



UNITED NATIONS

Press Release

HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS HAILS ADOPTION OF DECLARATION ON INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

13 September 2007

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour hailed today's adoption by the General Assembly of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples calling it "a triumph for justice and human dignity".

"It was a long time coming", she said, "but the hard work and perseverance of indigenous peoples and their friends and supporters in the international community has finally borne fruit in the most comprehensive statement to date of indigenous peoples' rights".

The Declaration, adopted this afternoon in New York after more than two decades of negotiations at the United Nations among Member States, with the participation of indigenous peoples from around the world, addresses both individual and collective rights; cultural rights and identity; rights to education, health, employment, language, and others. It outlaws discrimination against indigenous peoples and promotes their full and effective participation in all matters that concern them. It also ensures their right to remain distinct and to pursue their own visions of economic, social and cultural development. The Declaration explicitly encourages harmonious and cooperative relations between States and Indigenous Peoples.

The High Commissioner said the Declaration will provide impetus for renewed international efforts to address the pressing concerns of the world's 370 million indigenous people.

"I convey my warmest congratulations to all who made this historic day possible", she said. "The adoption of the Declaration truly is a triumph for justice and human dignity".