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Chair of UN forum welcomes Canada's endorsement of indigenous rights treaty



Carlos Mamani, Chairperson of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

12 November 2010 – Canada has endorsed the global treaty outlining the rights of the world's estimated 370 million indigenous peoples, a move welcomed by the head of a United Nations body dealing with the issue as a reaffirmation of the country's commitment to the principles of respect and non-discrimination.

The endorsement by Canada of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is an “important step in the right direction towards building and strengthening the relationship between Canada and indigenous peoples within Canada,” said Carlos Mamani, Chair of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII).

Canada, along with Australia, New Zealand and the United States, originally voted against the Declaration when it was adopted by the General Assembly in September 2007, a move that followed more than two decades of debate.

Australia later endorsed the treaty – a non-binding text that sets out the individual and collective rights of indigenous peoples, as well as their rights to culture, identity, language, employment, health, education and other issues – in 2009.

Mr. Mamani, in a statement, said he looked forward to increased commitment by Canada and the world to working towards the full implementation of the Declaration, and encouraged other States that have not endorsed it to do so.

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