

June 11, 2008

**By Fax: 613-941-6900**

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper  
Prime Minister of Canada  
Office of the Prime Minister  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister:

On behalf of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) 570,000 members I am writing to express our concerns about the Residential Schools Apology, scheduled for today.

This is an important moment for Canada and it must be respectful, dignified and meaningful. It must be nothing short of a significant public apology and it must be delivered in the House of Commons.

CUPE's National Aboriginal Council has discussed this apology at length and CUPE stands in full support of the position of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN).

The hardship endured by many Aboriginal children in residential schools had a severe impact. Separation from families and forced institutionalization combined with poor physical conditions at the schools; loss of language; abuse; and child labour. Many survivors are suffering from long-term consequences. The federal government must implement initiatives that promote the opening of educational, career and personal growth for survivors and their descendents.

Aboriginal Peoples in Canada have been active advocates for the preservation of culture. A meaningful apology, with an implementation plan, can be another important instrument for the preservation of culture, the improvement of Aboriginal communities and the process of healing.

Please do all that you can to ensure that the apology takes us forward on a new path of dignity and respect for the survivors of Residential Schools, their families and communities.

Sincerely,

**PAUL MOIST**  
National President

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c.c. Phil Fontaine, Assembly of First Nations  
National Aboriginal Council Members