

Facts on

Indigenous Culture, Treaties, Residential Schools

2018

1) Number of Nations

There are over 634 recognized First Nations governments or bands, roughly half of which are in the provinces of Ontario and British Columbia. The total population with First Nation identity is more than 850,000

2) Creation Beliefs

People everywhere, including First Nations, have their own creation beliefs. Each First Nation has its own creation beliefs, told in the form of a story of their ancestors. The Iroquois creation story often includes elements of the earth being formed on the turtle's back with animals and all other creatures providing further guidance when Sky Woman gives birth to First Woman. While creation beliefs may sound unlikely or silly, to put things in perspective, so does the idea of a person walking on water, coming back from the dead or parting the Red Sea.

3) Cultural Diversity

There is not one culture for all First Nations. Each Nation has its own culture, customs, beliefs, traditions, and world views. Cultural practices, symbols, and belief systems are influenced by each Nation's unique experience on the land and with each other and are always connected with the Spirit world.

4) Cultural Survival

Cultural survival is the name of the game for First Nations (and Indigenous Peoples in general). The past two centuries have seen an active program of assimilation directed towards First Nation culture via the Indian Act. Despite this campaign, which includes relocation from traditional or territorial lands, disastrous assimilation programs, outlawing of cultural practices, loss of language and customs, First Nation cultures have survived. Every decision made reflects this goal, and according to the 7th Generation principle, all decisions must include consideration of impacts on community members seven generations into the future, while honouring those who came before. So, next time a community seems to be taking a long time to decide, reflect back on this.

5) Connectivity Principle

Many First Nations believe everything is connected – the spirit world is connected to the mortal world; the sea is connected to the land; the sky is connected to the land. They usually get frustrated by attempts to separate things out. Statements such as "I can't talk you about that as it is not my department or line of work" or "I'm here to talk about mining only and not impacts about forestry" should be avoided. Effort will have to be made to be sensitive to the view of connectivity. Offer to bring in the person whose department it is if it's not yours. You'll get more co-operation in the long run.

6) The Circle is a Sacred Symbol

In First Nation spirituality the circle is everywhere – the medicine wheel, meetings and gatherings are held in circles, dances go in circles, drums are round, as are sweat lodges and tipis. The circle is the symbol of the cycle of all forms of life.

7) The American Constitution is based on the principles of the Great Law of Iroquois Confederacy

The Great Law of Iroquois Confederacy is credited as being a contributing influence on the American Constitution, due to Benjamin Franklin's great respect for the Iroquois system of government, which in itself is interesting from the perspective that the United States formed their Constitution not on the principles of European governments, but rather on that of a people considered "savages".

Fun Fact - Inventions

Who invented hockey is hotly contested but one theory is that it was invented by the Mohawks and we're going with this one. Hundreds of years ago, Jesuit priests wrote about the Mohawks playing with a stick and a piece of frozen ice embedded with mud and stones. According to the Jesuit journals, when a player was struck by the "puck" they yelled "Aukie!" meaning, ouch. Other inventions credited to First Nations include the canoe and kayak, darts, lacrosse (forerunner to hockey) petroleum jelly, cough syrup.

Myth: Indigenous people do not pay taxes.

Fact: All Indigenous people are required to pay taxes like all other Canadians. There are exceptions for those who have a Status Card in very specific situations, such as when they purchase goods and services on a reserve or earn their income on a reserve.

Myth: Indigenous peoples never had a written language.

Fact: European and Asian writing systems are one way of transmitting information in visual symbols, but there are others. Indigenous peoples have used symbols and a variety of markings to communicate and tell a story. Totem poles are a great example of the use of visual language.

Myth: Everything that happened to the Indigenous peoples happened so long ago that they should just get over it.

Fact: They are still dealing with the effects of colonization. For example, the Indian Act still controls many aspects of their lives and places limits on Indigenous peoples, and new developments happen in Indigenous communities and cultures every day.

Myth: Indigenous peoples are all the same.

Fact: Indigenous peoples across Canada are very diverse. They are composed of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people. They speak over 50 different languages. They have a wide range of cultural practices and traditions.

Myth: Indigenous cultures were very primitive.

Fact: Indigenous peoples have had complex cultures, and systems of governance, commerce and trade, and agriculture. Indigenous cultures and traditions are thriving today.

Myth: All Indigenous people get a free university education.

Fact: Some may get money for school if they have a Status Card and if their First Nation has money to fund all or part of their post-secondary degree. Many receive no help at all from their communities or the government.

Myth: Nothing happened to the younger generation so what is their excuse?

Fact: Colonization has had a lasting effect on Indigenous communities. This has resulted in challenges including: poverty, depression, intergenerational trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder. There are many social and economic barriers the communities and their youth must overcome in order to break this harmful cycle. Many Indigenous people continue to experience racism, sometimes direct and intentional, and sometimes in the form of uninformed

What newcomers need to know about residential schools:

When we talk about the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada, the term “residential schools” always comes up. What are residential schools and why is it important for newcomers to know about them?

The establishment and operation of residential schools is said to be one of the darkest periods in Canada’s history as a nation. Everyone needs to know about residential schools. It is crucial to understanding the plight of Indigenous peoples in our society today.

What are residential schools?

