

What is UNDRIP and what does it mean for USW and local unions?

UNDRIP is the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. UNDRIP was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2007 and by Canada's Parliament in 2018. (To read it, search for "full text undrip".)

The Declaration establishes minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the Indigenous peoples of the world. According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, adopting and implementing it is crucial for really achieving reconciliation.

UNDRIP addresses topics like education, language, citizenship, and self-government. It emphasizes the harm done to Indigenous people when their lands and resources are taken from them, and recognizes the valuable contribution that traditional practices and knowledge can make to sustainable, equitable economic development. Central to this is the right of Indigenous peoples to use, develop, and control their lands and resources, and the obligation of governments and corporations to properly obtain the free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before proceeding with development, mining, water use or other activities that affect Indigenous territories and resources.

What role does our union have under UNDRIP?

Indigenous nations are sovereign nations with a direct relationship with the Crown. Our union is not a party to UNDRIP or to other laws and treaties affecting Indigenous peoples and nations. But the USW has endorsed the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, and we have an important role to play as an ally. This includes:

- Continuing to build respectful, meaningful relationships with the Indigenous communities on whose lands our members live and work and where we hope to organize new groups of Indigenous workers
- Developing the skills and knowledge to consult with Indigenous communities with regard to economic development suggestions or opportunities
- Following and supporting the decisions taken by Indigenous communities, including related to the implementation of Impact Benefit Agreements
- Pressuring governments and employers to ensure that economic development is preceded by the free, informed consent of the Indigenous peoples and communities whose lands and resources are to be affected. If your employer and/or government isn't consulting, your local union can build a relationship with the affected Indigenous community and work together to push for better consultation
- Pressuring governments and employers to ensure that economic development enhances rather than harms Indigenous culture and economic practices and the safety of Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse persons.

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For more useful information, visit the Indigenous rights section of the USW web page at usw.ca/equity-for-indigenous-people



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