



Alberta Human Rights
and Citizenship Commission



THE CITY OF
CALGARY



COMMISSION CANADIENNE POUR L'UNESCO
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13 Municipalities confirm their commitment against racism and discrimination

Calgary, June 1, 2007. – On June 1st, in Calgary, 13 municipalities from across Canada met on the occasion of the Annual General Meeting of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) to sign a Declaration affirming their commitment against racism and discrimination and their wish to unite to share lessons learned.

David A. Walden, Secretary-General of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO stated: “These municipalities will share examples of concrete activities that contribute to the creation of more equitable communities where everyone participates fully. They are now part of UNESCO’s International Coalition of Cities against Racism and Discrimination.”

Canadian coalition members are: Brooks, Alberta; Calgary, Alberta; Drayton Valley, Alberta; Edmonton, Alberta; Gatineau, Quebec; Halifax, Nova Scotia; Lion’s Bay, British Columbia; Montreal, Quebec; Oshawa, Ontario; Thunder Bay, Ontario; Toronto, Ontario; and Windsor, Ontario; and the Region of Wood Buffalo and Fort McMurray, Alberta.

“All municipalities are invited to join the coalition and work toward the shared goal of eliminating racism and discrimination,” says Charlach Mackintosh, Chief Commissioner of the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission, and a member of the Canadian Association of Statutory Human Rights Agencies.

“Calgary is honoured to host this first meeting of these municipal leaders, who by joining the coalition, have agreed to take action within their communities and to share strategies with other municipalities on combating racism and discrimination,” said City of Calgary Alderman Joe Ceci, chair of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities’ Social Economic Development Committee and chair of the June 1st coalition meeting.

Toronto Mayor David Miller added: “In Toronto, 43 per cent of our population are racial minorities coming from over 200 countries and regions of the world. We are pleased to share our experiences with other cities, small towns and rural municipalities which are beginning to see demographic shifts in their communities due to global migration.”

The initiative is supported by the Canadian Association of Statutory Human Rights Agencies; the Federation of Canadian Municipalities; Human Rights Commissions in Alberta, Ontario and Saskatchewan; the Canadian Race Relations Foundation; associations of municipalities in different provinces; and the National Association of Friendship Centres for Aboriginal peoples.

Members of the Pan-Canadian Working Group involved in organizing this first meeting include the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission, City of Calgary, Canadian Commission for UNESCO, and City of Toronto.

The Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination is part of a larger international coalition being promoted by UNESCO worldwide.

For more information visit: http://portal.unesco.org/shs/en/ev.php-URL_ID=10635&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

To download the Declaration:

<http://www.unesco.ca/en/activity/sciences/documents/FinalDraftUNESCOCoalitionCertificate.pdf>

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Media Backgrounder:

Canadian municipalities unite to combat racism and discrimination

The International Coalition of Cities against Racism is an initiative launched by UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) in March 2004 to establish a network of cities interested in sharing experiences in order to improve their policies to fight racism, discrimination, xenophobia and exclusion.

In Canada, the Canadian Commission for UNESCO and its partners are inviting Canadian municipalities to be part of this larger international coalition by joining the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination.

By joining the Coalition, the municipality commits to:

- (1) endorse 10 Common Commitments
- (2) develop or adapt its own Plan of Action against Racism
- (3) make the 10 Common Commitments and the municipality's unique Plan of Action an integral part of the municipality's vision, strategies and policies
- (4) cooperate with other organizations and jurisdictions including governments, institutions and civil society
- (5) set its priorities, actions and timelines to achieve its Plan
- (6) allocate resources to achieve its Plan
- (7) exchange expertise with others
- (8) share best practices and
- (9) report publicly on an annual basis on actions undertaken in implementing the 10 Common Commitments and its Plan of Action against racism.

The 10 commitments reflect the responsibilities of municipalities as a guardian of the public interest, as an organization in the fulfillment of human rights, and as a community of residents.

The 10 Common Commitments are:

- (1) Increase vigilance against systemic and individual racism and discrimination
- (2) Monitor racism and discrimination in the community more broadly as well as municipal actions taken to address racism and discrimination
- (3) Inform and support individuals who experience racism and discrimination
- (4) Support policing services in their efforts to be exemplary institutions in combating racism and discrimination.
- (5) Provide equal opportunities as a municipal employer, service provider and contractor.
- (6) Support measures to promote equity in the labour market.
- (7) Support measures to challenge racism and discrimination and promote diversity and equal opportunity in housing.
- (8) Involve citizens by giving them a voice in anti-racism initiatives and decision-making.
- (9) Support measures to challenge racism and discrimination and promote diversity and equal opportunity in the education sector and in other forms of learning.
- (10) Promote respect, understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity and the inclusion of Aboriginal and racialised communities into the cultural fabric of the municipality.

To date, 13 municipalities have passed a Council Resolution responding to the Call for a Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination. These are: Brooks, Alberta; Calgary, Alberta; Drayton Valley, Alberta; Edmonton, Alberta; Gatineau, Quebec; Halifax, Nova Scotia; Lion's Bay, British Columbia; Montreal, Quebec; Oshawa, Ontario; Thunder Bay, Ontario; Toronto, Ontario; and Windsor, Ontario; and the Region of Wood Buffalo and Fort McMurray, Alberta.

In Europe, 67 cities have signed the Declaration of Intent and 26 have signed the Act of Accession and Commitment.

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