



FEMMES AUTOCHTONES DU QUÉBEC INC.  
QUEBEC NATIVE WOMEN INC.

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## Quebec Native Women congratulates the Parti Québécois for its support to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Spokesperson : Ellen Gabriel, President of Quebec Native Women

Quebec Native Women welcomes the decision by Quebec's Official Opposition party, the Parti Québécois, to support the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and joins their call for the National Assembly of Quebec to fully endorse the *Declaration*.

The *Declaration* is the first Human Rights instrument to acknowledge collective as well as individual rights. It provides a principled and normative framework for partnership and reconciliation between States and Indigenous Peoples. Its adoption by more than 144 States was heralded around the world by Indigenous Peoples, States, human rights organizations and the United Nations. Its provisions provide much needed guidance to governments, State institutions and society as a whole on how human rights law and obligation can be best understood and applied to the distinct circumstances and the urgent needs of Indigenous Peoples in Quebec and around the world.

The *Declaration* is also a fundamental instrument for Aboriginal women. It is the first international instrument to recognize the double discrimination Aboriginal women too often face, for being a woman and being Aboriginal. The *Declaration* requests States to take that double discrimination into account and to ensure that Aboriginal women and children are protected from all sorts of violence and discrimination, as mentioned in articles 22 and 23 of the *Declaration*. This would also impact any Youth Protection programs the State is putting in place which in Canada have caused too many children to be placed outside their families and communities, depriving them of their culture.

The *Declaration* is a living instrument that is broadly supported and has universal application. It provides a crucial context and framework towards ensuring justice, as well as the dignity, security and well-being of Indigenous Peoples worldwide.

It is therefore essential that all levels of government acknowledge and endorse the *Declaration* without qualifications or conditions. We are concerned, however, as to what is intended by the Federal Government's statement that it will take steps to endorse the *Declaration* "in a manner fully consistent with Canada's Constitution and laws".

To limit UN declarations in this way would defeat the purpose of having international standards, which are meant to inspire and guide improved protection for human rights, not simply reinforce the status quo. To require the provisions of the *Declaration* to be interpreted in accordance with the constitution and laws of each state could serve to legitimize any existing injustices and discrimination in domestic situations. It would also undermine the principle of “universality” that applies to all human rights.

We are then pleased by the decision of the Parti Quebecois to fully support the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and we request that the National Assembly of Quebec endorse the *Declaration* without qualifications or conditions in an act of true reconciliation with the Aboriginal Nations living on the Quebec territory as well as with the 370 millions of Aboriginal peoples in the world.

Ellen Gabriel  
President, Quebec Native Women

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For more information, please contact:  
Aurelie Arnaud  
Communications officer  
Quebec Native Women  
Tel.: 450-632-0088. #227  
Cell: 514-239-0088