



FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

NEWS RELEASE

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Australian support for UN Declaration an historic day for Indigenous peoples worldwide: Canada's continuing opposition reprehensible

Coast Salish Territory/Vancouver – Late this afternoon (Friday April 3rd Australian time) Australian Indigenous Affairs Minister Jenny Macklin made a statement announcing Australia's support for the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples ("UN Declaration") at Parliament House in Canberra, Australia. This reversal of position by Australia now leaves the United States, New Zealand and Canada as the only countries opposing the UN Declaration.

"We welcome the news that the Australian Government has reversed its previous position opposing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We stand together with the indigenous peoples of the world in raising our hands in honour of the Australian government and their decision to support the UN Declaration", said Grand Chief Edward John of the First Nations Summit Political Executive.

The *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* is a set of principles which describe equality, non-discrimination, partnership, consultation and cooperation between indigenous peoples and governments. The Declaration affirms minimum human rights standards necessary for the "survival, dignity and well-being of the Indigenous peoples of the world." The Declaration also explicitly requires that all provisions are to be balanced with the rights of others and interpreted in accordance with principles of justice, democracy, non-discrimination, good governance and respect for the human rights of all.

"Canada's continuing opposition to this important international human rights instrument is an embarrassment and a stain on Canada's reputation as a defender of human rights", added Grand Chief John. "We urge Canada to give its highest priority to moving on the Universal Periodic Review recommendation by the UN Human Rights Council to adopt the UN Declaration and work constructively with indigenous people and civil society to ensure the implementation of this and all the UPR recommendations."

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The First Nations Summit speaks on behalf of First Nations involved in treaty negotiations in British Columbia. Further background information on the Summit may be found at www.fns.bc.ca.

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