



11th session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
Item 7: United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples – good practices
and lessons learned

Wednesday 11 July 2018

Australian Statement

Thank you Madam/Mr Chair,

Australia welcomes the Expert Mechanism's focus on identifying and promoting best practice to give effect to the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Through a proactive approach of sharing our experiences and learning from the past, indigenous peoples, States and experts can strengthen efforts to protect the rights of indigenous peoples.

We welcome the recent work undertaken by the Expert Mechanism to provide technical advice to countries on improving outcomes for indigenous peoples, and look forward to the updated report on ten years of implementation of the Declaration. Australia was pleased to make a submission to this report and share some of our domestic successes and challenges.

Since its adoption, Australia has made important steps to honour the principles of the Declaration. These include efforts to repatriate ancestral remains, supporting language and culture maintenance and transmission, and continuing to recognise the ongoing connection of Indigenous peoples to land.

For the last decade Australia's national framework 'Closing the Gap' has provided the architecture for Australian governments to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and improve outcomes in a holistic way.

We have made progress on improving child mortality, year 12 educational attainment and early childhood enrolment. However, some of the aims for the framework have not been met.

Australian Governments have committed to refreshing the national framework, drawing on lessons and aiming for genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the design and delivery of policies and programs.

The next phase of Closing the Gap will be guided by principles of empowerment and enabling local decision making. The best progress happens when Indigenous peoples lead initiatives from the start.

Our current focus is on a comprehensive consultation process with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups, to inform the development of future targets, performance indicators and accountabilities. Consultations so far have demonstrated support for a strength-based approach that builds on the considerable achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Australia hopes to deliver a new national Closing the Gap framework by November 2018.

We look forward to further discussion with indigenous peoples, States and United Nations experts on identifying and promoting best practice to give effect to the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

409 Words