



CANADIAN COMMISSION FOR UNESCO
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City of Vancouver News Release
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Vancouver joins Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination

The City of Vancouver is joining a network of Canadian municipalities committed to taking action to combat racism and discrimination.

At a Council meeting today, Mayor Gregor Robertson signed a declaration and announced the City's decision to become a member of the Coalition of Canadian Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination (CMARD) and to work with 39 other Canadian municipalities united to fight racism and discrimination.

Coalition signatories also undertake to share best practices in developing policies and programs related to issues such as housing, employment, and non-violence.

"We are fortunate to live in a city as richly diverse and cosmopolitan as Vancouver," said Mayor Robertson. *"Over the years, the City has implemented a number of anti-discrimination, diversity and inclusion initiatives to welcome people from all over the world."*

"Our ability to recognize and celebrate our differences is part of what defines Vancouver, and makes us a model for cultural acceptance."

By signing the declaration, the City of Vancouver commits to developing and implementing an action plan to be approved by City council, collaborating with diverse communities and other key stakeholders, and sharing best practices with other signatory municipalities.

"We are proud that the City of Vancouver is now part of the Coalition. Considering the number of policies and programs the City already has in place, Vancouver will make a significant contribution to the work of the Coalition", stated David A. Walden, Secretary-General of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO.

Mr. Walden added: *"By joining the Coalition, the City of Vancouver is reaffirming its strong commitment to the core values of respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of the cultures found in the community, the multiple forms of expression, and the dignity of all peoples. The 40 Canadian signatory municipalities are examples that must be followed and emulated."*

The initiative is supported by the Canadian Association of Statutory Human Rights Agencies, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, various provincial associations of municipalities, and the National Association of Friendship Centres. CMARD encourages partnerships with and inclusion of various local partners and interested stakeholders, including educators, police, Aboriginal populations, representatives from various ethnocultural communities, and youth.

The Canadian Coalition of Municipalities against Racism and Discrimination is part of the International Coalition of Cities against Racism, launched in March 2004 by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) in response to recommendations adopted at the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (Durban, 2001).

To learn more about the content of the Declaration signed by the City of Vancouver as well as the ten commitments of the Coalition, please visit:

<http://www.unesco.ca/en/interdisciplinary/coalition/documents/CallCoalitionEng.pdf>

The Canadian Commission for UNESCO operates under the aegis of the Canada Council for the Arts. Its role is to act as a forum for governments and civil society, and to mobilize the participation of Canadian organizations and committed individuals in UNESCO's mandated areas: education, natural and social sciences, culture and communication and information. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is the only member of the United Nations System to have National Commissions performing this role in each of its Member States.

- 30 -

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