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# FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

## News Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**September 13, 2007**

### **Passage of UN Declaration an historic day for Aboriginal people in Canada: Canada's opposition a national disgrace and a stain on its international reputation**

Coast Salish Territory/Vancouver – Today the United Nations General Assembly, after more than 20 years in development, adopted the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* by an overwhelming majority of 143 in favour, 4 opposed and 11 abstentions. Unfortunately Canada was one of four countries to vote against the adoption of the Declaration.

“The First Nations Leadership Council stands together with the indigenous peoples of the world in celebrating this historic achievement”, said Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs and a member and First Nations Leadership Council.

“However we remain shocked and angered at Canada's refusal to support this important international human rights instrument. It is truly ironic that four first world countries that have become prosperous through the exploitation of the lands and resources of the indigenous peoples, including Canada, chose to oppose the adoption of the declaration” added Grand Chief Phillip. “We challenge Canada to take a step forward on the international stage and reverse its opposition and work with us to implement and uphold the principles contained in the Declaration”.

“The *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* will set the stage for an opportunity for a new beginning, for an improved relationship between indigenous peoples and States in North America and throughout the world”, said Grand Chief Edward John, a member of the First Nations Summit executive and First Nations Leadership Council who is in New York for today's historic vote.

“We stand together and celebrate that the fundamental human rights which we have all worked so hard to uphold in this Declaration are still intact in the final text now adopted by the UN General Assembly. These include the inherent rights related to our traditional lands, territories and natural resources, our self-determination, our unqualified recognition as Peoples, our own cultures, languages and identities, our subsistence, our own concepts of developments, Treaties, and free, prior and informed consent”, added Grand Chief John. “We hope the Declaration will now force Canada to work with Aboriginal people of this country to bring about change to their flawed colonial policies”.

"This document is truly a unifying instrument, a declaration of the struggle that unifies the 370 million indigenous people globally. The Declaration represents a shared struggle and as such will serve to bring us closer together to impact change, push back the destructive forces of globalization and provide us with an opportunity to shape the world instead of only being subject to, or victims of it" said Regional Chief Shawn Atleo of the BC Assembly of First Nations.

-30-

*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.*

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