



## CCCBC Executive Committee Statement on the Implementation of UNDRIP in Canadian Legislation

The Catholic Bishops in Canada are committed to engaging with the past and to taking meaningful active steps forward with Indigenous Peoples and communities in view of a future filled with greater respect and cooperation. Following closely the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, the Bishops of Canada recognize the impactful significance of its final report<sup>1</sup>, which included 94 Calls to Action, released in December 2015.

Call to Action 48 addresses faith groups in Canada to “formally adopt and comply with the principles, norms, and standards of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as a framework for reconciliation.”<sup>2</sup> In March 2016, the Catholic Bishops of Canada, alongside a number of Catholic partners, representing institutes of consecrated life and Catholic lay organizations, comprising what is now [Our Lady of Guadalupe Circle](#), released a [public statement](#)<sup>3</sup> of support regarding the adoption of the U.N. *Declaration*, as issued in 2007.

The *Declaration* continues to be understood as a key framework by which reconciliation and the strengthening of relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada may be reached. Its incorporation into Canadian legislation, ensuring that its spirit and principles are in harmony throughout our society, is an important and vital step forward on this journey.

The Catholic Bishops of Canada, as was communicated alongside ecumenical partners in April 2018<sup>4</sup>, continue to support the Government of Canada’s intention to enact legislation that will implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* in Canadian law. It is hoped that ongoing dialogue and consultation will ensure the success of legislation that honours, respects, and protects the rights of all Indigenous Peoples across the land. Pope Francis reminds us that:

Negotiation often becomes necessary for shaping concrete paths to peace. Yet the processes of change that lead to lasting peace are crafted above all by peoples; each individual can act as an effective leaven by the way he or she lives each day. Great changes are not produced behind desks or in offices. This

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<sup>1</sup>[Statement by the Permanent Council of the CCCBC in an Initial Response to the Summary Report and Calls to Action by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#)

<sup>2</sup>[TRC Calls to Action](#)

<sup>3</sup>[A Catholic Response to Call to Action 48](#)

<sup>4</sup>[Joint ecumenical letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau – 27 April 2018](#)

means that “everyone has a fundamental role to play in a single great creative project: to write a new page of history, a page full of hope, peace and reconciliation”. There is an “architecture” of peace, to which different institutions of society contribute, each according to its own area of expertise, but there is also an “art” of peace that involves us all<sup>5</sup>.

We strongly encourage Parliamentarians currently debating Bill C-15 to work diligently, in consultation and solidarity with Indigenous Peoples in Canada, so as to ensure the timely and necessary inclusion of UNDRIP within Canadian law and thus contribute to truly respectful and just relations in this land.



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on behalf of the Executive Committee of the  
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<sup>5</sup> Pope Francis, Encyclical letter, [Fratelli tutti](#), § 231, 3 October 2020