



Aile parlementaire

Press release

for immediate release

OPPOSITION ASKS CANADA TO STOP ARGUING AGAINST THE ADOPTION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Ottawa, Thursday, November 9, 2006 – The Indian and Northern Affairs critics of the Bloc Québécois, **Marc Lemay** (Abitibi—Témiscamingue), of the Liberal Party of Canada, **Anita Neville** (Winnipeg South Centre) and of the New Democratic Party, **Jean Crowder** (Nanaimo—Cowichan), are asking the Canadian government to stop opposing efforts that will lead to the adoption of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* by the Human Rights Council.

This Declaration has emerged as a universal instrument to protect the rights of indigenous peoples, who are among the poorest in the world. “Stephen Harper’s minority government must reverse its stance and publicly support the Declaration. Canada must send a clear signal to the international community, which wants to see the adoption of this instrument for protecting human rights, and ensure that indigenous peoples are no longer excluded from the inherent human rights and universal protections,” said Bloc Québécois critic **Marc Lemay**.

The opposition parties feel Canada's current position against the adoption of the Declaration is unpopular and unfounded. The Declaration is currently being studied by the United Nations' third committee, and Canada and its representatives belong to the minority of states that are doing everything they can to undermine support for the Declaration.

“For the past twenty years, Canada has taken the lead in the development and drafting of this aspirational document on the rights of Indigenous peoples. Now is the time for Canada's Indigenous people to see that work come to fruition. I cannot stress enough how important it is that the Conservative government publicly declare their support for the declaration. By not doing so, they will damage Canada's credibility on the international stage, yet again,” explained the LPC critic **Anita Neville**.

Canadians and Quebecers, as well as a majority of parliamentarians in the House of Commons, do in fact believe that Canada should move ahead by voting in favour of the Declaration.

“This declaration has been 20 years in development. For the first time in history, the rights of the world’s 350 million indigenous peoples will be recognized and Canada has flipped and flopped on the issue; this motion would, once and for all, show that Canadians support indigenous rights,” said NDP critic **Jean Crowder**.

– 30 –

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