



## Press Statement

### **“Our Peoples will not be Forgotten” ~ The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples brings the continued discrimination against Indigenous Peoples in Canada to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples.**

April 24, 2019 (Ottawa, ON) – The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples is bringing to light the continued discrimination against our constituency of Indigenous Peoples in Canada through advocacy this week at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples (UNPFII).

The marginalization experienced by CAP’s constituency of off-reserve status and non-status Indians, Métis, and Southern Labrador Inuit is deep-seated in colonial administration structures and legislation such as the *Indian Act* that continues to govern who is recognized as Indigenous in Canada today. In this time of reconciliation and a federal commitment to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) implementation, CAP believes immediate action must be taken for the inclusion of our peoples in federal program and policy.

“We want the UN to recognize that colonial violence continues today in Canada”, urges National Chief Bertrand, “because of this government’s approach to pitting Indigenous groups against each other instead of creating inclusive programs and responses for non-status peoples, Métis peoples with origins across Canada, and those living in urban and rural communities can access”.

Alarming, recent federal investments and legislation have deepened divisions and disadvantage, rather than create culturally-responsive, inclusive program and policy for **ALL Indigenous Peoples in Canada**. In Budget 2019 the federal government made investments that only benefit some: for example, post-secondary student support for only First Nations students, leaving Métis and non-status students without equal access to additional post-secondary support. The government has also introduced child welfare legislation, *Bill C-92: An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis Children, Youth and Families*, that was co-developed without the input of CAP and fails to address the unique needs and interests of the vulnerable off-reserve, non-status, and Métis children living across Canada.

CAP is hosting an event at the UN forum to bring attention to the struggle for recognition that Indigenous peoples continue to face in Canada today and the impacts on our communities of this discrimination and exclusion. Panellists include representatives from CAP’s provincial and territorial affiliates and the National Youth Council. Discussion will focus on violations of Indigenous rights in Canada and the specific ways government must work to better recognize and respect the rights of all Indigenous peoples as part of their commitment to UNDRIP implementation.

“If the federal government is truly committed to implementing UNDRIP in Canada they must begin by recognizing the Indigenous identities of our peoples, our right to self-determination and our rights to determine our own membership structures”, concludes National Chief Bertrand.

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For 48 years, the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples has been the national voice representing the rights, interests and needs of Métis, status and non-status Indians, and Southern Inuit Indigenous People living off-reserve. Today, over 75% of Indigenous people live off-reserve.

In 2016, CAP won a landmark victory in the Supreme Court of Canada’s unanimous decision in *CAP Daniels v. Canada*, which confirmed that Métis and non-status Indians fall under the federal government’s jurisdiction and fiduciary duty. The decision affirmed that Métis and Non-Status Indians are “Indians” under section 91(24) of the Constitution Act, 1867. As stated in the decision, “[Métis and non-status Indians] are deprived of programs, services and intangible benefits recognized by all governments as needed.”