

**ADVOCATE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH  
MEETS WITH UNITED NATIONS REPRESENTATIVE**

SASKATOON — The Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth Bob Pringle joined his provincial and territorial counterparts to welcome Marta Maurás, Vice-President of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child to Canada on a four-day visit, which included stops in Ontario, New Brunswick and Québec.

The Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates, which Pringle is a member of, invited Maurás of Chile to visit Canada to observe first-hand this country's implementation of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Maurás' visit closely follows the third and fourth periodic review of Canada's implementation of the UN Convention, which occurred this past September in Geneva, Switzerland.

"The periodic review process focuses heavily on government submissions, explanations and responses to questions," said Pringle. "The Council thought that it was important for Maurás to visit Canada to also hear directly from and about the concerns of youth and the country's child and youth advocates."

Sixteen-year-old Collin Joseph Starblanket from the Star Blanket Cree Nation in Saskatchewan also met with Maurás this past week. Earlier this year, the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada selected Starblanket as a First Nations Youth Ambassador for Canada, and the Saskatchewan Advocate sponsored his travels as a member of a youth delegation that attended a special session of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva, Switzerland.

As part of Canada's periodic review, the United Nations expressed concern over the lack of improvement to child poverty rates, continuing child health issues including unhealthy weights and mental illness, and inadequate monitoring mechanisms for tracking the well-being of children. The review also found insufficient accounting of government spending on children and coordination between various levels of government when it comes to serving Canadian children.

"Last February, the Council presented to the UN Committee our 2011 report on Aboriginal children in Canada," said Pringle. "They were very interested in our concerns about key systemic and child rights issues in Canada including the health, education and safety of Aboriginal children and youth. We are hopeful this knowledge will assist the committee to elevate these concerns with the government."

Pringle noted that the Council is confident that Maurás' visit will help further inform the UN Committee on the status of Canada's implementation of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Among her tour stops was a youth forum in Toronto, a Talking Circle with youth hosted by the Elsipogtog First Nation in New Brunswick, a visit with youth at residential rehabilitation units in Montreal, and meetings at the Canadian Human Rights Commission in Ottawa.

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