



## The Declaration explained

---

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (the Declaration) provides a roadmap to advance lasting reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. It shows us that further steps must be taken to respect, recognize and protect the human rights of Indigenous peoples and to address the wrongs of the past.

The Government of Canada and Indigenous peoples are working together in consultation and cooperation to implement the Declaration.

### ➤ The Declaration explained

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is a comprehensive international human rights instrument on the rights of Indigenous peoples around the world.

Through 46 articles, it affirms and sets out a broad range of collective and individual rights that constitute the minimum standards to protect the rights of Indigenous peoples and to contribute to their survival, dignity and well-being.

These include rights related to:

- Equality and non-discrimination
- Self-determination, self-government and recognition of treaties
- Environment
- Civil and political rights
- Participation in decision-making and Indigenous institutions
- Economic and social rights
- Implementation and redress
- Culture, religion and language
- Education and media

The Declaration also affirms the need to respect and promote the rights of Indigenous peoples set out in treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements.

The Declaration is the result of almost 25 years of work and collaboration between United Nations member states and Indigenous peoples from around the world. Indigenous leaders from Canada played a significant role in its development, including drafting and negotiating.

In 2016, the Government of Canada endorsed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples without qualification and committed to its full and effective implementation.



Working with First Nations, Inuit and Métis to implement the Declaration and create a framework to achieve its objectives is a proclamation that the human rights of Indigenous peoples matter. It is a concrete action guided by values of respect, cooperation and human rights for all.

➤ **Why Canada is implementing the Declaration**

Implementing the Declaration is a significant step forward on the shared path of reconciliation. It will contribute to building renewed, nation-to-nation, Inuit-Crown, government-to-government relationships with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis based on affirmation of rights, respect, co-operation and partnership.

➤ **Implementing the Declaration is about:**

- creating a brighter future for present and future generations
- continuing the journey of justice, peace and reconciliation
- continuing to break down barriers and combat systemic racism and discrimination
- affirming and recognizing the inherent rights of Indigenous peoples, including the rights to self-determination and self-government
- protecting Indigenous governance and laws, Indigenous lands and territories, cultures and languages, promoting economic participation, and creating social and economic equality

Implementing the Declaration in Canada sets a positive example for upholding and respecting the human rights of Indigenous peoples throughout the world.

Implementing the Declaration also responds to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action 43, and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls for Justice.

Everyone benefits when we all have access to basic human rights are met, this includes needs, safety and equal treatment. We all benefit when we respect and promote the rights of Indigenous elders, youth, persons with disabilities, women, men, and 2SLGBTQQIA+, and ensure everyone is protected against violence, systemic racism and discrimination. We all benefit when Indigenous people have equal access to opportunities and services, when Indigenous peoples and businesses are full partners in growing diverse, prosperous and sustainable economies.



➤ **Elements of the Declaration already reflected in federal laws**

There are elements of the Declaration that are already reflected in a range of Canadian laws, policies and programs, including section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, the equality rights provisions of the Charter and the non-discrimination protections provided by the *Canadian Human Rights Act*.

In addition, building on Canada's legal framework and working in partnership with Indigenous peoples, we have taken a number of steps to further reflect the Declaration in Canada. These include federal laws that protect and promote Indigenous languages, Indigenous child and family services, and Indigenous participation in environmental impact assessments. Implementing the Declaration is generational work. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* will help advance the implementation of the Declaration as a roadmap for reconciliation in Canada, building on steps the federal government has already taken in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples.