



The Métis National Council/Ralliement National des Métis
STATEMENT ON THE UNITED NATIONS
DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES
November 2, 2006

The Métis National Council represents the Métis Nation, one of the distinct Indigenous peoples in Canada. The Métis National Council joins other Indigenous peoples and States in urging the General Assembly to adopt the Declaration.

The heart of the Declaration is the right of self-determination, one of the great human rights guaranteed equally to all peoples in the name of peace and justice. The Council applauds the policy adopted by the government of Canada in 1995 which recognizes our inherent right of self-government. We applaud also Canada's public acknowledgment at the United Nations Commission on Human Rights Working Group in Geneva, on October 31, 1998, to the effect that the right of self-determination applies equally to Indigenous peoples in Canada as it does to all peoples. This view, now binding on Canada, has also been expressly described by United Nations treaty bodies as a domestic expression of the right of self-determination of all peoples.

Article 3 declares that Indigenous peoples have the right of self-determination and, in effect, welcomes Indigenous peoples into the fold of humanity and thus rejects all racist notions that Indigenous peoples are less than fully human and not equally deserving of all human rights.

Article 4 elaborates an important precept that must guide States as a minimum standard in order to fully recognize, respect, and protect the rights of Indigenous peoples. After emphasizing that States must respect the autonomy necessary for the exercise of the right of self-determination by Indigenous peoples, article 4 requires States to provide assistance for the practical realization of that right.

Inspired by the voices of our ancestors, we speak today for the benefit of all future generations, so that our children and the children of all peoples may live in peace and harmony in generations to come.