

**HIGH-LEVEL EXPERT SEMINAR ON INDIGENOUS FOOD SYSTEMS
FAO HEADQUARTERS, ROME
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**REMARKS BY MR PATRICK RATA
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- In the UN Sustainable Development Goals, all our countries have committed to promoting prosperity while protecting the planet.
- Goal 2 talks about ending hunger and ensuring access by all people to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round.
- Realising the SDGs and achieving zero hunger cannot be achieved by continuing the status quo. There has to be change.
- The challenge is simple; we need to produce more food to feed more people and do so in ways that reduce negative impacts on the environment.
- The solution is less simple and there is no single silver bullet. We need more efficient food production methods. We need to cease environmentally unsound practises. We need innovation.
- And we need to be exploring, and open to, all manner of food systems.
- It is in this spirit that my Government welcomes the convening of this High-Level Expert Seminar on Indigenous Food Systems, the first of its kind. We congratulate the organisers and distinguished panellists.
- This is an opportunity to learn from different indigenous communities about their approaches to food systems, food generation, resource management, and transmission of ancestral knowledge in relation to food systems.
- This sharing of information will allow us to better understand how indigenous food systems are already contributing to the goal of zero hunger.
- It will also enable us to begin exploring how these systems might have useful application in other local, regional and international contexts.

- As well, this Seminar is a chance for us to discuss ways in which we can support indigenous food systems and support the ongoing efforts of indigenous communities to sustainably manage their resources.
- The high visibility of this meeting gives us a chance to advocate for the inclusion, promotion and preservation of indigenous food systems within the SDGs-related programmes.
- New Zealand looks forward to sharing our experience of indigenous food systems, while recognising that all indigenous systems are unique and have evolved along with the needs and aspirations of the different communities.
- In this regard, we look forward to Ms Stacey Whitiara's presentation on the role of her organization - Plant & Food Research - in adding value to Māori natural resources and primary sector assets.
- Today, many communities are interested in building participation in trade (whether local, national or international).
- At the same time, indigenous peoples do not want an increased market focus to be at the expense of their culture, traditions, and way of producing food itself.
- Finding the balance between building markets while maintaining unique food systems is a challenge that requires further debate, research and attention by practitioners.
- Māori food systems are a significant part of New Zealand's agriculture. Economic wellbeing for New Zealand is closely tied to the economic performance of Māori agribusiness. The production, processing and trade of food contributes to the improvement of indigenous peoples in our country.
- There are examples of how Māori food systems have enabled the produce of Māori communities to reach the market and capture a larger share of the added value. This experience could be relevant for other countries and people who face similar challenges.
- In New Zealand, Māori and the Government have a partnership mandated by the Treaty of Waitangi. This includes the obligation of the Government to partner with Māori to protect Maori assets, which contributes directly to the development of New Zealand's regional economies.

- The New Zealand Government believes that assisting Māori in making the most of their assets is critical to economic growth for the nation. This strategy includes improving participation in international markets to maximise the economic return for the primary sector, contributing also to SDG8.
- Finally, New Zealand is committed to being involved in supporting outcomes from this seminar and on building further cooperation on indigenous food systems based on our relationships built this week.