



ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS BULLETIN ASSEMBLÉE DES PREMIÈRES NATIONS

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National Chief Welcomes Canada's Endorsement of UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: Respect, Partnership and Reconciliation will Guide Work to Improve the situation of First Nation Peoples and Build a Stronger Canada

OTTAWA, ON: Assembly of First Nations National Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo stated that Canada's endorsement of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is a positive development that sets the stage for a new approach to building stronger First Nations and a stronger Canada.

"Today marks an important shift in our relationship and now the real work begins," National Chief Atleo said. "Now is our time to work together towards a new era of fairness and justice for First Nations and a stronger Canada for all Canadians, guided by the Declaration's core principles of respect, partnership and reconciliation. First Nations have worked long and hard to set out constructive and effective approaches and to abandon the colonial relationship embodied in the Indian Act that has held back our people and this country. We are ready to move now – today – on our key priorities including education."

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was adopted by the UN General Assembly on September 13, 2007. Canada committed to endorsing the UN Declaration in the 2010 Speech from the Throne. The UNDRIP has the distinction of being the only Declaration within the United Nations which was drafted with the rights-holders, themselves, the Indigenous Peoples of the world.

"Today is important, not as the culmination of our efforts, but as the beginning of a new approach and a new agenda," the National Chief stated. "Canada's apology for the residential schools in 2008 was a critical moment to acknowledge the pain of the past. Endorsing the Declaration is the opportunity to look forward and re-set the relationship between First Nations and the Crown so it is consistent with the Treaties and other agreements with First Nations upon which this country was founded. In endorsing the UN Declaration, Canada is committing to work with us as a true partner to achieve reconciliation as instructed by the courts in Canada.

I congratulate Canada in taking another step towards the promotion and protection of human and fundamental freedoms for all."

The Assembly of First Nations is the national organization representing First Nations in Canada.

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