These are “government-sponsored religious schools established to assimilate Indigenous children into Euro-Canadian culture” (Residential schools, The Canadian Encyclopedia). The Residential School System was based upon the assumption that Indigenous people were not civilized. They thought that the best way to “educate” Indigenous children and assimilate them fully into the society was to separate them from their families to be taught at residential schools. In 1920, it became mandatory for Indigenous children to go to one. Parents faced fines or imprisonment if they did not follow. There were about 150 residential schools all over Canada.

What’s wrong with these schools?

The general experience of students was more negative than positive. Not only were the children forcibly separated from their families, many experienced:

- abuse and neglect
- disconnection from their beliefs, language, culture
- loss of freedom
- discrimination
- physical abuse (excessive punishment)
- sexual abuse

What were the schools like?

As soon as the children came in, their clothes and cultural belongings were taken away. They were:

- given haircuts and were required to wear uniforms
- given new English names
- not allowed to speak their own languages, practice their cultural beliefs or spend time with the opposite sex including their brothers and sisters. Students were physically punished for such “transgressions”.
- required to practice Christianity allowed to go home to their families during the school year. After the 1960s, they were allowed to go home for statutory holidays, and then later, on the weekends as well
- Until the late 1950s, a half-day system was enforced. School days started early, the half day divided into classroom instruction and work. Classes were in English or French, even if the children had a different language. After class, they worked as farm hands or cleaning staff. This was all in the guise of vocational training. Actually, the free labour benefitted the school and allowed them to run inexpensively.
- The children did not have enough to eat. They were also not given proper clothes for the cold winters or hot summers. And because of overcrowding, diseases spread rapidly in the schools. Over and above such treatment, the children were made to think that their culture was inferior. They were told that they will never be as good as non-Indigenous people. It is estimated that 150,000 First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children attended residential schools from 1883 until 1996.
- The video *Stolen Children: Residential School survivors speak out* from CBC’s *The National* features the experience of residential school survivors as well as the lasting effects of this experience on the children of the survivors:

Long-term consequences

- Because of such dismal conditions, many children felt scared, lonely and hungry. Some tried to run away, or rebel. In extreme cases, some tried to burn down their school or committed suicide. It is estimated that at least 6,000 children died in residential schools according to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- As early as the 1940s it was evident to the government as well as the missionary bodies that residential schools were ineffective. But it was the growing pressure from protests of parents and political leaders that finally pushed the government to start phasing out the schools. By 1986, most have been closed or turned over to local bands. Ten years later, the last residential school, Gordon Residential School in Punnichy, Saskatchewan was closed.
- After coming out of these schools, survivors experienced the following:
- Survivors were left with very little education and had developed a belief that it is shameful to be an Indigenous person.
- Many were unable to speak their mother languages when they went back home. This left them unable to connect with their parents, especially their grandparents. This created a greater gap between them and their own culture, as Indigenous culture is usually passed on orally.
- Many found it hard to fit into the European-Canadian society. They could not find work because of their low level of education. They also faced racism and discrimination.
- They felt that they did not belong anywhere.

Individual and family dysfunction grew and extended to the succeeding generations. This is why residential schools continue to be blamed for the joblessness, poverty, violence, drug and alcohol abuse, family breakdown, sexual abuse, prostitution, homelessness, high rates of imprisonment, and early death of Indigenous people even up to now.

Christopher Columbus and the Doctrine of Discovery - 5 Things to Know

The Doctrine of Discovery was used by European monarchies, beginning in the mid-fifteenth century, as a means of legitimizing the colonization of lands outside of Europe. It was issued in 1493, the year after Christopher Columbus arrived on the shores of what is now known as North America. The Doctrine of Discovery continues to impact Indigenous Peoples throughout the world.

1.The intent of the Doctrine

The Doctrine of Discovery provided a framework for Christian explorers, in the name of their sovereign, to lay claim to territories uninhabited by Christians. If the lands were vacant, then they could be defined as “discovered” and sovereignty claimed.

2.Within the framework of the Doctrine, Indigenous Peoples in the Americas were considered non- human

The prevailing theory of the time was that Indigenous Peoples, because they were non-Christians, were not human and therefore the land was empty or terra nullius. (Terra nullius is a Latin expression meaning "nobody's land", and is a principle sometimes used in international law to describe territory that may be acquired by a state's occupation of it)

When Christopher Columbus arrived in 1492, it is estimated that the Americas were actually occupied by 100 million Indigenous Peoples - which is about one fifth of the human race at that time - who had been living their traditional lives on the land since time immemorial. But, because they were not Christians the land was deemed terra nullius.

3. The UN's perspective on the Impact of the Doctrine of Discovery (May, 2012)

“The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues concluded its eleventh session with the approval of a set of nine draft recommendations, highlighted by a text approved on the special theme, the ongoing impact of the Discovery Doctrine on indigenous peoples and the right redress. That fifteenth century Christian principle was denounced throughout the session as the “shameful” root of all the discrimination and marginalization indigenous peoples faced today.

