



**COMMUNIQUÉ  
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**Secrétariat  
de l'Assemblée des  
Premières Nations  
du Québec  
et du Labrador**

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## **THE FIRST NATIONS DEMAND A UNITED NATIONS STUDY INTO THE COLONIAL POLICIES IN CANADA**

*New York, May 22 2009* – The Chief of the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador (AFNQL), Mr. Ghislain Picard, spoke yesterday at the 8<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. “We are urging the appropriate UN Agencies to examine the impact of chronic underfunding that has been endemic in Canada for many years in order to identify the effects and impact on our survival as distinct peoples” stated Mr. Picard.

In the presence of other First Nations Chiefs of Quebec, Chief Picard explained how the indigenous peoples of Canada have been subject to colonialism for more than 500 years. “We refuse both assimilation and extinction. We desire that our children who will be born in seven generations will continue to be proud to be members of their respective Nations” said Mr. Picard.

### **The “Northern Plan” denounced at the UN.**

On the same day, Grand Chief Lucien Wabanonik of the Algonquin Nation Council spoke before the Permanent Forum about Aboriginal concerns among the peoples in Northern Quebec about the Northern Development plan announced by the Premier of Quebec and about which they have very little information. “The indigenous peoples of the Quebec region are very concerned with the Northern Development Plan of the Quebec Government. The Quebec government is proceeding without due regard for the rights of the indigenous peoples of the North. Quebec is content with short term impact benefit agreements that are meant to reduce negative reaction from indigenous communities who are amongst the poorest in the country”, declared Grand Chief Wabanonik.

At the end of the day, the AFNQL organized a parallel evening event for the Permanent Forum, based on the theme *Our Lands Our Rights*. The members of the panel event were: AFNQL Chief Ghislain Picard, Grand Chief Lucien Wabanonik of Algonquin Nation Council, Ellen Gabriel, President of Native Women of Quebec and Russell Diabo, Political Advisor to the Community of Wolf Lake.

### **Meeting with Special Rapporteur**

Chief Ghislain Picard will have a private meeting today with the UN Special Reporter, Professor James Anaya, about the rights and fundamental freedoms of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. He will take this opportunity to invite the Special Rapporteur to visit Quebec in order to observe firsthand the violation of rights occurring among the Aboriginal peoples of Quebec.

### **About the UN Permanent Forum**

The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues was created in July 2000, as an advisory body to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) with a mandate to provide advice on Aboriginal issues to the United Nations and to increase UN awareness about such issues. It consists of 16 independent experts who work in the Forum on a personal basis. The AFNQL will take part in Forum deliberations this week and next week in New York. Under the direction of Ghislain Picard, the delegation will take advantage of this important International Forum to denounce the colonialist attitude of the government of Canada, and especially its refusal to support the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted by the UN General Assembly on September 13, 2007.

### **About the AFNQL**

The Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador (AFNQL) is a regional organization consisting of the First Nations Chiefs of Quebec and Labrador.

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