



DIALOGUE OF LEADERS HIGHLIGHTS CRITICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE UN DECLARATION

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The Residential School History & Dialogue Centre brought leaders together to explore how to implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* in British Columbia.

On October 11, 2018, the Residential School History & Dialogue Centre (RSHDC) at the University of British Columbia (UBC) arranged a special dialogue session on Implementing the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration)* in British Columbia. The session brought together Indigenous, government, industry, labour, and civil society leaders, experts, and influencers for an open and frank exchange about the importance, challenges, and paths forward in respecting the human rights of Indigenous peoples in the *UN Declaration*.

Today the Residential School History & Dialogue Centre is releasing the summary report examining some of the past and current efforts that have been made to transform Crown-Indigenous relations across Canada, along with providing critical considerations for implementing the *UN Declaration* in British Columbia. The report also focuses on achieving the broad and systemic shifts that are needed in order to support the ongoing work of Indigenous self-determination and self-government.

Indigenous leaders present at the session stressed the importance of implementing and upholding the *UN Declaration* to address the pressing daily challenges that affect Indigenous peoples in British Columbia.

The *UN Declaration* describes the individual and collective rights of Indigenous peoples around the world. Canada adopted the *UN Declaration* in 2016, and the BC Government has publicly committed to embrace and implement the *UN Declaration* in full partnership with Indigenous peoples. Bill C-262, a federal bill moving through Parliament which ensures that the laws of Canada are in harmony with the *UN Declaration*, is a good example of the recent work that is being done to develop an action plan to implement the *UN Declaration*. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action released in 2015, urged all levels of government to work together to change policies and programs in an effort to move towards reconciliation, including through adopting the *UN Declaration* as the framework for reconciliation.



The dialogue report can be found on the Residential School History & Dialogue Centre's website: irshdc.ubc.ca

The Residential School History & Dialogue Centre will be convening additional dialogues in 2019 to improve the understanding of critical matters that call for a relational approach. This is pivotal to a better future for Indigenous Nations and all British Columbians and Canadians.

Quotes

Scott Fraser, B.C.'s Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

"This dialogue brought leaders from across sectors together to discuss the importance of rights recognition in our shared future. Implementing the *UN Declaration* is no longer a question of whether but how. It's why our government is moving forward to co-develop legislation in 2019 together with Indigenous leaders and communities."

Perry Bellegarde, National Chief, Assembly of First Nations

"The *UN Declaration* is the framework for reconciliation. I acknowledge the efforts of First Nations leaders and the Government of British Columbia in bringing together civil society, educators, leaders, and the private sector for the positive exchange and dialogue that led to this publication. Everyone worked to a shared consensus: implement the *UN Declaration* in British Columbia. That will be significant for BC, and First Nations will continue to push for implementation of the *UN Declaration* at the federal level through Bill C-262."

Catherine Dauvergne, Dean, Peter A. Allard School of Law at the University of British Columbia

"The Truth and Reconciliation Commission challenged universities and law schools to do much better in understanding, respecting, and supporting Indigenous peoples, knowledge, and legal systems. As Dean of the Peter A. Allard School of Law, I want all law students to read and understand the significance of the 94 Calls to Action, but, more importantly, to answer those calls by learning the skills to engage in dialogue with First Nations leaders, governments, and those from civil society and industry on the transformative changes needed to support the rights of Indigenous peoples. This dialogue on the *UN Declaration* brought into sharp focus the significance of the *UN Declaration* for provincial laws, policies, and practices—and encouraged me to bring new efforts to supporting lawyers of the future to be adept at working with the *UN Declaration* as the framework for reconciliation."

Mary Ellen (*Aki-Kwe*) Turpel-Lafond, Director, Residential School History & Dialogue Centre

"The dialogue reinforced that the *UN Declaration* sets out the minimum standards for the survival of Indigenous peoples in British Columbia. In this regard, the *UN Declaration* is an essential and progressive lens to use to move forward together on matters where people have been stuck for years. British Columbia has the opportunity to be the first provincial jurisdiction to bring its laws in



conformity with the *UN Declaration*, and the practical value of this was identified by all of the participants.”

About the Residential School History & Dialogue Centre

The Residential School History & Dialogue Centre (RSHDC) is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the hə́nqəmíḱəm-speaking x̣ʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) people. In support of this mandate, the RSHDC works to generate inclusive dialogue that is transparent and trauma-informed. This approach to dialogue is essential to the Centre’s work building on information practices, research, and education around Residential Schools and related systems. With a framework that privileges respectful, equitable, and Indigenous-informed access to records and information, the RSHDC is developing digital systems and spaces of inquiry to model a new platform for information stewardship.

For more information on the report or dialogue statement, contact Erik Rolfsen, UBC Media Relations: erik.rolfsen@ubc.ca or 604-822-2644.

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