The Permanent Forum noted that, while such doctrines of domination and “conquest”, including terra nullis and the Regalian doctrine (The Regalian doctrine is the foundation of the time-honored principle of land ownership that 'all lands that were not acquired from the Government, either by purchase or by grant, belong to the public domain.'" "All lands and water of the public domain are owned by the state.) were promoted as authority for land acquisition, they also encouraged despicable assumptions: that indigenous peoples were “savages”, “barbarians”, “inferior and uncivilized,” among other constructs the colonizers used to subjugate, dominate and exploit the lands, territories and resources of native peoples.”

4. The Doctrine of Discovery is still relevant in today's legal arenas in Canada

“On 26 June 2014, in a unanimous 8:0 decision that marked the first time the highest court has recognized the existence of Aboriginal title on a particular site, the Supreme Court of Canada made clear that: “The doctrine of terra nullius (that no one owned the land prior to European assertion of sovereignty) never applied in Canada, as confirmed by the Royal Proclamation (1763), R.S.C. 1985, App. II, No. 1.” See *Tsilhqot'in Nation v British Columbia*, 2014 SCC 44 at para. 69.

The case concerned an Aboriginal title claim to lands within the province of British Columbia and as the Court explains: “At the time of assertion of European sovereignty, the Crown acquired radical or underlying title to all the land in the province. This Crown title, however, was burdened by the pre-existing legal rights of Aboriginal people who occupied and used the land prior to European arrival. ... The Aboriginal interest in land that burdens the Crown's underlying title is an independent legal interest, which gives rise to a fiduciary duty on the part of the Crown.””

5. The Doctrine of Discovery continues to impact Indigenous Peoples in Canada

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls-to-Action, released in 2015, includes two references to repudiate the concept of the Doctrine of Discovery:

"Reconciliation

Canadian Governments and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People

We call upon the Government of Canada, on behalf of all Canadians, to jointly develop with Aboriginal peoples a Royal Proclamation of Reconciliation to be issued by the Crown. The proclamation would build on the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and the Treaty of Niagara of 1764, and reaffirm the nation-to-nation relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the Crown. The proclamation would include, but not be limited to, the following commitments:

1. Repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples such as the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius.
2. Settlement Agreement Parties and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

We call upon all religious denominations and faith groups who have not already done so to repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples, such as the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius."

Healing the damage

Church groups began to issue apologies in the 1980s for their role in running these schools (Residential schools and reconciliation: What you should be reading today, Globe and Mail, June 1, 2015).

On June 11, 2008, then Prime Minister Stephen Harper offered an apology to all former students of residential schools in Canada and established a \$1.9 billion compensation package for the survivors. A year before, the government and churches that operated the schools signed the Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. It provides financial compensation to former students of residential schools.

Instrumental to the process of reconciliation was the creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It undertook a six-year study to uncover the effects of residential schools. The commission studied the testimony of survivors, former staff, and church and government officials, as well as the contents of archival documents. On June 2, 2015, the commission published a report declaring that the residential school experience was equivalent to cultural genocide. The report also contained 94 recommendations towards healing and righting the wrongs committed during this dark period in Canadian history.

LEGACY The "calls to action" are divided into two parts: legacy (1 to 42) and reconciliation (43 to 94.)

Child welfare

1. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to commit to reducing the number of Aboriginal children in care by ...

2. We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with the provinces and territories, to prepare and publish annual reports on the number of Aboriginal children who are in care, compared with non-Aboriginal children, as well as the reasons for apprehension, the total spending on preventive and care services by child-welfare agencies, and the effectiveness of various interventions.

3. We call upon all levels of government to fully implement Jordan's Principle.

(Jordan's Principle. Jordan's Principle is a child-first principle intended to ensure that First Nations children do not experience, delay, denial, or disruption of services that are normally available to all other children)

4. We call upon the federal government to enact Aboriginal child-welfare legislation that establishes national standards for Aboriginal child apprehension and custody cases and includes principles that ...

5. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate parenting programs for Aboriginal families.

Education

6. We call upon the Government of Canada to repeal Section 43 of the Criminal Code of Canada.

(Violence as Correction)

Section 43 of the Criminal Code of Canada is a defense to assault that justifies violence against children by teachers and parents in the name of correction. It became part of our Criminal Code in 1892 and has allowed severe spanking, slapping and striking with belts and other objects.

The January 30, 2004 decision of the Supreme Court of Canada on the constitutionality of section 43 limited the scope of this defence but did not end it. Limiting legal approval of hitting children by restricting hitting to certain ages, degrees of force, and parts of the body is not the solution to the problems posed by this nineteenth century defence to assault. Legal approval for any hitting of children is harmful and unjust.

We believe section 43 is contrary to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We believe it has no place in a democratic society that values children and should be repealed.

The wording of the section will remain the same unless it is repealed or changed by Parliament. Those who use or support corporal punishment will continue to judge its acceptability by their own subjective standards of what is “reasonable”. See Constitutional Challenge, Comment on Supreme Court Decision for our view of the decision and its implications. We will continue to advocate complete repeal of this defence to assaults on children).

7. We call upon the federal government to develop with Aboriginal groups a joint strategy to eliminate educational and employment gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.

8. We call upon the federal government to eliminate the discrepancy in federal education funding for First Nations children being educated on reserves and those First Nations children being educated off reserves.

9. We call upon the federal government to prepare and publish annual reports comparing funding for the education of First Nations children on and off reserves, as well as educational and income attainments of Aboriginal peoples in Canada compared with non-Aboriginal people.

