



FEMMES AUTOCHTONES DU QUÉBEC INC.
QUEBEC NATIVE WOMEN INC.

March 12, 2010

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper
Prime Minister of Canada
Ottawa, Ontario

Dear Prime Minister Harper:

Quebec Native Women is pleased with your announcement in the Speech from the Throne that the Government of Canada will be taking steps to endorse the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

The UNDRIP is the most comprehensive human rights instrument respecting the collective and individual rights of Indigenous peoples and is being implemented by various treaty monitoring bodies, specialized agencies and human rights mechanisms of the United Nations. It is a Declaration with legal implications and is not simply an aspirational document.

As numerous Supreme Court of Canada decisions have stated, the Government of Canada has a constitutional obligation to consult Aboriginal peoples on a wide range of matters affecting their rights. Hence, it is imperative that the Government of Canada inform Indigenous peoples on its consultation plan regarding its endorsement of the UNDRIP, so that it may have the full and effective support of Indigenous peoples. Canada's approach to consultations must be timely, genuine, inclusive and accommodate Indigenous peoples' concerns, and therefore must not be restricted solely to national Aboriginal organizations

International human rights instruments affirm crucial standards for the respect, promotion and fulfillment of human rights. The UNDRIP is no exception and must consequently not be limited to what exists in State constitutions or laws. To do so would jeopardize Indigenous peoples' human rights and could serve to legitimize any existing injustices and discrimination in domestic situations. It would set a dangerous international precedent that would be inconsistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. No such limitation has been imposed by any previous government in Canada, in regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the two international human rights Covenants.

QNW respectfully awaits your response on this important issue and we look forward to working with your Government on the endorsement of the UNDRIP.

Skén:nen - In peace

Ellen Gabriel
President