

The Honourable Irwin Cotler
Minister of Justice

Dear Minister Cotler:

Re.: Aboriginal Appointments to the Supreme Court of Canada

I am writing on behalf of **(NAME OF ORGANIZATION)** regarding the National Secretariat Against Hate and Racism Canada's (NSAHRC) recommendation that you appoint at the earliest opportunity an Aboriginal person to the Supreme Court of Canada and that the justice system acknowledge Aboriginal customary law as a valuable legal code within Canadian law and jurisprudence.

As you may recall, the NSAHRC was organized as a follow-up to the conference on *Hate and Racism in Canada* coordinated by the Indigenous Bar Association and the Quebec Native Women's Association in March, 2004. Amongst a host of other national and international persons - Grand Chief of the Assembly of First Nations Mr. Phil Fontaine, Mr. Stephen Lewis, former General Romeo Dallaire, former Chief of Six Nations Roberta Jamieson and others – you honoured this conference with your participation as a speaker and made several points which were well-received.

As a follow-up to this conference the IBA and QNW are working with representatives of national and local ethno-racial, religious and faith-based groups to promote the goals of the conference and to take action on the many issues raised during the conference's proceedings.

The organizations involved include the Canadian Arab Federation, the Students Commission, the League for Human Rights/B'nai Brith, the National Anti-Racism Council of Canada, the Center for Research Action on Race Relations, the African Canadian Legal Clinic, the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, the United Nations Association Canada, the Canadian Ethnocultural Council, the Council of Agencies Serving South Asians and the Chinese Canadian National Council. The mandate and membership of the NSAHRC are outlined in the enclosed brochure. You can find more information about the NSAHRC on the IBA's website www.indigenousbar.ca

Our organization is supportive of the NSAHRC generally and of its recommendations to you on this matter specifically.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Our organization and its members look forward to seeing a positive response on this in the near future.

Sincerely yours,

(NAME OF BOARD CHAIR OR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR)

cc: Dianne Corbierre
Chair, NSAHRC and President Indigenous Bar Association

Charles C. Smith
Facilitator, National Secretariat Against Hate and Racism Canada