

For Immediate Release

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First Nations Leadership Council Troubled By Today's Vote at the United Nations Inaction on Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Inexcusable

Coast Salish Territory/Vancouver BC - After two decades of discussion and development, the slow pace of approval of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples came to a halt today at the current session of the UN General Assembly in New York. A resolution put forward by the Namibian delegation - in effect, a non-action motion on the Declaration - was supported by a majority with 82 Nation States voting in favour, 67 Nation States voting not in favour and 25 Nation States abstaining.

Grand Chief Ed John, First Nations Summit Executive member, who is in New York on behalf of the Assembly of First Nations and working with the Indigenous Peoples' Caucus, stated "Today is a very sad day for the United Nations and a very serious setback for the integrity of the newly formed Human Rights Council who urged the General Assembly to formally adopt this historic document. It now appears that the most likely outcome will be that the United Nations never formally adopts the Declaration. This is a remarkable and bizarre development."

"Canada was positioned to play a significant role in supporting the Declaration but Canada chose to actively oppose the Declaration as a member of the Human Rights Council and at the General Assembly," commented BC Assembly of First Nations Regional Chief Shawn Atleo. "We share the deep frustration of all those who worked long and hard to get the Declaration to this point. We sincerely hope that the Declaration is not lost and that we can find a way in which to revitalize this important work."

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, stated "Canada no longer enjoys a 'blue beret' reputation at the United Nations. Canada's disgraceful and disgusting conduct against Indigenous People at both the national and international levels is being noted. It is simply shameful that as a Council member of the Human Rights Council, Canada pretends to espouse the highest standards and protection of Human Rights. It is those countries who have lived with the ravages of colonialism now speak for continuing colonialism for all Indigenous Peoples."

The Declaration was adopted by the UN Human Rights Council this past June and was recommended for adoption by the General Assembly. Canada was one of few countries to vote against the Declaration in June.

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