



FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

NEWS RELEASE

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Canada's position at UN World Conference on Indigenous Peoples an affront to the concept of reconciliation

New York/NY – First Nations Summit (FNS) leaders attending this week's United Nations World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (WCIP2014) are dumbfounded by Canada's delegated representation and offensive position regarding the WCIP2014 consensus Outcome Document which was passed by the UN General Assembly yesterday.

"Many states around the globe have sent Presidents, members of Senates or other elected leaders to participate in this momentous 2 day UN conference on Indigenous Peoples. Canada unfortunately chose to send a high level bureaucrat", said Cheryl Casimer of the First Nations Summit political executive. "Regrettably this is yet another indicator of how seriously the Harper government takes indigenous issues in this country and on the international stage".

"States representatives and representatives from Indigenous nations around the world have gathered this week in New York to discuss mechanisms and instruments for a path forward based on recognition and reconciliation", added Grand Chief Edward John of the FNS Political Executive and also a North American representative to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

"Yesterday the UN General Assembly adopted the action based consensus outcome document of WCIP2014 which includes the establishment of a mechanism to monitor and encourage state implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Canada chose not to support paragraphs 3, 4 and 20 of the Outcome Document regarding the overarching principle of free prior and informed consent. This position is clearly inconsistent with the legal requirement of consent as articulated in the June 26, 2014 Supreme Court of Canada decision in the Tsilhqot'in case", added Grand Chief John.

"As we have stated time and time again, and as the Canadian courts have decreed, the necessary consultation standard for any development project, especially those in British Columbia, must be to seek the free, prior and informed consent of each and every First Nation whose Aboriginal Title and Rights will be impacted", concluded Grand Chief John.

WCIP2014 concludes later today following roundtable discussions on Indigenous peoples' lands, territories and Resources and Indigenous priorities for the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

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The First Nations Summit speaks on behalf of First Nations involved in treaty negotiations in British Columbia. The Summit is also a NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Further background information on the Summit may be found at www.fns.bc.ca.

Further information on WCIP2014 can be found at:
<http://www.un.org/en/ga/69/meetings/indigenous/#&panel1-1>

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