



HAUDENOSAUNEE

MOHAWK - ONEIDA - ONONDAGA - CAYUGA - SENECA - TUSCARORA

KAHNAWÀ:KE KANIEN'KEHÁ:KA ONKWANAKERÁHSERA - KAHNAWAKE BRANCH OF THE MOHAWK NATION
NE IÁ:IA'K NIHONONHWENTÁ:KE - SIX NATION IROQUOIS CONFEDERACY

Rotinonhsón:ni at Kahnawake celebrate passing of Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by UN Human Rights Council

For Immediate Release

Mohawk Nation at Kahnawake – Ohiari:ha/June 30, 2006

The Rotinonhsón:ni at Kahnawake offer greetings and thanksgivings. After almost 30 years since the Longest Walk and 13 years of international work, the Rotinonhsón:ni at Kahnawake celebrate the adoption of the Draft Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by the newly created United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva Switzerland. The passing of the Draft Declaration is considered a victory of sorts for all Indigenous Peoples.

The Rotinonhsón:ni at Kahnawake would like to point out that while the Draft Declaration was passed with an overwhelming majority of 30-2 (with 12 abstentions), we are dismayed to learn that Canada was amongst the two member states who voted against the document.

Among the victories achieved within the Draft Declaration is the unqualified right of Indigenous Peoples to self-determination, giving Indigenous Peoples complete and independent control over their social, political, economic, and spiritual destiny. Moreover, the Draft Declaration further affirms the collective and individual rights of Indigenous Peoples to both their land and resources; adding to the strength of their own territorial integrity.

While certainly a call to celebrate, the Draft Declaration is far from perfect and the Rotinonhsón:ni at Kahnawake are disappointed in some of the articles that were altered or removed from the Draft Declaration by Chairperson Gomez. We feel these alterations have weakened the document and we would like to note that even if passed as a Convention by the UN General Assembly; the document is not legally binding upon our people. Regardless of the outcome, the Rotinonhsón:ni at Kahnawake will continue to maintain and uphold the sovereign integrity of the Six Nation Iroquois Confederacy.

The Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is expected to go before the UN General Assembly some time in October or November.

Sincerely,

Atsenhaién:ton Kenneth Deer
Secretary - Kahnawà:ke Branch
Six Nation Iroquois Confederacy