

## Public Issues Forum: Indigenous Peoples and Resource Development

Over the last three decades, the unprecedented growth of the global economy has been tightly linked to the increasing intensity of natural resource extraction, which has increased by at least fifty percent since 1980.<sup>[1]</sup> Around the globe, Indigenous peoples have been disproportionately affected by resource development, much of which takes place on their traditional lands and transforms their economies, communities, and cultures. In some cases, Indigenous peoples are willing partners in resource development who welcome the economic gains it can deliver to their communities. But Indigenous peoples have also been among the most mobilized opponents of extractive industries' tendency to displace local populations and to generate environmental damage that threatens Indigenous ways of life, sometimes without compensatory economic benefits to Indigenous communities.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples sets the standard of "free, prior and informed consent" as the principle that should govern state action that affects Indigenous peoples. Yet many governments regard this standard as too restrictive a limitation on their rights of internal sovereignty and their interests in economic development. In Canada, which is a signatory to the Declaration, the new Liberal government has pledged to transform its relationship with Indigenous peoples and to uphold the Declaration, as well as Aboriginal and Treaty rights, in its economic development agenda.

Can continued economic growth based on resource extraction be reconciled with the rights of Indigenous peoples? What are the appropriate mechanisms of consultation with Indigenous peoples concerning resource development? What constitutes "free, prior and informed consent" to resource extraction? Do Indigenous peoples have a right *against* economic development on their traditional territories? Our expert panel will debate these questions, which are especially timely because of the new government's commitments

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<sup>[1]</sup> [http://images.google.de/imgres?imgurl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.eea.europa.eu%2Fdata-and-maps%2Ffigures%2Fglobal-extraction-of-natural-resources%2Fglobal-extraction-of-natural-resources%2FSOER-Fig\\_7-1ab\\_ID-1225.eps.75dpi.gif%2Fat\\_download%2Fimage&imgrefurl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.eea.europa.eu%2Fdata-and-maps%2Ffigures%2Fglobal-extraction-of-natural-resources&h=1436&w=2268&tbnid=MDqIP4hT6QbYUM%3A&docid=M\\_-Y08M9YSkiOM&ei=It5dVpjYK4L4OajFkbAE&tbnm=isch&iact=rc&uact=3&dur=1498&page=1&start=0&ndsp=24&ved=0ahUKEwiY-7ytnbvJAhUCfA4KHahIBEYQrQMILTAE](http://images.google.de/imgres?imgurl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.eea.europa.eu%2Fdata-and-maps%2Ffigures%2Fglobal-extraction-of-natural-resources%2Fglobal-extraction-of-natural-resources%2FSOER-Fig_7-1ab_ID-1225.eps.75dpi.gif%2Fat_download%2Fimage&imgrefurl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.eea.europa.eu%2Fdata-and-maps%2Ffigures%2Fglobal-extraction-of-natural-resources&h=1436&w=2268&tbnid=MDqIP4hT6QbYUM%3A&docid=M_-Y08M9YSkiOM&ei=It5dVpjYK4L4OajFkbAE&tbnm=isch&iact=rc&uact=3&dur=1498&page=1&start=0&ndsp=24&ved=0ahUKEwiY-7ytnbvJAhUCfA4KHahIBEYQrQMILTAE)