous peoples of the world. Today, MP Romeo Saganash's private members bill on implementation of the *UN Declaration*, Bill C-262, will begin debate at second reading in Parliament.

Our Nations and organizations have been deeply involved in the development, promotion and implementation of the *UN Declaration*. As Grand Chief Abel Bosum of the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee (northern Quebec) underlines, "We are firmly convinced of the *Declaration's* vital importance for achieving justice, reconciliation, healing and peace."

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has embraced the *UN Declaration* as "the framework" to redress the horrific human rights violations that have been inflicted on Indigenous peoples throughout Canada's history. The 94 Calls to Action in the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission include the call for all levels of government—federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal—to undertake measures to implement the *UN Declaration*. We urge all levels of government in Canada to implement the *Declaration*.

Key elements of Bill C-262 include: repudiation of colonialism and doctrines of superiority; affirmation that the standards set out in the *UN Declaration* have application in Canadian law; and review and reform of federal legislation to ensure consistency with the minimum standards set out in the *UN Declaration*. In addition, the Bill requires that a national action plan for implementation be developed in partnership with Indigenous peoples.

Our organizations and governments acknowledge that full implementation of the *Declaration* will require long-term commitment and collaboration. As BC Regional Chief Terry Teegee emphasizes, "We urgently need the *Declaration* and a legislative framework precisely because so many of the laws and policies affecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples in Canada are profoundly unjust and rest on foundations of colonialism and racial discrimination." As the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has reminded Canadians, "reconciliation is going to take hard work."



At the United Nations, the *UN Declaration* was developed and negotiated with Indigenous peoples and States for more than two decades. Another decade has passed since the negotiations concluded. It is time for a legislative framework to take the *Declaration* to the crucial next stage of full and effective implementation in Canada. Bill C-262 is principled human rights legislation that will accomplish this vital objective and merits the support of all Parliamentarians.

The Coalition for the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Statement endorsed by:

Amnesty International Canada; Assembly of First Nations; Assemblée des Premières Nations Québec-Labrador and Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador; British Columbia Assembly of First Nations; Canadian Friends Service Committee (Quakers); Confederacy of Treaty 6; First Nations Summit; Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government; Indigenous World Association; KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives; Métis Nation; Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs

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