



**Project to Implement the
UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
in the United States**



2018-2019

The University of Colorado Law School and Native American Rights Fund announce a project to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the United States.

In 2007, following decades of advocacy by indigenous peoples, the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration, acknowledging indigenous peoples' rights to self-determination, equality, property, culture, and other human rights. The United States, along with Canada, New Zealand, and Australia, have pledged their support for the Declaration, such that 148 nations worldwide now accept a set of agreed-upon norms for the just treatment of indigenous peoples. The General Assembly's adoption of the Declaration is, as Walter Echo-Hawk has written, "a landmark event that promises to shape humanity in the post-colonial age." The Declaration provides an impetus to redress historic wrongs committed against indigenous peoples and advance the arc of justice.

As we celebrate the achievement embodied in the Declaration, we also recognize that its promises will ring hollow without sustained commitment to implement its provisions through domestic law. The Declaration sets forth a remedial scheme to address the legacy of land dispossession, physical violence, cultural disruption, economic deprivation, and other harms experienced by indigenous peoples during the experiences of conquest, colonization, and settlement. In many cases, indigenous peoples continue to experience these harms. It will take comprehensive law and policy reform, as well as structural and conceptual change, to begin the process of redress and reconciliation for indigenous peoples in domestic legal systems.

The CU-NARF Project will advance a framework of federal-tribal relations based on a model of individual and collective human rights. Drawing on our strengths in research, advocacy, and collaboration with indigenous governments, the project will undertake legal and policy work in federal, state, and tribal settings, as well as institutions of civil society and industry. Guided by traditional indigenous values, the challenges of contemporary life in Indian Country, and the needs of future generations, we will work to realize the promises of the Declaration in the U.S., toward the true flourishing of indigenous peoples, and healing and justice for all.

Project Elements

- Research, develop, and execute strategy to bring U.S. law into compliance with the Declaration, including educational events and practical training for attorneys and others.
- Foster awareness of the Declaration in Indian Country and work closely with indigenous leaders to secure their support and guidance regarding implementation efforts.
- Partner with NGO's, universities, and organizations in furtherance of the Project and the movement for indigenous peoples' human rights more broadly.