



FEMMES AUTOCHTONES DU QUÉBEC INC.
QUEBEC NATIVE WOMEN INC.

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Quebec Native Women regrets the continued stance of the Canadian government against indigenous rights at the OAS, and hails the Canadian Parliament motion to endorse the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Kahnawake, April 11, 2008 - Quebec Native Women wholeheartedly welcomes the Canadian Parliament motion on April 8, to endorse the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The Declaration was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on September 13, 2007 by a great majority of States. The Canadian Government has nevertheless refused to sign this important human right instrument, according to justifications that were not based upon any valid legal ground. QNW has fervently advocated in favor of the adoption of the Declaration by organizing, among other things, a peaceful march on September 7, 2007, bringing together diverse Indigenous organizations and human rights groups across Canada.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is a remarkable document that reflects the culmination of the work accomplished in the international sphere by both Indigenous groups and Nation states working cooperatively and respectfully together. Being more moral than legal in nature, the Declaration aspires to reinforce and set standards for the human rights of Indigenous peoples around the World, who are still subject to discriminations and human rights abuses despite the existing human rights frameworks.

The Declaration states that Indigenous peoples have the right to the full enjoyment, as a collective or as individuals, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms as recognized in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights law. Indigenous peoples and individuals are free and equal to all other peoples and individuals and have the right to be free from any kind of discrimination, in the exercise of their rights, in particular that based on their indigenous origin or identity. Indigenous peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development. Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinct political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions, while retaining their rights to participate fully, if they so choose, in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the State.

QNW would like to thank the members of Parliament who voted in favor of Canada's endorsement of the Declaration as it will promote and establish guidelines that frame a more equitable and honorable relationship between Indigenous peoples and the Canadian Government.

It is unfortunate that the Government of Canada continues in its efforts to deny equitable access of Indigenous peoples to human rights as demonstrated in its statement to the OAS refusing to participate in the creation of their human rights document for Indigenous peoples. As demonstrated April 8th, 2008 by Canada's Parliament, the Government of Canada continues to disregard the will of its own people with respect to Canadian values and principles regarding the respect and the promotion of human rights.

Our organization:

Founded in 1974, Quebec Native Women Inc. (QNW), a non-profit organization, represents women from the First Nations in Quebec and Aboriginal women living in urban areas. QNW advocates on behalf of the Rights of Aboriginal women and their families.

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