

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Background:

On September 13, 2007 the UN General Assembly adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples after more than twenty years of discussion between nation-states and Indigenous Peoples.

With an overwhelming majority of 143 votes in favour, only 4 negative votes cast (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, United States) and 11 abstentions, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples on September 13, 2007.

The Declaration guarantees Indigenous Peoples:

- the right to **self-determination**
- the right to maintain their distinct **political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions**
- the right to a **nationality**
- the right to **security** of person
- the collective right to live in freedom, peace and security as distinct peoples and not to be subjected to any act of **genocide** or any other act of violence, including the forcible removing of children of the group to another group
- the right not to be subjected to **forced assimilation** or destruction of their culture
- the right to belong to an indigenous community or **nation**
- the right not to be forcibly removed from their **lands**
- the right to practise and revitalize their **cultural traditions** and customs
- the right to establish and control their **educational systems**
- the right to establish their own **media** in their own languages

"The Declaration does not represent solely the viewpoint of the United Nations, nor does it represent solely the viewpoint of the Indigenous Peoples. It is a Declaration which combines our views and interests and which sets the framework for the future. It is a tool for peace and justice, based upon mutual recognition and mutual respect."

Les Malezer, Chair of the International Indigenous Peoples'

FAFIA fact sheet

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- the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through **representatives** chosen by themselves
- the right to be actively involved in developing and determining **health, housing and other economic and social programmes** affecting them
- the right to their **traditional medicines**
- right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of **physical and mental health**
- the right to the **lands**, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired
- the right to **redress** or, when this is not possible, just, fair and equitable **compensation**, for the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used, and which have been confiscated, taken, occupied, used or damaged without their free, prior and informed consent
- the right to determine their own **identity** or membership in accordance with their customs and traditions

For more information

For the full text of the declaration:

www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/declaration

UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues:

www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/

Native Women's Association of Canada

www.nwac-hq.org

Assembly of First Nations

<http://www.afn.ca>

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

www.itk.ca

