

# What Is the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act?

In 2007, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration).

- ▶ The UN Declaration sets out standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the Indigenous peoples of the world.
- ▶ It builds on existing human rights and fundamental freedoms and describes how they apply to Indigenous peoples.
- ▶ The UN Declaration emphasizes that Indigenous peoples have the right to:
  - live in dignity
  - maintain and strengthen their own institutions, cultures and traditions
  - pursue self-determination
- ▶ The UN Declaration is a framework for reconciliation.
- ▶ The UN Declaration has been adopted by 148 nations around the world.

## Article 13

Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.

## Article 14

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.
2. Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination.
3. States shall, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, take effective measures, in order for indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language.

## British Columbia's Implementation of the UN Declaration

- ▶ In November 2019, the Province of BC passed the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (Declaration Act) into law.

### The Declaration Act:

- aims to create a path to respecting the human rights of Indigenous peoples.
- requires the provincial government to make BC laws consistent with the UN Declaration.
- states that this work should be done with Indigenous peoples.
- requires the development and implementation of an action plan that is developed with Indigenous peoples in BC.
- requires the provincial government to produce an annual report with an update on how the laws of British Columbia are being made consistent with the UN Declaration and how the goals in the action plan are being achieved.
- states that the government may enter into agreements with Indigenous governing bodies.