

INTERVENTION BY CANADA

H.E. ELISSA GOLBERG, AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES

HRC 24 - 2013-09-18

On behalf of Canada, I would like to thank you, Mr. Anaya, for your report on extractive Industries. I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge your upcoming visit to Canada in October. The Government of Canada looks forward to providing you with information on the steps that we have taken to improving the lives of Aboriginal peoples across Canada and to demonstrate how we continue to work with all willing partners toward transformative structural changes.

In trying to find practical solutions to real issues, Canada continues to work with Aboriginal peoples and all willing partners to renovate programs and develop approaches, including new legislation, with the goal of improving the lives of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples.

In 2013, five pieces of legislation received Royal Assent, bringing real change and improvement for people in Canada's Aboriginal and Northern communities. These five Acts include: The Northern Jobs and Growth Act, The First Nations Financial Transparency Act, the Family Homes on Reserves and Matrimonial Interests or Rights Act, the Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act, and the Yale First Nation Final Agreement Act.

Additionally, Canada has increased its support to promote responsible resource development in Canada's North. In addition to streamlining regulatory processes in the north and increasing supports for Aboriginal engagement and participation in resource development projects, Canada has implemented the Geo-Mapping for Energy and Minerals Program, which ensures the public availability of geological data needed to make well-informed decisions concerning land use and resource development.

The natural resources sector is an important contributor to global economic development and job creation. In Canada, Aboriginal communities stand to benefit from long-term, large-scale economic opportunities due to their proximity to so many major resource development projects.

A key component of Canada's plan for responsible resource development is to enhance Crown consultations with Aboriginal peoples for major projects, in a manner that meets Canada's legal, constitutional and treaty obligations, and recognizes the importance of the meaningful involvement of Aboriginal communities in these projects.

The Government of Canada also encourages and expects all Canadian companies working internationally to respect all applicable laws and international standards, to operate transparently and in consultation with the host government and local communities.

Overwhelmingly, Canadian companies operate responsively and constructively and - through this approach - contribute to job creation and prosperity for all Canadians, as well as in the countries where they operate.

We must remember that there are simply no quick fixes, and much work remains ahead. But we are focusing on real, incremental, structural reforms to deliver results with the goal of improving the lives of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples.

Thank you.