

NEWS RELEASE
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Rights of Indigenous Peoples

**THE COMMISSION DES DROITS DE LA PERSONNE ET DES DROITS DE LA JEUNESSE
CALLS ON THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO SIGN UN DECLARATION**

Montréal, June 20, 2010 – The Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse is urging the Harper government to adopt, without restriction, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which affirms the equality of Indigenous Peoples with other peoples and crystallizes their individual and collective rights.

“The Commission encourages the Government of Canada to adopt this international instrument in order to lay a new foundation for strengthening its relations of cooperation with Canada’s Aboriginal peoples, in keeping with their fundamental rights, their right to equality and their economic, social and cultural rights, such as those recognized by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and Québec’s *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*,” states the declaration of the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse released today, on the eve on National Aboriginal Day.

The Commission has sent a copy of its declaration to Prime Minister Stephen Harper, to Québec Premier Jean Charest and to Ghislain Picard, Chief of the Assembly of First Nations of Québec and Labrador.

The Canadian Government’s promise, in the March 2010 Speech from the Throne “to take steps to endorse this aspirational document (the Declaration) in a manner fully consistent with Canada’s Constitution and laws”, is a “noteworthy”. Moreover, last April, at a meeting of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, the government specified that it would be adopting this “reference document” in the next few months.

“The Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse cannot remain silent as still, today, Aboriginal peoples are the victims of discrimination, prejudice and violations of human rights in Canada. This reality is reflected in the major disparities that set them apart from the rest of Canadians. Examples are their precarious socioeconomic situation, difficult living conditions, and high rates of suicide, infant mortality, unemployment, school dropout, imprisonment and the number of children taken into care by the State,” the Commission said in its declaration.

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Contact
Patricia Poirier
514 873-5146, ext. 358
patricia.poirier@cdpdj.qc.ca