



Affaires autochtones
et du Nord Canada

Indigenous and
Northern Affairs Canada

Sous-ministre adjoint principal Senior Assistant Deputy Minister

Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0H4

JUN 08 2018

Mr. Gordon Swan,
President
British Columbia School Trustees Association
1580 Broadway West, 4th Floor
VANCOUVER BC V6J 5K9

Via email: bcsta@bcsta.org

Dear Mr. Swan:

This is in response to your letter of August 30, 2017, addressed to the Honourable Carolyn Bennett, concerning the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Minister Bennett has asked that I respond on her behalf. I regret the delay for responding.

I appreciate you writing on behalf of the British Columbia School Trustees Association, and its interest in the Government of Canada's commitment to adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, in addition to the ongoing efforts being made toward reconciliation.

I would like to congratulate the British Columbia School Trustees Association for passing a resolution calling for the use of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation. Canada's path toward reconciliation will not be successful with only the input and attention of federal, provincial, and territorial governments. Other partners in reconciliation, such as your association, are needed if we are to succeed.

In May 2016, the Government of Canada announced that it is a full supporter of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, without qualification. On November 20, 2017, the government committed to fully implementing the Declaration, and is working in full partnership with Indigenous Peoples to achieve this, including by supporting Private Member's Bill C-262.

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In July 2017, the Government published the principles respecting its relationship with Indigenous Peoples, which will drive the review of laws process. These principles are rooted in section 35, guided by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of

Indigenous Peoples are informed by the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. You can find out more about the principles on the following webpage:

<http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/principles-principes.html>.

The Government will fulfill its commitment to implementing the Declaration through the collaborative review and reform of laws, policies, and practices together with our Indigenous partners. This work is ongoing through various mechanisms, such as the Working Group of Ministers on the Review of Laws and Policies Related to Indigenous Peoples, the Permanent Bilateral Mechanisms with three National Indigenous Organizations, the ministerial engagement on the development of a Recognition and Implementation of Indigenous Rights Framework, and through existing for a, such as discussion and negotiation tables with Indigenous groups.

This work is grounded in various sources of knowledge, such as reports, studies, and the tireless advocacy of Indigenous Peoples, and is guided by the *Principles respecting the Government of Canada's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples*.

On February 14, 2018, the Prime Minister announced that the Government of Canada will develop a Recognition and Implementation of Indigenous Rights Framework in full partnership with First Nation, Inuit, and Métis. The contents of the Framework will be determined through national engagement activities that began in the spring. To truly renew the relationship between Canada and Indigenous Peoples, the Government of Canada must make the recognition and implementation of rights the basis for all relations between Indigenous Peoples and Canada. Additional information is available online at www.canada.ca/indigenous-rights.

Like the British Columbia School Trustees Association's resolution calling upon Canada to fully adopt and implement the Declaration, we are working towards this goal. The Framework will make the recognition of Indigenous rights the foundation of all relations between Canada and Indigenous Peoples. It is intended to bring the federal approach to self-determination in line with the Declaration

Thank you again for sharing the views of the British Columbia School Trustees Association, and its leadership in working toward reconciliation. Your continued interest in the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Canada and the ongoing efforts being made toward reconciliation are both commendable and extremely important.

Sincerely,



Joe Wild
Senior Assistant Deputy Minister
Treaties and Aboriginal Government