



United Nations Association in Canada
Association canadienne pour les Nations Unies

Media Announcement

**The Rt. Hon. Beverley McLachlin to
Receive the 2020 Pearson Peace Medal**

Ottawa – December 10: On this UN Human Rights Day, where nations are urged to create equal opportunities for all, UNA-Canada is pleased to announce the 2020 recipient of our Pearson Peace Medal, The Rt. Hon. Beverley McLachlin. She is the 32nd recipient of this Medal, which honours a Canadian who has made an outstanding contribution, in a professional capacity or through volunteer work, to those causes for which Lester B. Pearson is remembered: aid to the developing world; mediation where conflicts arise; assistance to refugees and those in need; equal rights and justice for all; peaceful change through international law and multilateralism.

For over a decade and a half, Beverley McLachlin, first as a Justice and later as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada (2000-2017), led with measured and collegial strength through a series of land-mark decisions. These decisions, under her leadership, have contributed to shape and elevate the recognition and respect of essential human rights in Canada. In this regard her Court played a central role in giving effect to our Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Beverly McLachlan has been instrumental in defining and expanding the fundamental rights of Canadians in such key areas as the legalization of assisted dying, the expansion of Indigenous rights, and the rights of the accused before the courts and law enforcement. She also succeeded in achieving a significant number of decisions with full consensus of the Court, giving greater strength to the Court's decisions on central questions of law.

Ms. McLachlin has earned respect from all Canadians for humane judgements that have sought to protect the most vulnerable. As only one example, deeply relevant today, the Court ruled that indigenous peoples would be guaranteed a place at the table – as equals – when their ancestral lands were under consideration for development by government or corporations, thus reversing a century of land seizure. She wrote that ancestral lands belonged to the indigenous people. And in 2015, she stated in a speech that Canada (led by our first Prime Minister, John A. Macdonald) had committed cultural genocide against the Indigenous population through the use of residential schools. These words reverberated – and still reverberate - across the land.

Upon retirement, Chief Justice McLachlin has been invited to serve as an external judge on the highest courts of Singapore and Hong Kong. This is significant global recognition from jurisdictions which practice several different legal traditions, and recognizes the trust and esteem in which she is held for a remarkable body of work.

As one of her nominators noted, “She has used her intelligence, compassion and keen legal mind to develop a foundation of rights that will serve the people of Canada for generations. The Rt. Hon. Beverley McLachlin embodies the Pearsonian ideals of equality and justice for all; and peaceful change through law”.

Kathryn White, President and CEO of UNA-Canada, notes: In this 75th anniversary of the United Nations and of the Canadian civil society organization, the United Nations Association in Canada, and an extraordinary year that has demanded we recognize our equality in front of a virus, we could only honour a laureate like the Rt Hon Beverly McLachlan. From Pincher Creek, Alberta, overcoming barrier after barrier, Ms. McLachlan embodies how a single person can embody 'justice for all'."

The presentation of the 2020 Pearson Peace Medal will take place in early 2021

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For more information contact:
Joan Broughton, Public Information Officer
Joan.broughton@unac.org
613-232-5751 ext 230

[The United Nations Association in Canada](#)

The United Nations Association in Canada (UNA-Canada) is an historic, national charitable organization providing a leading policy voice on multilateralism in Canada, and innovative programming focused on the Sustainable Development Goals with 30,000 members from coast to coast to coast. UNA-Canada was a founding member of the World Federation of United Nations Associations and today holds the elected Vice-Presidency, representing global civil society. Celebrating 75 years of Canadian support for an effective United Nations.

Our Mission and Vision

Our mission is to educate and engage Canadians in the work of the UN and the critical international issues that affect us all. We believe that a strong and effective United Nations is essential if we are to secure a future based on equality, dignity and justice for all. UNA-Canada is dedicated to promoting constructive Canadian participation in the United Nations system and to **growing global citizens** in Canada who embrace the principles of the UN Charter.

Our Work

UNA-Canada engages citizens and decision makers at every level of Canadians society. We invest across generations, bringing empathy-based educational resources on health, citizen education, diversity, peace and the environment to both the best and the brightest and to most marginalized youth within Canada and in the world's poorest countries.

We meet our mandate with a national network of branches, volunteers and education programmes that are inspiring and mobilizing Canadians in support of the principles and critical work of the UN. By **growing global citizens**, we are building a stronger, more outward looking Canada ready to accept the greatest challenges of our time.



Growing Global Citizens § Citoyens du monde à venir

400 – 30 Metcalfe Ottawa ON K1P 5L4 ∪ Tel: (613) 232-5751 ∪ E-mail: info@unac.org
Charitable Registration. 11927-6855 RR0001 / Organisme de charité 11927-6855 RR0001