



**National Association of Friendship Centres
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September 14, 2007

For Immediate Release

Press Release

**Canada's failure to adopt the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
'major defeat' for urban Aboriginal peoples, says the NAFC**

(September 14, 2007) – Ottawa, Ontario – The NAFC is deeply disappointed that the Government of Canada (Canada) voted against Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It was unfortunate that Canada dismissed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as not being “meaningful and effective”.

Canada's action sends a provocative message to the international community that it does not support what has been described by the United Nations as a ‘triumph for indigenous peoples around the world’.

Canada missed a historic opportunity to take a leadership role in its commitment to human rights, yet, has chosen to stand outside the circle of the international community as it celebrates a major victory in establishing international human rights standards for Aboriginal peoples.

The NAFC is disappointed that the reasons stated for voting against the Declaration were as ‘clear as mud’ as Canada described the some of the text of Declaration as overly broad, unclear and capable of a wide variety of interpretations, faulty, unduly restrictive. Canada even speculated that the Declaration as non-binding document may establish a complete veto power over legislative action.

The NAFC believes that Canada's actions tarnishes its reputation in not standing with the international community as it works to set the minimum international standards for the protection and promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples. In the spirit of transparency and accountability, existing and future laws, policies, and programs on urban Aboriginal peoples may not meet or be consistent with these minimal standards.

Canadians have stood proud as Canada has heeded the call from the United Nations and the international community to support those more unfortunate around the world, yet, the United Nations and the international community asked for our support and, in an unprecedented move, the Canada turned its back.

The National Association of Friendship Centres is a national Aboriginal organization providing programs and services to 116 Friendship Centres across the country.

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