



FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
DECEMBER 10, 2008**

60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Canada Must Respect the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Vancouver (Coast Salish Territory) – On December 10, 2008 (United Nations Human Rights Day), the United Nations celebrates the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (“UN Declaration”) affirms that *‘Indigenous peoples have the right to the full enjoyment, as a collective or as individuals, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms as recognized in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights law’.*

Canada, the United States, Australia and New Zealand were the only nations to vote against the UN Declaration when it was adopted by the UN General Assembly on September 13, 2007. The Canadian government has continued to oppose the UN Declaration, actively undermining the international human rights system.

On December 9, 2008, Canada again joined with the United States, Australia and New Zealand to oppose references to the UN Declaration and to the rights of Indigenous peoples in a decision on REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation), which was drafted by government delegates at the UN Climate Change Conference in Poznań, Poland.

“This latest effort by Canada to oppose the UN Declaration and the rights of Indigenous peoples is part of a disturbing pattern”, stated Grand Chief Edward John, Political Executive Member of the First Nations Summit, “Within Canada, and internationally, the federal government has shown no respect for recognizing and upholding the rights of Indigenous peoples”.

“On the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we call upon Canada to endorse and fully implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples”, stated Chief John.

-30-

The First Nations Summit speaks on behalf of First Nations involved in treaty negotiations in British Columbia. Further background information on the Summit may be found at www.fns.bc.ca.

For Further Information:

Colin Braker
Communication Director
First Nations Summit: Office: 604.926.9903/Cell: 604.328.4094