10. We call on the federal government to draft new Aboriginal education legislation with the full participation and informed consent of Aboriginal peoples. The new legislation would include a commitment to sufficient funding and would incorporate the following principles ...

11. We call upon the federal government to provide adequate funding to end the backlog of First Nations students seeking a post-secondary education.

12. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Aboriginal families.

Language and culture

13. We call upon the federal government to acknowledge that Aboriginal rights include Aboriginal language rights.

14. We call upon the federal government to enact an Aboriginal Languages Act that incorporates the following principles ...

15. We call upon the federal government to appoint, in consultation with Aboriginal groups, an Aboriginal Languages Commissioner.

16. We call upon post-secondary institutions to create university and college degree and diploma programs in Aboriginal languages.

17. We call upon all levels of government to enable residential school survivors and their families to reclaim names changed by the residential school system by waiving administrative costs for a period of five years for the name-change process and the revision of official identity documents, such as birth certificates, passports, driver's licenses, health cards, status cards, and social insurance numbers.

Health

18. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to acknowledge that the current state of Aboriginal health in Canada is a direct result of previous Canadian government policies, including residential schools, and to recognize and implement the health-care rights of Aboriginal people as identified in international law, constitutional law, and under the Treaties.

(International Law

"In the second half of the twentieth century, removing children from their parents in order to change a people and a culture came to be recognized as an act of oppression, formally considered by the United Nations to be a form of genocide. Many distinct aspects of aboriginal child protection are thus related to international human rights law including the 1951 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide the 1976 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the 1986 Declaration on Social and Legal Principles Relating to the Protection and Welfare of Children, with Special Reference to Foster Placement and Adoption Nationally and Internationally the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples The latter Declaration provides: "Indigenous peoples have the collective right to live in freedom, peace and security as distinct peoples and shall not be subjected to any act of genocide or any other act of violence, including forcibly removing children of the group to another group. It is non-binding but may be persuasive even for those states that voted against it. Within countries, the expression of aboriginal child protection may be seen to be entangled with issues relating to the right of self-determination of indigenous peoples.)

19. We call upon the federal government, in consultation with Aboriginal peoples, to establish measurable goals to identify and close the gaps in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, and to publish annual progress reports and assess long-term trends.

20. In order to address the jurisdictional disputes concerning Aboriginal people who do not reside on reserves, we call upon the federal government to recognize, respect, and address the distinct health needs of the Métis, Inuit, and off-reserve Aboriginal peoples.

21. We call upon the federal government to provide sustainable funding for existing and new Aboriginal healing centres to address the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual harms caused by residential schools, and to ensure that the funding of healing centres in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories is a priority.

22. We call upon those who can effect change within the Canadian health-care system to recognize the value of Aboriginal healing practices and use them in the treatment of Aboriginal patients in collaboration with Aboriginal healers and Elders where requested by Aboriginal patients.

23. We call upon all levels of government to: increase the number of Aboriginal professionals working in the health-care field, ensure the retention of Aboriginal health-care providers in Aboriginal communities and provide cultural competency training for all health-care professionals ...

24. We call upon medical and nursing schools in Canada to require all students to take a course dealing with Aboriginal health issues, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, and Indigenous teachings and practices.

Justice

25. We call upon the federal government to establish a written policy that reaffirms the independence of the RCMP to investigate crimes in which the government has its own interest as a potential or real party in civil litigation.

26. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to review and amend their respective statutes of limitations to ensure that they conform with the principle that governments and other entities cannot rely on limitation defences to defend legal actions of historical abuse brought by Aboriginal people.

27. We call upon the Federation of Law Societies of Canada to ensure that lawyers receive appropriate cultural competency training, which includes the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations.

28) We call upon law schools in Canada to require all law students to take a course in Aboriginal people and the law, which includes the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations.

29. We call upon the parties and, in particular, the federal government, to work collaboratively with plaintiffs not included in the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement to have disputed legal issues determined expeditiously on an agreed set of facts.

30. We call upon federal, provincial, and territorial governments to commit to eliminating the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in custody over the next decade, and to issue detailed annual reports that monitor and evaluate progress in doing so.

31. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to provide sufficient and stable funding to implement and evaluate community sanctions that will provide realistic alternatives to imprisonment for Aboriginal offenders and respond to the underlying causes of offending.

32. We call upon the federal government to amend the Criminal Code to allow trial judges, upon giving reasons, to depart from mandatory minimum sentences and restrictions on the use of conditional sentences.

33. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to recognize as a high priority the need to address and prevent Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and to develop, in collaboration with Aboriginal people, FASD preventive programs that can be delivered in a culturally appropriate manner.

34. We call upon the governments of Canada, the provinces, and territories to undertake reforms to the criminal justice system to better address the needs of offenders with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, including ...

- Providing increased community resources and powers for courts to ensure that FASD is properly diagnosed, and that appropriate community supports are in place for those with FASD.
- Enacting statutory exemptions from mandatory minimum sentences of imprisonment for offenders affected by FASD.
- Providing community, correctional, and parole resources to maximize the ability of people with FASD to live in the community.
- Adopting appropriate evaluation mechanisms to measure the effectiveness of such programs and ensure community safety.

