

Centre Oblat  OMI

A Voice For Justice  
Une voix pour la justice

The Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau,  
Prime Minister of Canada  
The House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A6

July 2, 2021

Re. Bill C-15

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau:

I wish to express gratitude to your government for the passage of **Bill C-15: An Act respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**. As members of the Faith in the Declaration Coalition, Oblates have supported both Bills C-15 and C-262. Oblates have affirmed the UN Declaration as a framework for reconciliation as called for in TRC Call to Action #48.

Throughout the Parliamentary process, we and our coalition partners have appreciated the collaboration among departments and the coordinating function served by the office of the Minister of Justice. We especially appreciated Minister Lametti's Zoom meeting with us and other faith community leaders after the draft Bill was tabled. We urge the government to continue and even improve processes of healthy collaboration and clarity of ministerial leadership with respect to development of the Action Plan.

As we commit to carefully track the implementation of Bill C-15, a comprehensive consultation process with rights holders, national Indigenous organizations and modern treaty partners will be necessary. Accountability in thorough consultations will mark the success, or failure, of the development and implementation of Bill C-15's Action Plan. We humbly ask that you build Canada's ongoing efforts for compliance with the Declaration on new relationships of trust and reciprocity with Indigenous communities. Although the original draft legislation allowed three years for the Action Plan to be developed, we note that this was eventually amended to two years. This major endeavour cannot therefore be delayed by summer schedules nor possible election campaigns.

Accordingly, where S. 3 of the bill refers to specific Ministerial responsibility for developing the Action Plan, we ask you *which Minister will be tasked with this key task?* We encourage you to name a person of your confidence to take on this task without delay. And *which government secretariat will be charged with developing the Action Plan?*

We view Bill C-15 (s. 7) provisions for annual reporting as one means for Canada to honour Indigenous rights through Parliament. For our part, as believers in Christ's call to reconciliation, we commit to gauging this annual reporting as one important measure of accountability to the principles of the UN Declaration.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, as well as Elders in the communities we serve, continue to remind us that the sacred journey of reconciliation is long and complex. We appreciate your leadership at the level of the federal government, and pledge to humbly contribute to the on-going responsibility to reconciliation and justice with Indigenous peoples.

Sincerely yours,

Joe Gunn  
Executive Director/Directeur général  
**Centre Oblat • A Voice for Justice**

cc.: Hon. David Lametti  
Hon. Carolyn Bennet  
Hon. Marc Miller  
Hon. Erin O'Toole  
Jagmeet Singh, MP  
Annamie Paul