

Harper won't commit to TRC recommendations

Prime Minister Stephen Harper spent much of Tuesday's question period defending his government's work on aboriginal affairs as the opposition challenged him on the results of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's findings.

But Harper wouldn't commit to any of the 94 recommendations outlined in the summary report, released Tuesday morning. Members from the NDP, including Opposition Leader Tom Mulcair, questioned Harper repeatedly as to whether the government would fully adopt the United Nations' Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which the commissioners called the "framework for reconciliation."

The prime minister answered by reiterating his party's stance on the declaration.

"Canada is one of the very few countries in the world where aboriginal and treaty rights are recognized, and that's one of the reasons why the government accepts the UN declaration as an aspirational document," he told the Commons. The declaration outlines the

minimum human rights standards for indigenous people.

Canada voted against it when it was accepted by the UN in 2007, along with Australia, New Zealand and the United States. The countries argued it would undermine their sovereignty.

In 2010, the government accepted it as an "aspirational" document. Cree NDP MP Romeo Saganash



Justice Sinclair, chair of the commission, and his fellow commissioners, Marie Wilson -CP-

reintroduced the declaration as a private member's bill in early May, but it was defeated by the government.

Justice Murray Sinclair, the commission's chair, told CBC News chief correspondent Peter Mansbridge on Monday's edition of The

National that he didn't mind the government's characterization of the declaration.

"It should be an aspirational document. So what we're saying to them is, 'Aspire to it.'"

Sinclair said in a statement Tuesday, however, that he was still concerned with the government's "resistance to the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous

Peoples."

The statement was released after the commissioners, prime minister and aboriginal affairs minister met to discuss the findings. Sinclair said the prime minister was open to listening and asked about some of the recommendations - and that the commissioners have offered to meet again once the prime minister has read the report.

Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau pledged his party's commitment to adopt and implement all of the recommendations made in the report. He asked the

Conservatives if they would do the same.

"The commission has spent a long time on this report - a commission established by this government," Harper replied.

"It has issued a large number of recommendations and we are still awaiting the full report. The government will examine all of these [and] obviously read them before deciding on what the appropriate next steps are." He wouldn't yet commit to any of the Truth and Reconciliation report's recommendations.

Harper several of his MPs brought up his 2008 apology to residential school survivors multiple times.

"Intentions are not enough.



Prime Minister Harper in the House

An apology is only meaningful if it is accompanied most recent budget and "vast amounts of money"

Ontario's Wynne calls federal response to TRC "disappointing"

COLLINGWOOD, Ont. -Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne calls the federal government's response to recommendations from a six-year study of Canada's residential schools legacy "disappointing."

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission released 94 recommendations Tuesday along with a summary of its conclusions, including its description of a "cultural genocide" and the estimated deaths of more than 6,000 children.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper did not address a ceremony that was held on Wednesday to formally close the commission's work.

He has suggested in the House of Commons that his government has already moved on addressing aboriginal concerns in the seven years since he issued an historic apology from the government of Canada.

Wynne began her speech to the Ontario Liberal annual general meeting on Saturday by acknowledging the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and saying there is "no possible excuse for any government to ignore the abuses of our past relationship."

The premier has criticized Harper in the past for not calling a national inquiry into murdered and missing aboriginal women.

The federal government did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Wynne's speech.

by real action," said Mulcair.

Sinclair, chair of the commission, and his fellow commissioners, Marie Wilson and Chief Wilton Littlechild, watched question period from the gallery and were acknowledged by Commons Speaker Andrew Scheer

The prime minister told the House of Commons that his government has already moved on First Nations issues, citing training programs announced in the

provided for education reform, post-secondary scholarships, and health investments.

NDP Leader Tom Muclair linked the success of Canada's indigenous people to the success of the environment, the resource sector, and the economy.

"If we don't get to those results now, we're going to be leaving an insurmountable debt on the backs of future generations," he told reporters.