35. We call upon the federal government to eliminate barriers to the creation of additional Aboriginal healing lodges within the federal correctional system.

36. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to work with Aboriginal communities to provide culturally relevant services to inmates on issues such as substance abuse, family and domestic violence, and overcoming the experience of having been sexually abused.

37. We call upon the federal government to provide more supports for Aboriginal programming in halfway houses and parole services.

38. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to commit to eliminating the overrepresentation of Aboriginal youth in custody over the next decade.

39. We call upon the federal government to develop a national plan to collect and publish data on the criminal victimization of Aboriginal people, including data related to homicide and family violence victimization.

40. We call on all levels of government, in collaboration with Aboriginal people, to create adequately funded and accessible Aboriginal-specific victim programs and services with appropriate evaluation mechanisms.

41. We call upon the federal government, in consultation with Aboriginal organizations, to appoint a public inquiry into the causes of, and remedies for, the disproportionate victimization of Aboriginal women and girls. The inquiry's mandate would include an investigation into missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls and links to the intergenerational legacy of residential schools.

42. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to commit to the recognition and implementation of Aboriginal justice systems in a manner consistent with the Treaty and Aboriginal rights of Aboriginal peoples, the Constitution Act, 1982, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, endorsed by Canada in November 2012.

RECONCILIATION

Canadian governments, UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

43. We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation.

Canada endorses indigenous rights declaration

CBC News · Posted: Nov 12, 2010 8:13 PM ET | Last Updated: November 12, 2010

The federal government has endorsed a United Nations declaration that recognizes global human rights standards for indigenous populations, reversing its initial opposition to the document.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), a non-binding document, recognizes indigenous people's basic human rights and rights to self-determination, language, equality and land, among other rights.

Assembly of First Nations National Chief Shawn Atleo praised Canada's endorsement of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. (Jeff McIntosh/Canadian Press)

Canada was one of four countries, along with Australia, New Zealand and the U.S., to vote against the declaration when it was adopted by the General Assembly in September 2007. Australia and New Zealand have since reversed their stance, and the U.S. has said it will review its position.

At the time the declaration was passed, the Harper government had expressed concerns about its wording on provisions addressing land and natural resources, saying it was overly broad and could lead to the reopening of previously settled land claims.

We call upon the Government of Canada to develop a national action plan, strategies, and other concrete measures to achieve the goals of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

In its March speech from the throne, the government indicated it wanted to "take steps to endorse this aspirational document in a manner fully consistent with Canada's Constitution and laws."

But on Friday, the government released a statement saying it has formally endorsed the declaration.

On the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada website, it stated that: "after careful and thoughtful consideration, Canada has concluded that it is better to endorse the UNDRIP while explaining its concerns, rather than simply rejecting the overall document.

"Although the UNDRIP does not reflect customary international law or change Canadian laws, Canada believes that the UNDRIP has the potential to contribute positively to the promotion and respect of the rights of indigenous peoples around the world."

In a statement, Assembly of First Nations National Chief Shawn Atleo praised Canada's endorsement of the document as a positive development.

"Today marks an important shift in our relationship, and now, the real work begins," he said. "Now is our time to work together towards a new era of fairness and justice for First Nations and a stronger Canada for all Canadians, guided by the Declaration's core principles of respect, partnership and reconciliation."

44. We call upon the Government of Canada to develop a national action plan, strategies, and other concrete measures to achieve the goals of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Royal Proclamation and Covenant of Reconciliation

45. We call upon the Government of Canada, on behalf of all Canadians, to jointly develop with Aboriginal peoples a Royal Proclamation of Reconciliation to be issued by the Crown. The proclamation would build on the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and the Treaty of Niagara of 1764 and reaffirm the nation-to-nation relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the Crown. The proclamation would include, but not be limited to, the following commitments ...

- Repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples such as the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius.
- Adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation.
- Renew or establish Treaty relationships based on principles of mutual recognition, mutual respect, and shared responsibility for maintaining those relationships into the future.
- Reconcile Aboriginal and Crown constitutional and legal orders to ensure that Aboriginal peoples are full partners in Confederation, including the recognition and integration of Indigenous laws and legal traditions in negotiation and implementation processes involving Treaties, land claims, and other constructive agreements

(The Treaty of Niagara 1764 and Canadian constitutionalism today: Crown/First Nations relations 250 years in

The Royal Proclamation of 1763 is recognized as one of Canada's founding constitutional documents and is sometimes referred to as a "Bill of Rights" for Indigenous people. Less well-known and recognized in Canadian classrooms and jurisprudence is a treaty entered into a year later, in July and August 1764, when about 2000 First Nations chiefs gathered at Fort Niagara to meet with British superintendent of Indian Affairs, Sir William Johnson.

The treaty of peace, friendship and respect entered into at Niagara 250 years ago set out a framework for Indigenous and British co-existence on Turtle Island, as the British were brought within the normative web of relationships already existing on Turtle Island. Included in the treaty negotiation was the reading of the text of the Proclamation but the negotiations and terms of the eventual treaty were richer than the plain text of the document.)

46. We call upon the parties to the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement to develop and sign a Covenant of Reconciliation that would identify principles for working collaboratively to advance reconciliation in Canadian society, and that would include, but not be limited to ...

