

INTRODUCING

BILL C-262

Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act

Wachiya:

Thirty years ago, I was invited to go to the United Nations to negotiate the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Coming full-circle, it is with great pleasure that I am introducing my Bill C-262: An Act to ensure that the laws of Canada are consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The Prime Minister has stated in his mandate letters that no relationship is more important to him than that with Indigenous peoples. My bill is a unique opportunity for Canada to move towards a true nation-to-nation relationship. I hope that all MPs will support this bill.

I hear talk of reconciliation and a new nation-to-nation relationship in the the words spoken by the government. With my Bill, I am proposing non-partisan cooperative, concrete action to back up those words. As the Truth and Reconciliation Commission said: the UN Declaration is the framework for reconciliation.

I truly believe that this bill is important for future generations on this land, which is why I am asking for your support.

Romeo Saganash

Inspiration

Cooperation

Implementation

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has hailed the Declaration as "a visionary step towards addressing the human rights of Indigenous peoples" and "a momentous opportunity for States and Indigenous peoples to strengthen their relationships, promote reconciliation and ensure that the past is not repeated."

By ensuring that Canadian legislation respects the UN Declaration, the demands asserted by representatives of Indigenous peoples and their advocates for decades will begin to be respected within Canadian law. This means that all Canadian laws will be subject to review. Canada will have clear guidelines for cooperation with Indigenous peoples.

Ratification will inform public opinion, influence public policy, and guide future jurisprudence. Indigenous peoples can use it in to pursue full recognition, respect, and implementation of Indigenous rights. Human rights institutions and courts have used the Declaration as a standard to measure how Canada behaves toward Indigenous people, communities, and nations.

On September 13, 2007 the UN General Assembly adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This followed more than twenty years of discussion within the UN system. Indigenous representatives played a key role in the development of this Declaration.

The Declaration is a long and complex document with a preamble and 46 articles. The text recognises the wide range of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms of Indigenous peoples. Among these are the right to unrestricted self-determination, an inalienable collective right to the ownership, use and control of lands, territories and other natural resources, their rights in terms of maintaining and developing their own political, religious, cultural and educational institutions along with the protection of their cultural and intellectual property.

The Declaration highlights the requirement for prior and informed consultation, participation and consent in activities of any kind that impact on Indigenous peoples, their property or territories. It also establishes the requirement for fair and adequate compensation for violation of the rights recognised in the Declaration and establishes guarantees against ethnocide and genocide.

The Declaration also provides for fair and mutually acceptable procedures to resolve conflicts between Indigenous peoples and States, including procedures such as negotiations, mediation, arbitration, national courts and international and regional mechanisms for denouncing and examining human rights violations.

This universal human rights instrument is celebrated globally as a symbol of triumph and hope. While it is not legally binding on States, and does not, therefore, impose legal obligations on governments, the Declaration carries considerable moral force. Effective adoption and implementation of the Declaration would result in significant improvements in the lives of Indigenous peoples.

What they are saying:

"We believe the passage of Bill C-262 will be one of a number of steps necessary for the ultimate demise of the Indian Act necessary for decolonization, restoration of our traditional forms of governance, and the exertion of our inherent jurisdiction and implementation of our treaties." - Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs

"I support him whole-heartedly in this endeavor, and pledge to do what is necessary to ensure passage when the Bill gets to Senate. I see it as an important step in re-balancing the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples." - Senator Murray Sinclair

"NAN and COO support the adoption and implementation of the UNDRIP, which recognizes the collective rights of Aboriginal Peoples living in Canada including inherent rights to traditional lands and territories, self-determination, and recognition of culture and language. We thank the Hon. Romeo Saganash for his efforts and we encourage this government to match its commitments to reconciliation with action." - Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Chiefs of Ontario

"The commitment to the UN declaration is part of the journey needed to understand the legacy of colonialism and provide new pathways to healing. NDP MP Romeo Saganash presents an opportunity to reject the colonial past in favour of a contemporary approach based on justice, equality, respect for human rights and good faith." - Grand Council of the Cree

"The development of the Declaration took more than two decades. Another decade has passed since the negotiations concluded. It is time for the government of Canada to commit to re-engage in a collaborative dialogue with Indigenous peoples to take the Declaration to the necessary next stage of domestic implementation. Bill C-262 provides a framework for doing so in a way that is principled, systematic, cooperative, transparent and accountable. This approach deserves the support of all Parliamentarians, all Parties and all Canadians." - Coalition for the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Many of the drafters of the Declaration believed that governments and international agencies would move quickly to implement its rights and strategies. That has not happened. Nor will it happen on its own.

The UN Declaration is a powerful assertion by Indigenous peoples that we have survived, that we will survive, and that we insist on fair and just treatment by governments and communities. The implementation of the UN Declaration in Canada could be a world-changing development.

The next step for Canada is Bill C-262. As the struggle for Indigenous rights continues, empowered by the rights recognized in the Declaration, it is vital that the Canadian government fully protect and promote our rights within its own structure.

Who supports Bill C-262?

Amnesty International Canada

Assembly of First Nations

Assemblée des Premières Nations du

Québec et Labrador/Assembly of First

Nations of Quebec and Labrador

BC Assembly of First Nations

Canadian Friends Service Committee
(Quakers)

Chiefs of Ontario

First Nations Summit

Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)

Indigenous World Association

KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice
Initiatives

Nunavut Tunngavik

Québec Native Women/Femmes

Autochtones du Québec

Union of BC Indian Chiefs

Nishinawbe Aski Nation

Senator Murray Sinclair

File Hills Qu'appelle Treaty Council

Dene Nation

Get In Touch

For information about
the Declaration and
Bill C-262:



Romeo Saganash

House of Commons

Ottawa, Ontario

K1A 0A6

Telephone: 613-992-3030

Fax: 613-996-0828

E-mail: Romeo.Saganash.a2@parl.gc.ca

www.AdoptAndImplement.com

NDP  **NPD**