



**Assemblée des Premières Nations
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**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**AFNQL STATEMENT FOR THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE WORLD'S
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

Wendake, August 9, 2020 - Ninety-seven years ago, Deskaheh Levi General, Cayuga Chief, and speaker of the Six Nations Hereditary Council, visited Geneva. He came to the League of Nations, the forerunner of the United Nations (UN), to gain international recognition for the sovereignty of his nation. He wanted to denounce a Canada that was preparing to impose a political system that was completely foreign to the system of governance of the hereditary council. The Chief thus marked the beginning of a long history of attempts by First Nations to have their right to self-determination recognized. Like many similar attempts undertaken by multiple Indigenous leaders later, Deskaheh's attempt was unsuccessful.

Each year on August 9, the world celebrates the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples. Did you know that this day was established by the UN? Did you know that its purpose is to raise awareness around the world about the rights of Indigenous peoples? Isn't it ironic that the UN established this day when it previously refused to hear Deskaheh defend the rights of his nation nearly a century ago?

This date also reminds us that work on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) began on August 9, 1982 with the first working meeting that would one day lead us to this document of fundamental importance for Indigenous peoples.

While recognition of the rights of Indigenous peoples was finally endorsed on the international stage, Canada resisted opening to it for a few years before taking a new position in 2010 under Harper. However, the openness of the country's governments to recognize the legitimacy of First Nations' rights is still discretionary in 2020. We are still facing inequalities, and, like Deskaheh, First Nations are facing incomprehensible mutism on the part of governments.

The government's attempts to eradicate First Nations having failed, more than ever we are here, and we are reaching out to our fellow citizens to improve our life together. In the coming days, the AFNQL will share the results of an important survey conducted among the Quebec population in relation to the perception they have of First Nations. We hope that this will be the beginning of a new era. In the meantime, August 9 is a great opportunity to reflect on how each of us wishes to participate in this essential review of our nation-to-nation relationship. The AFNQL wishes you a wonderful International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples.

About the AFNQL

The Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador is the regional political organization that brings together 43 First Nations Chiefs in Quebec and Labrador. Follow the AFNQL on Twitter @APNQL.

Source:

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