47. We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous peoples and lands, such as the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius, and to reform those laws, government policies, and litigation strategies that continue to rely on such concepts.

Settlement Agreement Parties and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

48. We call upon the church parties to the Settlement Agreement, and all other faith groups and interfaith social justice groups in Canada who have not already done so, to formally adopt and comply with the principles, norms, and standards of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous

49. We call upon all religious denominations and faith groups who have not already done so to repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples, such as the Doctrine of Discovery

(The Doctrine of Discovery was promulgated by European monarchies in order to legitimize the colonization of lands outside of Europe. Between the mid-fifteenth century and the mid-twentieth century, this idea allowed European entities to seize lands inhabited by indigenous peoples under the guise of discovery. In 1494, the Treaty of Tordesillas declared that only non-Christian lands could be colonized under the Discovery Doctrine.

In 1792, U.S. Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson declared that the Doctrine of the Discovery would extend from Europe to the infant U.S. government. The Doctrine and its legacy continue to influence American imperialism and treatment of indigenous peoples. and terra nullius.)

Equity for Aboriginal People in the Legal System

50. In keeping with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, we call upon the federal government, in collaboration with Aboriginal organizations, to fund the establishment of Indigenous law institutes for the development, use, and understanding of Indigenous laws and access to justice in accordance with the unique cultures of Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

51. We call upon the Government of Canada, as an obligation of its fiduciary responsibility, to develop a policy of transparency by publishing legal opinions it develops and upon which it acts or intends to act, in regard to the scope and extent of Aboriginal and Treaty rights.

52. We call upon the Government of Canada, provincial and territorial governments, and the courts to adopt the following legal principles ...

National Council for Reconciliation

53. We call upon the Parliament of Canada, in consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, to enact legislation to establish a National Council for Reconciliation. The legislation would establish the council as an independent, national, oversight body with membership jointly appointed by the Government of Canada and national Aboriginal organizations and consisting of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members. Its mandate would include, but not be limited to, the following ...

The legislation would establish the council as an independent, national, oversight body with membership jointly appointed by the Government of Canada and national Aboriginal organizations and consisting of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members.

54. We call upon the Government of Canada to provide multi-year funding for the National Council for Reconciliation to ensure that it has the financial, human, and technical resources required to conduct its work, including the endowment of a National Reconciliation Trust to advance the cause of reconciliation.

55. We call upon all levels of government to provide annual reports or any current data requested by the National Council for Reconciliation so that it can report on the progress towards reconciliation. The reports or data would include, but not be limited to ...

- The number of Aboriginal children—including Métis and Inuit children—in care, compared with non-Aboriginal children, the reasons for apprehension, and the total spending on preventive and care services by child-welfare agencies.
- Comparative funding for the education of First Nations children on and off reserves.
- The educational and income attainments of Aboriginal peoples in Canada compared with non-Aboriginal people.
- Progress on closing the gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities in a number of health indicators such as: infant mortality, maternal health, suicide, mental health, addictions, life expectancy, birth rates, infant and child health issues, chronic diseases, illness and injury incidence, and the availability of appropriate health services.

56. We call upon the prime minister of Canada to formally respond to the report of the National Council for Reconciliation by issuing an annual "State of Aboriginal Peoples" report, which would outline the government's plans for advancing the cause of reconciliation.

54. We call upon the Government of Canada to provide multi-year funding for the National Council for Reconciliation to ensure that it has the financial, human, and technical resources required to conduct its work, including the endowment of a National Reconciliation Trust to advance the cause of reconciliation.

55. We call upon all levels of government to provide annual reports or any current data requested by the National Council for Reconciliation so that it can report on the progress towards reconciliation. The reports or data would include, but not be limited to ...

- Progress on eliminating the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in youth custody over the next decade.
- Progress on reducing the rate of criminal victimization of Aboriginal people, including data related to homicide and family violence victimization and other crimes.
- Progress on reducing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in the justice and correctional systems.

56. We call upon the prime minister of Canada to formally respond to the report of the National Council for Reconciliation by issuing an annual "State of Aboriginal Peoples" report, which would outline the government's plans for advancing the cause of reconciliation.

Professional Development and Training for Public Servants

57. We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

Church Apologies and Reconciliation

58. We call upon the Pope to issue an apology to survivors, their families, and communities for the Roman Catholic Church's role in the spiritual, cultural, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children in Catholic-run residential schools.

What's happening?

(On May 29, 2017, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau met with His Holiness Pope Francis at the Vatican.

During this meeting, the Prime Minister formally asked the Pope to deliver a papal apology for the Catholic Church's role in Indian Residential Schools.

On March 28, 2018 the Prime Minister received a letter from a senior representative of the Catholic Church in Canada, which stated that Pope Francis would not issue an apology. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau told reporters that, "obviously I am disappointed in the Catholic Church's decision not to apologize for their role in residential schools."

59. We call upon church parties to the settlement agreement to develop ongoing education strategies to ensure that their respective congregations learn about their church's role in colonization, the history and legacy of residential schools, and why apologies to former residential school students, their families, and communities were necessary.

