

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

This is a day to celebrate!

13 September 2007

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples ADOPTED

Shame on CANADA, the US, AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND

The UNITED NATIONS have overwhelmingly approved the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples after over a decade of negotiations, and a year of Canada trying to stall the final vote on in the General Assembly. Canada could not break the international consensus that indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination, land rights, and collective human rights.

On this day of historic importance, that can be compared to December 10, 1948 when the United Nations approved the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, 158 nations participated in the vote in the presence of even more indigenous nations and 143 nations voted in favor - 11 abstained and 4 voted against it, namely: Canada, the US, Australia and New Zealand. Today these 4 nations and especially Canada stand alone against the overwhelming agreement of the rest of the world and indigenous nations that indigenous rights have to be recognized and implemented.

The whole of Latin America, Asia, Africa and Europe stands behind the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Canada HAS NO RIGHT TO call itself a leader on indigenous issues and a champion on human rights, when it is now clear and on the record of the United Nations that they lag behind all these other 143 nations that have voted in favor of indigenous rights! The record of the negotiations of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples will show that Canada never was a leader on indigenous issues, that through the over 14 years of negotiations of this document - Canada tried to undermine indigenous rights. Canada along with Russia (who now did not vote against the declaration) were the only two members of the UN Human Rights COUNCIL to vote against the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2006.

The text as approved by the UN Human Rights Council will remain an important instrument, since it enshrines the consensus of negotiations amongst indigenous nations and nation states. Since then Canada has tried to proceduarly side-track a vote in the UN General Assembly on the Declaration. Fears were raised amongst other nations about the possible implications of adopting this important instrument and compromise provisions were introduced into the text. Canada could not break the international support for indigenous rights and the world has spoken loud and clear:

WE NOW HAVE A UN DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES that recognizes the universal human and indigenous rights of indigenous peoples, first and foremost the right to self-determination.

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