



BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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NEWS RELEASE

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BCAFN Expresses Concern with Canada's Implementation Progress on UNDA

(Lheidli T'enneh Territory, Prince George, BC) – On June 20, 2024, Canada released its third Annual Report as required in section 7 of the *United Nations Declaration Act* (UNDA). The report articulates Canada's work to date on the implementation of the UNDA and its associated Action Plan.

BCAFN is concerned that the implementation efforts to date fall short of the standards and principles espoused by the *UN Declaration*. If Canada doesn't seriously engage with the concerns expressed by First Nations, it will fail to achieve the goals of the legislation.

"The fulsome implementation of the *UN Declaration*, as envisioned by the UNDA, presents a very real opportunity to recognize and implement the human rights of Indigenous peoples," stated Regional Chief Terry Teegee. "This requires Canada committing to a whole-of-government approach with defined processes by which First Nations are engaged and their free, prior and informed consent is obtained."

In order for the *UN Declaration* to be successfully implemented in Canada, the federal government must commit to:

1. Developing an engagement framework for the alignment of laws and the implementation of the National Action Plan Measures.
2. Define a whole-of-government standard for recognizing First Nation's right to free, prior and informed consent.
3. Identify appropriate funding to resource the participation of First Nations in co-development and co-implementation of the UNDA and the NAP.
4. Create an arms-length coordination body, commissioner or secretariat to oversee UNDA implementation and to ensure accountability and transparency.

Without these, Canada risks undermining its own implementation efforts by engaging with First Nations through ad-hoc, inconsistent processes that fail to recognize First Nations' rights as found within the *UN Declaration*.

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