

19 February 2001

## An Introduction

The following document is a **record** of what took place in the small groups, caucuses and plenary sessions at the **World Conference Against Racism, Saskatchewan Consultation**, held in Waskesiu, Saskatchewan February 6-8, 2001.

The World Conference Against Racism, Saskatchewan Consultation, *a gift for ourselves and future generations*, marks an historical and important step in civil society networking, in Saskatchewan, for the purpose of working toward the elimination of racism, racial discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerances.

Participants in the conference generated a wealth of ideas and strategies for the elimination of racism. The conference was enriched with a spirit of compassion, passion, hope, and creativity even in the midst of the burdens and pain that racism causes. This spirit is reflected in the record of the conference.

While this document represents a rich and varied resource which can be used to direct and move into the future, two priorities were clearly stated in the closing plenary session:

1. The World Conference Against Racism, Saskatchewan Consultation, agreed to add its endorsement to the Aboriginal Caucus in supporting the *Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People*, Commission on Human Rights, Sub Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, Forty fifth session, Santiago, Chile, December 04, 2001.
2. There was consensus that it is important to continue this work of the elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerances through a variety of efforts at the local, provincial, national and international level of civic society, government and the corporate sector.

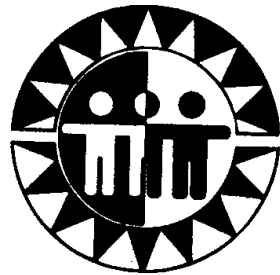
Participants expressed appreciation to the Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan, board and staff for taking the initiative and leadership in organizing this consultation.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth Blaser  
Blaser & Associates  
Consultation Aid, Moderator

# World Conference Against Racism Saskatchewan Consultation

*A gift for ourselves and future  
generations*



*Civil Society Networking*

# **World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance**

## *Civil Society Consultations*

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## **World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance**

### *Civil Society Consultations*

The UN slogan for the World Conference is "United to Combat Racism: Equality, Dignity, Justice."

Five broad themes were identified at the first UN Preparatory Committee meeting (Geneva, May 1-5, 2000):

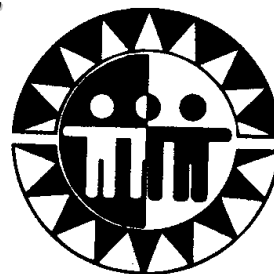
- ❖ The sources, causes, forms and contemporary manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerances.
- ❖ Victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.
- ❖ Measures of prevention, education and protection aimed at the eradication of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance at national, regional, and international levels.
- ❖ Provision of effective remedies, resources, redress (contemporary) and other measures, the national, regional and international levels.
- ❖ Strategies to achieve full and effective equality, including international co-operation and enhancement of the UN and other international mechanisms in combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerances, and follow-up.

*Taken from: Canada's Consultations for the World Conference Against Racism, Draft Discussion Paper. Canadian Secretariat WCAR, Department of Canadian Heritage, Multiculturalism.*

## **World Conference Against Racism Saskatchewan Consultation**

*A gift for ourselves and future generations*

### ***Civil Society Networking***



#### **Background:**

The Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan and partners will provide an opportunity for representatives of the Saskatchewan Multicultural, First Nations and Metis organizations and citizens to gather to discuss and formulate input into the Canadian preparations for the United Nations World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerances.

#### **Goals of the Saskatchewan Consultation**

To bring together representatives from the Saskatchewan Multicultural and First Nations and Metis communities to:

- ❖ Begin the process of creating “safe spaces” in which people can talk about racism, imagine and plan for ways of living together with *equality, dignity* and *justice* across the wide terrain of diversity and differences.
- ❖ Prepare Saskatchewan based recommendations to feed into the Canadian position document for the WCAR in South Africa in 2001.

*United to Combat Racism: Equality, Dignity, Justice.*

World Conference Against Racism, Saskatchewan Consultation  
*A gift for ourselves & future generations*

Guidelines for Working Together

1. Everyone has wisdom.
2. Everyone will hear and be heard.
3. We respect each other.
4. We respect confidentiality. This means that no one has the right to share another person's personal story unless permission is asked for and given.
5. We want to have fun together.
6. We seek to understand each other and the differences we have.
7. We seek to offer one another affirmation and appreciation as well as correction when appropriate.
8. Please turn off your cell phones in plenary and small groups.
9. This is a work in-progress; it is okay if some things are unresolved.
10. Others

Adapted from Elimination of Racism in Sport and Recreation, Canadian Institute of Cultural Affairs, and Intercultural Grandmothers

## RINGING WORDS

*On the closing day of the consultation, Consultation Aides gave a summary of what happened in their groups and circles:*

### Vision

1. An inclusive society through recognition of discrimination
2. Acknowledgement
  - Recognize structural and barriers
  - Self-determination
  - Inclusive, participatory democracy
  - Learn from our history, not be prisoners of it
3. Key Actions
  - Decolonization of institutions
  - Cultural pride
  - Advocacy for change and accountability
  - Intra-communication to advance and strengthen local initiatives
  - Reconstruct language
4. Sharing Circle
  - Métis and First Nations decided to work together
  - Elders talked about history life experiences (very emotional)
  - Draft declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples == want to adopt for conference, don't want to threaten rights
  - Sexism and Racism compound each other
  - How does the process affect our treaties?
  - Racism = lost hope = lost lives
  - Housing, employment, education = all include racism
  - All of us need help to stop

- Energy = increased
- Sincerity
- On same journey
- Education
- Diversity
- **\*\*Equity\*\***
- Knowledge } Emotional tone
- Sharing
- Feeling
- Respect
- Caring
- First Nations person came to share
- FEAR – blocks much of vision hard to deal with obstacles after lunch bogged down with word “meanings” – worked together to find meanings
- Education TOGETHER (of all kinds)
- Taking personal responsibility (not blaming)
- Influence political system
- Continue interacting, sharing stories
- 2005 Cultural Diversity Saskatchewan Celebration

## 5. Actions

- Educating for Change and engaging the media
- Building Bridges
- Making a personal commitment
- Actively changing the system

6. Obstacles
  - Vision
  - Dealing with the Past, learning from all of our pasts
  - Exploding the Myths
  - Heartfelt
  - Humanistically driven and economically supported
  - Teaching a new Canadian how to make a snow angel
  - Commitment
  - Compassion
  - Challenges
  - Courage to force/face change
  
7. Youth
  - Artistic expression
  - Puzzle
  - Need adult and elder support to implement ideas
  - Appreciate work done before – THANK YOU
  - Group stuck together
  - Revolution!
  - Social Change – right now

### **OBSTACLES**

- Power and control
- Fear of change
- Lack of information and awareness
- Ignorance
- Negative attitudes
- Unity – need to stay in circle – strength
- International indigenous peoples
- Working with African people at United Nations
- Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative Employer Tool Kit

**DIRECTIONS**

- There are problems among the powers in our Country that cause, permit and magnify racism. These powers can be amended by popular opinion and the voices of citizens. Granted, these opinions and voices must involve positive attitudes surrounding discrimination. For this to be, people must be informed about other cultures. There must be interaction and education to inform people. Then, people need to be aware of the resources that are available for people to voice their opinions.
- All of these things are just some of the elements in a huge circle of inter-dependent issues surrounding discrimination. The eradication of racism is a huge circle.
- I believe that a good starting point in the circle is in attitudes of people. There needs to be more programs to encourage acceptance and celebration of diversity. This can be done through the education system. Programs need to be implemented in schools as elective courses and compulsory units in history, social studies, etc.