



**FEMMES AUTOCHTONES DU QUÉBEC INC.**  
**QUEBEC NATIVE WOMEN INC.**

**PRESS RELEASE - “Indian” Status Issue: QNW Demands Amendments to Bill C-3: Aboriginal Women Deserve Better**

**Kahnawake, QC** (June 3, 2010): Quebec Native Women calls upon the Government of Canada to amend Bill C-3, the “Gender Equity Act”, in accordance with the recommendations advocated by Aboriginal organizations and their communities. The Federal Government has refused the amendments proposed by Aboriginal peoples to Bill C-3. In doing so, the [Conservative] Federal Government has not upheld its obligations under section 35 of Canada’s *Constitution Act, 1982* to uphold the honour of the Crown in its dealings with Aboriginal peoples’ right.

Since its creation in 1876, the *Indian Act* has caused distress for Aboriginal peoples and has adversely affected Aboriginal peoples’ right. The *Indian Act* continues to maliciously attack the family unit, destroy cultural integrity and discriminate against Aboriginal women and their children.

The *Indian Act* continues to deny Aboriginal women the right to live in their home communities where they were born and raised. Aboriginal women are also denied the right to be buried in their communities.

QNW questions Canada’s lack of procedural and substantive consultations concerning Bill C -3. The Government of Canada has a duty to consult and accommodate Aboriginal peoples when legislation adversely affects Aboriginal rights. Canada has ignored its obligations under section 35 of Canada’s *Constitution Act, 1982* which protects Aboriginal and treaty rights.

Bill C-3 will not end gender discrimination. According to the proposed amendments, grandchildren of Aboriginal men will have full *Indian status* meanwhile the grandchildren of Aboriginal women will only have partial *Indian status*. Not only is this discriminatory but it is a blatant disrespect of Aboriginal peoples’ dignity that further undermines Aboriginal peoples’ right to self-determination.

Furthermore, Bill C-3 requires that community membership codes be in accord with the policy criteria set out by the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. INAC’s requisite approval of membership codes means that discrimination will continue because federally recognized *Indian Status* does not automatically confer a right to community residency.

In the spirit of reconciliation, a just society and an end to the discrimination towards Aboriginal women and their families, QNW calls upon Canada to incorporate legislative amendments to Bill C-3 that accommodate the recommendations advocated by Aboriginal organizations and Aboriginal communities. Furthermore in terms of human rights, QNW advocates that Canada fully endorse the United Nations’ Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, without qualifications. The UNDRIP is a normative, principled international human rights instrument that reaffirms Indigenous peoples’ rights and dignity.

Quebec Native Women Inc., is a grass roots Aboriginal women organization founded in 1974, and is a non-profit organization that advocates to put an end to the sexual discrimination caused by the *Indian Act*. QNW has special consultative status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

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