



# ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS BULLETIN ASSEMBLÉE DES PREMIÈRES NATIONS

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## **AFN National Chief applauds today's passage of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples – Recognizing 20 years of work in the making**

The National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations said today is an important day in Canada's history. It's a day to celebrate, and a day to act.

"This recognition was a long time coming," said National Chief Phil Fontaine. "The declaration recognizes our collective histories, traditions, cultures, languages, and spirituality. It is a call for First Nations in Canada and Indigenous peoples around the world to act on their rights, to implement them wherever and however they are able, to give them meaning in their lives, and in the lives of their children and their communities."

However, the National Chief said he is very disappointed that the Government of Canada chose to vote against the UN Declaration. Canada lobbied hard to convince other countries to not support the declaration. But despite Canada's efforts, many countries decided to set a good example, by voting in favor of human rights for Indigenous peoples.

"The Assembly of First Nations and other representatives of Indigenous peoples in Canada offered to work with the government to address the concerns it had and to come to a solution, but that offer was refused," National Chief Phil Fontaine said. "Canada prides itself as a protector of human rights. It is a member of the UN Human Rights Council, yet it is disappointing today to see this government vote against recognizing the basic rights of Canada's First Peoples. This is a stain on the country's international reputation."

Chiefs and First Nations representatives put an enormous amount of work into the declaration over the last 20 years. The National Chief said the declaration is not perfect, however, he said it is a step towards setting minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well being of indigenous peoples around the world.

The Assembly of First Nations is the national organization representing First Nations citizens in Canada.

- 30 -

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