60. We call upon leaders of the church parties to the settlement agreement and all other faiths, in collaboration with Indigenous spiritual leaders, survivors, schools of theology, seminaries, and other religious training centres, to develop and teach curriculum for all student clergy, and all clergy and staff who work in Aboriginal communities, on the need to respect Indigenous spirituality in its own right, the history and legacy of residential schools and the roles of the church parties in that system, the history and legacy of religious conflict in Aboriginal families and communities, and the responsibility that churches have to mitigate such conflicts and prevent spiritual violence.

60. We call upon leaders of the church parties to the settlement agreement and all other faiths, in collaboration with Indigenous spiritual leaders, survivors, schools of theology, seminaries, and other religious training centres, to develop and teach curriculum for all student clergy, and all clergy and staff who work in Aboriginal communities, on the need to respect Indigenous spirituality in its own right, the history and legacy of residential schools and the roles of the church parties in that system, the history and legacy of religious conflict in Aboriginal families and communities, and the responsibility that churches have to mitigate such conflicts and prevent spiritual violence.

61. We call upon church parties to the settlement agreement, in collaboration with survivors and representatives of Aboriginal organizations, to establish permanent funding to Aboriginal people for ...

- Community-controlled healing and reconciliation projects.
- Community-controlled culture and language revitalization projects.
- Community-controlled education and relationship-building projects.
- Regional dialogues for Indigenous spiritual leaders and youth to discuss Indigenous spirituality, self-determination, and reconciliation.

Education for reconciliation

62. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to ...

- Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students.
- Provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms.
- Provide the necessary funding to Aboriginal schools to utilize Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods in classrooms.
- Establish senior-level positions in government at the assistant deputy minister level or higher dedicated to Aboriginal content in education.

63. We call upon the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues, including ...

- Developing and implementing Kindergarten to Grade Twelve curriculum and learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools.
- Sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history.
- Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.
- Identifying teacher-training needs relating to the above.

What's happening? (The Government of Canada is not the lead on a response for Call to Action 63.)

64. We call upon all levels of government that provide public funds to denominational schools to require such schools to provide an education on comparative religious studies, which must include a segment on Aboriginal spiritual beliefs and practices developed in collaboration with Aboriginal elders.

What's happening? (The Government of Canada is not the lead on a response for Call to Action 64.)

65. We call upon the federal government, through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, post-secondary institutions and educators, and the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and its partner institutions, to establish a national research program with multi-year funding to advance understanding of reconciliation.

Youth Programs

66. We call upon the federal government to establish multi-year funding for community-based youth organizations to deliver programs on reconciliation and establish a national network to share information and best practices.

Museums and Archives

67. We call upon the federal government to provide funding to the Canadian Museums Association to undertake, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, a national review of museum policies and best practices to determine the level of compliance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and to make recommendations.

What's happening?

(Canadian Heritage is working with the Canadian Museums Association to support the implementation of Call to Action 67. In 2016-2017, Canadian Heritage funding was provided to the Canadian Museums Association to establish a framework and plan for undertaking a national review. A working group was established to provide guidance on the overall proposal, including establishing a majority Indigenous 13-member council of museum experts from across the country, establishing terms of reference, and developing the overall plan and budget. A proposal is now being finalized for a second phase of Canadian Heritage funding, to enable the implementation of the plan. This will include working with the Council and university partners to undertake regional roundtables, surveys, research and literature reviews to develop a comprehensive picture of current policies, best practices and gaps, followed by clear recommendations and toolkits.)

68. We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, and the Canadian Museums Association to mark the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation in 2017 by establishing a dedicated national funding program for commemoration projects on the theme of reconciliation.

69. We call upon Library and Archives Canada to fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the United Nations Joinet-Orentlicher principles, as related to Aboriginal peoples' inalienable right to know the truth about what happened and why, with regard to human rights violations committed against them in the residential schools, and ...

70) We call upon the federal government to provide funding to the Canadian Association of Archivists to undertake, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, a national review of archival policies and best practices to ...

Missing Children and Burial Information

71. We call upon all chief coroners and provincial vital statistics agencies that have not provided to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada their records on the deaths of Aboriginal children in the care of residential school authorities to make these documents available to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.

72. We call upon the federal government to allocate sufficient resources to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation to allow it to develop and maintain the National Residential School Student Death Register established by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

73. We call upon the federal government to work with churches, Aboriginal communities, and former residential school students to establish and maintain an online registry of residential school cemeteries, including, where possible, plot maps showing the location of deceased residential school children.

74. We call upon the federal government to work with the churches and Aboriginal community leaders to inform the families of children who died at residential schools of the child's burial location, and to respond to families' wishes for appropriate commemoration ceremonies and markers, and reburial in home communities where requested.

75. We call upon the federal government to work with provincial, territorial, and municipal governments, churches, Aboriginal communities, former residential school students, and current landowners to develop and implement strategies and procedures for the ongoing identification, documentation, maintenance, commemoration, and protection of residential school cemeteries or other sites at which residential school children were buried.

76) We call upon the parties engaged in the work of documenting, maintaining, commemorating, and protecting residential school cemeteries to adopt strategies in accordance with the following principles

National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation

77. We call upon provincial, territorial, municipal, and community archives to work collaboratively with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation to identify and collect copies of all records relevant to the history and legacy of the residential school system, and to provide these to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.

