



Alberta Human Rights
and Citizenship Commission



THE CITY OF
CALGARY



CANADIAN COMMISSION FOR UNESCO
COMMISSION CANADIENNE POUR L'UNESCO

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NEWS RELEASE

Thirty Canadian municipalities united against racism and discrimination

Calgary, March 18, 2009 — On Thursday March 19, the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, in collaboration with the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission and the City of Calgary, will hold the Second Meeting of the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities against Racism and Discrimination (CMARD). Representatives from 20 of the 30 signatory municipalities will be in attendance.

Today, the official unveiling of the certificate of the Coalition will take place at the Calgary Power Reception Hall in the presence of the Honourable Lindsay Blackett Alberta Minister of Culture and Community Spirit who is responsible for the *Alberta Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act*, the Mayor of The City of Calgary, His Worship Dave Bronconnier, the Secretary-General of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, David A. Walden, and the Chief Commissioner of the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission, the Honourable David Blair Mason, Q.C. The unveiling is hosted by His Worship Dave Bronconnier, Mayor of the City of Calgary.

"To be part of the Coalition signifies the respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our communities' cultures, our forms of expression and the dignity of all peoples," said David A. Walden, Secretary-General of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO. "I express my support and encouragement for these exemplary efforts to promote the peaceful coexistence between peoples within our communities and across Canada. The 30 signatory municipalities are examples that must be followed and emulated."

The Second Meeting of the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities against Racism and Discrimination aims at supporting the municipalities' action in their fight against racism and discrimination by providing a platform to share experiences, good practices and ideas while discussing future strategic directions for the Coalition.

"CMARD extends our society's ability to protect human rights through coordination and shared responsibility among governments, public and private institutions, businesses, community organizations, and individuals." says Honourable David Blair Mason, Q.C., Chief Commissioner of the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission.

The Canadian Coalition of Municipalities against Racism and Discrimination is part of the International Coalition against Racism and Discrimination, launched in March 2004 by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) as part of the Organisation's strategy to follow up to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (Durban, 2001).

"Calgary is pleased to welcome representatives from a select group of Canadian cities, each of whom is committed to taking action to end racism and discrimination," said Mayor Bronconnier. "The City of Calgary, together with our community partners and through our action plan, is moving forward with positive steps to foster equality and respect for all our citizens, to celebrate our diversity and to share this with the global community."

"The strength of our province lies in the diversity of its people and in organizations working together to help build strong and welcoming communities and workplaces," said Lindsay Blackett, Minister of Culture and Community Spirit. "The Government of Alberta is committed to creating a province where all people feel welcome and are included in all aspects of life."

The call for a Canadian Coalition of Municipalities against Racism and Discrimination was launched in 2005. Since then, thirty municipalities have joined:

Alberta: Brooks, Calgary, Drayton Valley, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, St. Albert and the Region of Wood Buffalo and Fort McMurray

British Columbia: Lion's Bay, Williams Lake

Manitoba: Winnipeg

New Brunswick: Saint John

Nova Scotia: Halifax, Kings, Truro

Ontario: Oakville, Oshawa, Sudbury, Tecumseh, Thunder Bay, Toronto, Vaughan, Windsor

Prince Edward Island: Stratford

Quebec: Gatineau, Montreal, Quebec, Saint-Justin

Saskatchewan: Prince Albert, Saskatoon

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

For more information about the International Coalition of Cities against Racism and Discrimination: www.unesco.org/shs/citiesagainstracism

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