



CANADIAN  
HUMAN RIGHTS  
COMMISSION

COMMISSION  
CANADIENNE DES  
DROITS DE LA PERSONNE

Thank you, Mr. President.

I speak on behalf of the Canadian Human Rights Commission, a National Human Rights Institution accredited with A status.

We congratulate the Special Rapporteur for a very informative report, and commend his effort to make a positive impact in the lives of Indigenous peoples around the world.

The lived experiences of Aboriginal peoples in Canada are a daily reminder of the most important human rights challenges facing our country.

Over the past few decades, Canada has taken a number of steps to improve the situation of Aboriginal peoples. Significant recent advances include the apology to survivors of Indian Residential Schools and the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

However, Aboriginal peoples continue to represent one of the most disadvantaged populations in Canada, as well as one of its youngest and fastest growing. Aboriginal peoples have a higher unemployment rate and a lower personal income than the Canadian average, and are disadvantaged in education, health status, and overall quality of life. A recent UNICEF report identified difficulties in access to health care among Aboriginal children. Child welfare and family service supports are persistent concerns, as is the over-representation of Aboriginal peoples both as victims and offenders. Requiring particular and urgent attention is the number of missing and murdered Aboriginal women.

The *Canadian Human Rights Act*, which mandates our work, was recently changed to extend full human rights protection to persons living under the Indian Act. This legislative change represents a critical step of many that are needed. In our view, the Indian Act itself should also be examined to determine, amongst other things, its compliance with human rights principles.

Further, Canada has yet to express support for the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Working with Aboriginal organizations to raise awareness of human rights is the Commission's key priority this year. The Canadian Human Rights Commission will follow and support the Special Rapporteur's work, in the interests of our shared objective of advancing the human rights of Indigenous peoples in Canada.

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