78. We call upon the Government of Canada to commit to making a funding contribution of \$10 million over seven years to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, plus an additional amount to assist communities to research and produce histories of their own residential school experience and their involvement in truth, healing, and reconciliation.

Commemoration

79. We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with survivors, Aboriginal organizations, and the arts community, to develop a reconciliation framework for Canadian heritage and commemoration.

- Amending the Historic Sites and Monuments Act to include First Nations, Inuit, and Métis representation on the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada and its Secretariat.
- Revising the policies, criteria, and practices of the National Program of Historical Commemoration to integrate Indigenous history, heritage values, and memory practices into Canada's national heritage and history.
- Developing and implementing a national heritage plan and strategy for commemorating residential school sites, the history and legacy of residential schools, and the contributions of Aboriginal peoples to Canada's history.

80. We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, to establish, as a statutory holiday, a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation to honour Survivors, their families, and communities, and ensure that public commemoration of the history and legacy of residential schools remains a vital component of the reconciliation process.

81. We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with survivors and their organizations, and other parties to the Settlement Agreement, to commission and install a publicly accessible, highly visible, Residential Schools National Monument in the city of Ottawa to honour Survivors and all the children who were lost to their families and communities.

82. We call upon provincial and territorial governments, in collaboration with Survivors and their organizations, and other parties to the Settlement Agreement, to commission and install a publicly accessible, highly visible, Residential Schools Monument in each capital city to honour Survivors and all the children who were lost to their families and communities.

83. We call upon the Canada Council for the Arts to establish, as a funding priority, a strategy for Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists to undertake collaborative projects and produce works that contribute to the reconciliation process.

Media and Reconciliation

84. We call upon the federal government to restore and increase funding to the CBC/ Radio-Canada, to enable Canada's national public broadcaster to support reconciliation, and be properly reflective of the diverse cultures, languages, and perspectives of Aboriginal peoples, including, but not limited to ...

- Increasing Aboriginal programming, including Aboriginal-language speakers.
- Increasing equitable access for Aboriginal peoples to jobs, leadership positions, and professional development opportunities within the organization.
- Continuing to provide dedicated news coverage and online public information resources on issues of concern to Aboriginal peoples and all Canadians, including the history and legacy of residential schools and the reconciliation process.

85. We call upon the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, as an independent non-profit broadcaster with programming by, for, and about Aboriginal peoples, to support reconciliation, including but not limited to ...

- Continuing to provide leadership in programming and organizational culture that reflects the diverse cultures, languages, and perspectives of Aboriginal peoples.
- Continuing to develop media initiatives that inform and educate the Canadian public and connect Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.

86. We call upon Canadian journalism programs and media schools to require education for all students on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations

Sports and Reconciliation

87. We call upon all levels of government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, sports halls of fame, and other relevant organizations, to provide public education that tells the national story of Aboriginal athletes in history.

88. We call upon all levels of government to take action to ensure long-term Aboriginal athlete development and growth, and continued support for the North American Indigenous Games, including funding to host the games and for provincial and territorial team preparation and travel.

89. We call upon the federal government to amend the Physical Activity and Sport Act to support reconciliation by ensuring that policies to promote physical activity as a fundamental element of health and well-being, reduce barriers to sports participation, increase the pursuit of excellence in sport, and build capacity in the Canadian sport system, are inclusive of Aboriginal peoples.

90. We call upon the federal government to ensure that national sports policies, programs, and initiatives are inclusive of Aboriginal peoples, including, but not limited to ...

- In collaboration with provincial and territorial governments, stable funding for, and access to, community sports programs that reflect the diverse cultures and traditional sporting activities of Aboriginal peoples.
- An elite athlete development program for Aboriginal athletes.
- Programs for coaches, trainers, and sports officials that are culturally relevant for Aboriginal peoples.
- Anti-racism awareness and training programs.

91. We call upon the officials and host countries of international sporting events such as the Olympics, Pan Am, and Commonwealth games to ensure that Indigenous peoples' territorial protocols are respected, and local Indigenous communities are engaged in all aspects of planning and participating in such events.

Business and Reconciliation

92. We call upon the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a reconciliation framework and to apply its principles, norms, and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous peoples and their lands and resources.

- Commit to meaningful consultation, building respectful relationships, and obtaining the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before proceeding with economic development projects.
- Ensure that Aboriginal peoples have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector, and that Aboriginal communities gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects.
- Provide education for management and staff on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

Newcomers to Canada

93. We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with the national Aboriginal organizations, to revise the information kit for newcomers to Canada and its citizenship test to reflect a more inclusive history of the diverse Aboriginal peoples of Canada, including information about the Treaties and the history of residential schools.

94. We call upon the government of Canada to replace the oath of citizenship with the following: "I swear (or affirm) that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Canada, her heirs and successors, and that I will faithfully observe the laws of Canada including Treaties with Indigenous Peoples, and fulfil my duties as a Canadian citizen."

What's happening?

(Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada is working with Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs to ensure the Oath of Citizenship reflects the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action. As part of the process, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada has engaged in consultations with the Assembly of First Nations, the Métis Nation, and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami.

Modifying the oath requires an amendment to the Citizenship Act, as such, the Government of Canada will bring forward legislation in order to make the necessary revisions to the Oath of Citizenship.)