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U N I V E R S A L D E C L A R A T I O N
OF THE INDIGENOUS ABORIGINAL NATIONS OF CANADA

OUR HISTORY

We, the Indigenous Nations of Canada, have lived on our traditional lands for thousands of years, since before anybody can remember.

Through these thousands of years we lived in keeping with the sacred birthright of the Creator; to live in harmony with our neighbours and the land

We developed our own values and our own understanding of what it means to live in harmony with our neighbours and the land.

We practiced stewardship, caring and sharing.

We developed our own languages and our own laws to foster our harmonious lifestyle.

We developed unique forms of government.

We lived as nations with territorial boundaries and respecting the territorial rights of our neighbours.

THE DARK SHADOW

Very recently in our long history as nations, our peoples have undergone difficult and threatening times.

Europeans with different values, different languages, different laws have come onto our lands.

We extended the hand of friendship and entered into peace and friendship treaties, believing we could live in mutual respect and harmony with these newcomers.

But we have been disappointed and angered.

Rather than living with us in peace these Europeans have violated our basic human rights by attempting to force us to feel, think, act and live as they live.

Rather than recognizing and respecting our rights as nations they have tried to control us, imposing their own values and institutions and form of government.

Rather than respecting and recognizing our right to our

land, they have taken our non-renewable resources and seriously damaged our harvesting of renewable resources.

The action of these Europeans constitutes genocide - cultural and political genocide as that is defined by the United Nations.

STRENGTH INTO THE FUTURE

But we have not been destroyed. We are nations. We are determined to be recognized as such; recognized by the people and by the Government of Canada, by the peoples and governments around the world, and by the United Nations.

We are strengthened and encouraged in our struggle by the events in recent years around the world; colonialism and imperialism is now dead or dying; from the ashes of colonialism old nations are being reborn and new nations are being born.

While this emergence is evident in many parts of the world it is not happening in Canada. But we are determined that it will happen.

We are determined to be recognized for what we are: the Indigenous founding nations of Canada.

We seek Canadian and International recognition of these rights.

- (1) We are nations. We have always been nations.
- (2) As nations we have inherent and fundamental rights which have never given up and which we continue to exercise.
- (3) We have always had and exercised the right to govern ourselves and we will continue to do so.
- (4) The right to govern is an expression of our right to be a self determining nation of people within a revised Canadian Federation.
- (5) Our right to govern includes our right to determine our own citizens.
- (6) Our right to govern includes the right to determine the kind of education we want for our children, the kind of economy we need to foster self-reliance, sufficient control of our land and resources to be self-sufficient and the right to control our land - including water, air, minerals, timber and wildlife.

These and other fundamental and ancillary rights of the Indigenous Nations must be entrenched in a Canadian Constitution which acknowledges that we are the founding and Indigenous Nations of Canada.

A first step in acknowledging our rights must be the full and equal participation of our nation at all levels and stages of negotiations leading to a new constitution.

What we seek is independence and self-determination within the country of Canada.

Our plea to the peoples and governments of Canada and the world and to the United Nations is to help us in our struggle to find a place in the world community where we can exercise our right to self-determination as distinct nations.

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