

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (PYM) Minute
On the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN DRIP)

Preface:

Affirming our testimonies of peace and equality, we seek to live in just and equitable peace with our fellow human beings, both as individuals and as peoples. We recognize the early role of Philadelphia Quakers in the history of relations between Friends and the Indigenous Peoples of North America. We desire to continue the legacy of William Penn's quest for right relationship with Indigenous Peoples by working to improve recognition of Indigenous Peoples and their rights.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN DRIP) is an international human rights instrument adopted by the UN General Assembly on Sept. 13, 2007 after more than 20 years of negotiations. It was originally approved by 143 countries. As of 2008, only 4 countries had not endorsed it: The United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. It is now endorsed by all, the final endorsement occurring on December 16, 2010, when President Obama officially endorsed the UN DRIP for the United States.

The UN DRIP affirms the fundamental rights of Indigenous Peoples to exist as unique cultural groups. Indigenous Peoples have rights to own and control their lands, resources, spiritual practices, languages, and cultural practices, and to self-government. We honor the inalienable rights that sustain the existence of Indigenous Peoples.

This minute would put the PYM Religious Society of Friends on record supporting Indigenous Peoples' calls for justice and fairness in dealing with state and national governments. Following the lead of Baltimore Yearly Meeting, New York Yearly Meeting, the American Friends Service Committee, and Canadian Yearly Meeting, as well as of individual Quaker monthly meetings and other religious groups such as the Unitarians and Episcopalians, our endorsement would serve as a continuing reminder of our need to support and to lead in practices of healing and restorative justice and to walk faithfully with our Native brothers and sisters as they seek healing and justice in the 21st century.

Minute:

We hereby minute our approval of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN DRIP) as endorsed by countries around the world. We call on Friends in our monthly meetings within PYM to likewise show their support by considering a minute of approval and by acting on their support through further study, education, and advocacy. We ask that monthly meetings communicate their actions on the UNDRIP with the Indian Committee, who will report their witness and share their work with Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

Approved at Annual Sessions, July 28, 2013