

**Item 8: Discussion on the theme “Tenth Anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: Measures taken to implement the Declaration”**

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Tuatahi, kei te mihi atu ki te Iwi taketake o tenei whenua, Onondaga tēnā koutou katoa.

Tuarua, he mihi nui ki a koe te kaiwhakahaere o tenei huihuinga.

E ngā mana, e ngā reo, e ngā wai, e ngā maunga o te ao Tenā tātou katoa.

In anticipation of this anniversary, New Zealand has been reflecting on the importance of the Declaration, all it aspires to, and our expression of support for the Declaration.

When New Zealand moved to support the Declaration in 2010, the then Minister of Māori Affairs, Hon Pita Sharples, delivered our statement of support at this Forum as an acknowledgement of the distinct and special status that Māori have as the indigenous people of New Zealand. He also acknowledged the considerable involvement that Māori had in the establishment of the Declaration and their investment in its development. I’d like to take this opportunity to reiterate New Zealand’s continued acknowledgement of these efforts.

New Zealand remains committed to the common objectives of the Declaration and the Treaty of Waitangi alongside New Zealand’s existing legal and constitutional frameworks. New Zealand has focused primarily on upholding the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and strengthening the Crown – Māori relationship. This is evident in efforts made to work alongside the Iwi Chairs Forum to address matters of importance to Iwi Māori and the progress made in the Treaty Settlements process.

We are currently considering how the progress derived from the Treaty of Waitangi relationship compliments and intersects with the common objectives of the Declaration in order to understand the focus required for further development.

Given the critical and overarching role that meaningful relationships between the Crown and Māori play, New Zealand continues to focus on strengthening the Crown-Māori relationship. This will help to ensure that long-term domestic priorities for advancing indigenous well-being are achieved. The aspirations and rights affirmed within the Declaration support both strong relationships between states and indigenous peoples, and pathways to pursue economic, social and cultural development.

New Zealand is also concentrating efforts to consider options for continuing our national dialogue on the Declaration and identifying priorities for enhancing our commitment to indigenous peoples rights in line with the common objectives of the Declaration and Treaty of Waitangi.

There is still further work to be done before we are in a position to share a comprehensive update on these commitments, but work is underway.

Throughout the next two weeks, we will make statements to update the Permanent Forum on the progress made and areas where continued efforts are required. Central to this progress is the spirit of partnership and mutual respect between the New Zealand Government and Māori to achieve better outcomes for whānau and families.

No reira, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa.

*Te Puni Kōkiri*

*April 2017*