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FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 12, 2007

First Nations Leadership Council Urges Canada to Vote in Support of UN Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Coast Salish Territory/Vancouver – The First Nations Leadership Council is urging Canada to vote in support of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in an open letter to Prime Minister Stephen Harper (attached). The United Nations General Assembly is scheduled to consider the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples for final adoption during tomorrow's session in New York.

"The indigenous peoples of Canada are outraged and offended that Canada has consistently been one of a small group of countries who have opposed the adoption of the Declaration", said Grand Chief Edward John, a member of the First Nations Summit executive and First Nations Leadership Council, Representative of the Assembly of First Nations on International Issues, and Co-Coordinator of the North American Regional Indigenous Peoples Caucus. Grand Chief John is at the United Nations this week on behalf of the Assembly of First Nations.

The Declaration provides minimum INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS for the protection of the "dignity, well being and the survival" of the world's 370million Indigenous Peoples.

In the open letter to Prime Minister Harper the BC First Nations Leadership Council expresses support for the recently amended text and strongly supports the final adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples at the vote later this week.

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The First Nations Leadership Council is comprised of the political executives of the BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit, and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs.

The Council works together to politically represent the interests of First Nations in British Columbia and develop strategies and actions to bring about significant and substantive changes to government policy that will benefit all First Nations in British Columbia.

Media inquires:

For more information please contact:

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FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

September 11, 2007

Right Honourable Stephen Harper
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Re: *An open Letter on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*

Dear Prime Minister Harper:

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples represents an historic opportunity for the international community to address the widespread and systematic human rights abuses that threaten the security, well-being and cultural integrity of Indigenous peoples around the world.

As you are aware, Indigenous peoples and states have been working together for more than two decades to develop the Declaration. Such a Declaration is urgently needed to help close gaps in the human rights protections provided by other international instruments and to guide states in ending the racism and discrimination that stain national laws and policies around the world.

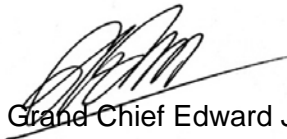
The BC First Nations Leadership Council (BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit, Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs) has expressed support for the amended text and strongly supports the final adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples at the vote later this week.

We urge Canada to vote in support of the Declaration at the UN General Assembly on September 13, 2007. Furthermore, in order to not open the door for voices of opposition to the Declaration, we urge Canada NOT to call for a vote on the Declaration on the floor of the General Assembly when the Declaration is being considered. We also urge Canada not to issue any negative statements, before or after the vote, to explain its vote or about the applicability of the Declaration in Canada.

Canada must abandon its campaign against the Declaration before further harm is done to the safety and well-being of Indigenous peoples worldwide and to Canada's reputation as a principled defender of human rights. We urge Canada to return to its previous practice of collaborating with other States and Indigenous peoples to build international support for the adoption of the Declaration.

Yours truly,
FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

On behalf of the FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT:



Grand Chief Edward John

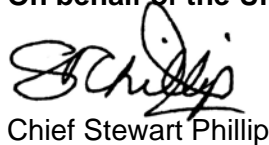


Dave Porter



Chief Judith Sayers

On behalf of the UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS



Chief Stewart Phillip



Chief Robert Shintah



Chief Lynda Price

On behalf of the BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS:



Regional Chief A-in-chut (Shawn Atleo)

Cc. Hon. Chuck Strahl, Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs
Hon. Stephane Dion, Leader of the Official Opposition
Gilles Ducepe, Leader of the Bloc Quebecoise
Hon. Jack Layton, Leader of the New Democratic Party of Canada
Hon. Gordon Campbell, Premier of BC
Hon. Mike de Jong, BC Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation
Carole James, Leader of the BC NDP