



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **CAP Excluded from FPT Meeting on United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

November 12<sup>th</sup> 2020 (Ottawa, ON) – The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP) condemns the exclusion of its voices from a high level meeting on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Today’s Federal-Provincial Territorial (FPT) meeting with select National Indigenous Organizations (NIO) discussing the draft legislation to implement UNDRIP was organized by the federal Department of Justice.

CAP’s National Chief Elmer St. Pierre stated, “The exclusion of CAP from this FPT UNDRIP meeting is nothing short of racial profiling indicative of systemic racism on behalf of so-called Justice officials. The perspective of off-reserve Indigenous peoples is not optional. It is an obligation.”

The Department of Justice organized an FPT meeting with only three of five National Indigenous Organizations, leaving out CAP and the Native Women’s Association of Canada. The Department is deliberately excluding off-reserve Indigenous input. While other Indigenous organizations were provided many months of consultation, CAP was offered a hollow gesture of two short meetings.

“As National Chief, and a grassroots Indigenous individual, I am ashamed of this government. Any discussion regarding legislation that affects our rights as Indigenous Peoples without CAP at the table is disgraceful,” said St. Pierre. “CAP represents constituents across Canada whose input is being willfully ignored by the Federal government.”

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was the result of many years of advocacy and negotiation by Indigenous peoples working with nation states to address the systemic and colonial oppression experienced by Indigenous people worldwide. In its essence, it creates the opportunity for Nations to be able to begin the process of reconciliation through the respect for Indigenous peoples and their inherent right to self-determination.

Article 38 of the UNDRIP calls upon all states in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples to take the appropriate measures, including legislative measures to begin the implementation of the declaration. Canada is not living up to the spirit of the UN Declaration by failing to engage all Indigenous peoples in an equitable way.

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples is the federally recognized National Indigenous Organization that represents off-reserve status and non-status Indians, Metis and Southern Inuit Aboriginal Peoples. Over 80% of Indigenous people in Canada live off-reserve. CAP has been in existence since 1971, bringing together provincial and territorial organizations from coast to coast. CAP is responsible for victories in Indigenous rights, such as the April 14<sup>th</sup> 2016, CAP-Daniels Supreme Court decision, and fighting for the inclusion of S.35 of the Constitution Act.

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