



Canadian Ecumenical
Justice Initiatives /
Initiatives œcuméniques
canadiennes pour
la justice

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The Anglican Church of Canada
Canadian Catholic Organization for
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Canadian Conference of
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in Canada
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Conférence des évêques
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Comité Central Mennonite Canada
Conférence religieuse canadienne
Développement et Paix
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Amérique du Nord
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L'Église Unie du Canada

Le fonds du Primat pour le secours
et le développement mondial

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The Honourable Lawrence Cannon, Minister of Foreign Affairs
The Honourable James Moore, Minister of Canadian Heritage
The Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern
Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians
Ottawa, Ontario

June 9, 2010

Dear Ministers:

We write to you as the leaders of eleven Churches and religious organizations that collaborate in KAIROS on social justice issues. We have deep commitment to the dignity of all persons made in the image of God and to a hopeful future of right relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada. In that light, we welcome the announcement in the March 3rd, 2010 Speech from the Throne that the Government of Canada is moving to endorse the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

We are encouraged that the Government of Canada is prepared to join the overwhelming global support for the *Declaration*. As Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Chair of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, said to the General Assembly on the occasion of its adoption on 13 September 2007, "This is a Declaration which makes the opening phrase of the UN Charter, 'We the Peoples...' meaningful for the more than 370 million Indigenous persons all over the world."

Many of the Churches and religious organizations that are represented in KAIROS have worked with Indigenous peoples and their supporters to ensure the successful adoption of this important human rights instrument by the United Nations. At this moment, it is very important to us that the Government of Canada meaningfully endorse the *Declaration* without qualifications or conditions.

The *Declaration* provides a principled framework for partnership and reconciliation between states and Indigenous peoples. Its provisions provide guidance to governments, state institutions and society as a whole on how human rights laws and obligations can best be applied to the distinct circumstances and urgent needs of Indigenous people.

As an international standard it inspires improved recognition, protection and promotion of human rights in Canada and around the world.

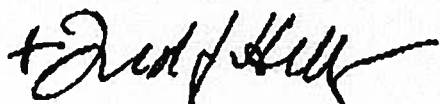
On 1 May 2008, more than 100 experts on constitutional and international law relating to Indigenous peoples issued an Open Letter stating that the *Declaration* "is consistent with the Canadian Constitution and Charter and is profoundly important for fulfilling their promise."

This is an important time for Canada's relationship with Indigenous peoples as together all Canadians are invited to participate in the first national event of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Winnipeg.

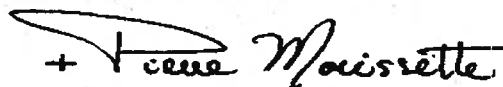
We urge our government to work in partnership with Indigenous peoples on a respectful process for the full endorsement and implementation of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

Be confident of our prayers for you.

Sincerely,



The Most Reverend Fred Hiltz
Archbishop and Primate
The Anglican Church of Canada



† Pierre Morissette
Bishop of Saint-Jérôme
President
Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops



Yvon Pomerleau, OP
Past President, Canadian Religious Conference



Patrick Hogan
President, National Council
Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace



Reverend Bruce Adema
Director, Canadian Ministries
Christian Reformed Church in North America



Bishop Susan Johnson
National Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada



Donald Peters
Executive Director
Mennonite Central Committee Canada



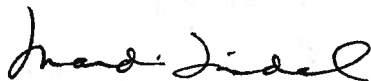
Reverend Harvey Self
Moderator of the 135th General Assembly
The Presbyterian Church in Canada



Interim Executive Director
The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund



Anne Mitchell
Clerk, Canadian Yearly Meeting
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)



Mardi Tindal
Moderator
United Church of Canada