



**Key reasons for implementing the *UN Declaration* by legislation:**

1. **Legislative framework provides clarity.** A legislative framework for implementing the *UN Declaration* would affirm its central significance in the process of national reconciliation. Such implementation would highlight the importance of harmonizing federal laws consistent with the *UN Declaration*.
2. **Calls to Action.** The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) has called upon the federal government, among others, to “fully adopt and implement” the *UN Declaration* as “the framework for reconciliation” (Call to Action 43). The TRC has included the *UN Declaration* in 16 Calls to Action. The Prime Minister has agreed to implement all Calls to Action.
3. **Implementation a priority.** The Prime Minister’s “Mandate Letter” to the Minister of Indigenous Affairs stipulates that implementation of the *UN Declaration* is a “top priority”. Just prior to the federal election, the Liberal Party of Canada promised that a Liberal government “will move forward urgently with implementing” the principles of the *UN Declaration*. The Minister of Indigenous Affairs has committed to its full adoption and implementation.
4. **Repeal of *Indian Act* requires new legislative framework.** On April 12, 2016, the Minister of Justice stated in the House of Commons: “It is not easy to remove the shackles of 140 years of life under the Indian Act... the Indian Act is not a suitable system of government. It is not consistent with the rights enshrined in our Constitution, the principles as set out in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, or the calls to action in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report.” A legislative framework for implementing the *UN Declaration* would be a catalyst to repeal the *Indian Act*.
5. **Reject colonialism.** Historical and ongoing colonial policies and actions by governments, churches and others include, *inter alia*, land and resource dispossessions, residential schools, denial and destruction of Indigenous languages and cultures, and discrimination. Legislative implementation of the *UN Declaration* would explicitly reject colonialism, in favour of a contemporary approach based on justice, equality, respect for human rights and good faith. The TRC Final Report calls for such rejection.
6. **Ongoing impacts of colonialism.** Within a legislative framework, impacts such as intergenerational trauma, severe impoverishment, epidemics of suicide, impairment of mental and physical health, and profound loss of hope should receive the attention they deserve.
7. **Doctrines of superiority must be repudiated.** Rejection of discriminatory doctrines of “discovery” and *terra nullius* could be effectively achieved by adopting a legislative framework. The TRC Final Report calls for rejection of such doctrines.

8. **National action plan part of the legislative framework.** TRC Call to Action 44 calls upon the Government of Canada to “develop a national action plan, strategies, and other concrete measures to achieve the goals of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.” Canada agreed to a national action plan in the Outcome document of the 2014 World Conference on Indigenous Peoples.
9. **Nation-to-nation relationship essential.** The Prime Minister’s Mandate Letter to the Minister of Indigenous Affairs stipulates: “It is time for a renewed, nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous Peoples, based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership.” All four elements are entrenched in the *UN Declaration*. Nation-to-nation relationship will require a legislative framework.
10. **Legislative implementation must be a lasting legacy.** Legislative implementation of the *UN Declaration* will contribute to ensuring that progress made will not be easily reversed by any future government. As the Minister of Justice indicated to the House of Commons on April 12<sup>th</sup>: “We need to develop a national reconciliation framework in partnership with indigenous communities ... That reconciliation framework needs to survive the life of one government.”

**For more information visit: [www.adoptandimplement.com](http://www.adoptandimplement.com)**