

Declaration of Action

Canada's leading philanthropic organizations declare solidarity and support for stronger, positive relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples

OTTAWA, ON (June 1, 2015) — Coinciding with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) holding its closing events here from May 31 to June 3, a group of Canada's philanthropic organizations has prepared a *Declaration of Action* committing to ensuring that positive action on reconciliation will continue.

The TRC, headed by Justice Murray Sinclair, has spent six years hearing the truth about Canada's Indian Residential Schools and establishing a reconciliation process that will lead to better relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples of Canada. Its report will be released on June 2.

"This is a starting point to focus our collective attention and commitment to reconciliation, and the action required to ensure that the TRC's recommendations are honoured and implemented," said Bruce Lawson, Chair of the Philanthropic Foundations Canada and CEO of The Counselling Foundation of Canada.

The signatories to the declaration currently include more than a dozen foundations and philanthropic organizations from across the country working in all areas of community, including inclusion, culture and language, health, housing education, employment and environment. They are committed to supporting the fulfillment of the vision of Aboriginal peoples, to building a fairer and more just country.

"Aboriginal peoples in Canada have contributed much, often willingly and freely, but too often without choice. This declaration is very exciting for us," said signatory Wanda Brascoupé Peters, Executive Director of The Circle on Philanthropy and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada.

"It brings to life the work that The Circle has been engaged in since inception, to foster conversations, connections, and relationships among Aboriginal Peoples and philanthropic organizations in an atmosphere of understanding, dignity and respect toward reconciliation."

The Community Foundations of Canada are building a multi-sectoral coalition with partners to bring action, with shared plans that could include work such as community-based learning, work on policy, and strategies to engage the public and spread the word about reconciliation.

"Community Foundations of Canada is committed to working with our network of 191 community foundations to build a new relationship among Aboriginal peoples and all Canadians. This declaration is an important call to action towards building communities where we all belong — a reconciled Canada where we all have a stake and a voice in our collective future," said Ian Bird, President of Community Foundations of Canada.

The Declaration's signatories view their commitment as a living document and invite other foundations and organizations to add their names. Each signature breathes further life into the declarants' commitment and efforts.

Some Declaration Participants

Community Foundations of Canada (www.communityfoundations.ca) is the national network for Canada's 191 community foundations from coast to coast to coast. Together, we help Canadians invest in building strong and resilient places to live, work and play, contributing more than \$189 million to local organizations in 2014.

Philanthropic Foundations Canada (www.pfc.ca) is a member association of Canadian grantmakers, including private and public foundations, charities and corporations. PFC numbers 125 members and promotes the growth and development of effective and responsible foundations and organized philanthropy in Canada through provision of membership services, resources and advocacy.

The Circle on Philanthropy and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada

(www.philanthropyandaboriginalpeoples.ca/) is an open network to promote giving, sharing, and philanthropy in Aboriginal communities across the country. We connect with and support the empowerment of First Nations, Inuit and Métis nations, communities, and individuals in building a stronger, healthier future.

Inspirit Foundation (www.inspiritfoundation.org/) is a national, grant-making organization that supports young people (aged 18 to 30) in building a more inclusive and pluralist Canada. One way we do this is by funding projects that foster engagement and exchange between young people of different spiritual, religious and secular backgrounds.

The Counselling Foundation of Canada (www.counselling.net) was established to create and enrich career-counselling programs and improve the technical skills of career counsellors. The object of the Foundation is to engage in charitable and educational activities for the benefit of people; thus enabling them to improve their lifestyles and make a more effective contribution to their communities.

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