

'We can't build strong relationships if we refuse to have conversations,' Canada's Trudeau says at UN

21 September 2017 – Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau took the podium at the United Nations General Assembly today with condolences for those affected by recent successive natural disasters, including the earthquakes in Mexico and hurricanes in the Caribbean, saying his country is ready to “lend a helping hand in whatever way it can.”

He spoke extensively on Canada's indigenous people, of the injustices they face and the efforts being made to improve the relationship with First Nations, calling it “righting historical wrongs.” He noted how Canada is implementing the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) on a national level to improve their lives, saying that the Goals are “as meaningful in Canada as they are everywhere else in the world.”

Mr. Trudeau cited a few examples of the [SDGs](#) in action in indigenous communities, such as bringing safe and clean drinking water (SDG 6), working with them to help build and refurbish homes, making safe and sustainable places to live (SDG 11), and combatting gender-based violence and giving women and girls equal opportunities to succeed (SDG 5).

The Prime Minister noted that his country fully supports the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples “without qualification” and is working with Canada's indigenous leaders to correct past injustices. “Indigenous Peoples will decide how they wish to represent and organize themselves,” he told the Assembly.

“We can't build strong relationships if we refuse to have conversations. We can't chart a more peaceful path if the starting point is suspicion and mistrust. And we can't build a better world unless we work together, respect our differences, protect the vulnerable, and stand up for the things that matter most,” Mr. Trudeau concluded.

[Full statement available here](#)