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**PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES
THIRD MEETING**

EDUCATION

**STATEMENT BY THE NEW ZEALAND REPRESENTATIVE
MS MOANA DURIE-SINCLAIR**

TUESDAY 11 MAY 2004

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New Zealand

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Mr Chairman,

New Zealand's education system is characterised by high levels of above average achievement, but relative to other countries, it has a wide gap between its highest performing students and its lowest achievers. Raising achievement and closing this achievement gap continues to be one of the major challenges facing educators and policy makers in all levels of our education system.

The success of Māori in education is a matter we take seriously.

We are pleased to be able to report there have been some small yet positive improvements in recent years. At a national level, Māori participation in early childhood education increased, slightly more Māori are staying at school longer, more Māori are going directly from school to tertiary education and Māori participation in tertiary education continued to grow.

Raising Māori achievement is complex, but our research and developments are showing it can be done.

Mr Chairman

Over the last four or five years we have worked hard to bring Māori education into the spotlight. This work has pushed at the concept of striving for excellence, incorporating within it the best of tikanga and te reo Māori, and bringing people and groups together to work on a common good.

One of the core elements of the move towards building excellence has been developing Māori authority and partnership in ways that boost the active involvement of Māori in education. A good example of this can be seen in the growing number of partnerships and relationships being developed between iwi and Māori organisations and the Ministry of Education focused explicitly on improving education outcomes.

Large-scale gatherings focussed on education like Hui Taumata Mātauranga have also been helping to find new ways of working together. The spirit – and the energy – generated by these activities are helping take us towards more active Māori participation in the formulation of educational policies and programmes. They are showing us how participation might flourish within the model of an active partnership and from the foundations of a focussed Māori voice.

Mr Chairman

A key influence on educational achievement is the whānau/family. They play a significant role in helping motivate their children to learn, shaping attitudes to learning, and supporting their children.

A key programme for providing educational information to Māori learners, parents and whānau is called 'Te Mana - Ki te Taumata, Get There with Learning'. This programme combines a national advertising campaign with local events to promote positive messages about education to Māori communities. Te Mana emphasises that making the right educational choices can dramatically change lives and that Māori communities need access to information that supports them to make those choices.

Mr Chairman,

The Government's 10-year strategic plan for early childhood education is part of that effort, by seeking for example to increase the number of Māori children in attendance at an early childhood centre. Increasing participation in early childhood education particularly among Māori children, through the promoting participation programme and the provision of capital funding has continued.

Since its inception in 2001, the Promoting Participation Programme has involved work across the country with Māori communities to develop local solutions that support Māori participation.

Last year the capital programme provides a further \$8 million to create an extra 1236 new places for children in licensed and chartered early childhood education centres over the next year. This funding is a significant way to increase participation in quality early childhood services, especially amongst children from low socio-economic, rural, isolated, Māori or Pasifika communities.

A number of initiatives are underway to support quality including increasing the number of qualified teachers, progressing the ECE learning and exemplar work, establishing centres of innovation, and reviewing the fundamental frameworks on which the current early childhood education system is based.

Mr Chairman

Ensuring Māori stay at school, are engaged in their learning, and are achieving is a priority. The quality of teaching within schools makes a significant difference to engaging students and raising their achievement. Too many Māori leave school early or with few or no formal qualifications.

An extensive programme of work is underway to support quality teaching and learning initiatives. Key areas of focus are raising teacher expectations of Māori learners through better assessment information and research to inform teaching practice, supporting and developing the professional capability of educators working with Māori learners, and increasing the supply of quality Māori teachers.

The introduction of the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) is providing a new set of achievement information that will help students, teachers and parents to monitor student achievement and identify where more help is needed.

Mr Chairman

Māori students are being suspended, stood-down, truant or excluded from school at higher rates than non-Māori. This is an issue we must continue to work on. The Suspension Reduction Initiative (SRI), launched in 2001 to reduce Māori suspensions, has succeeded in reducing suspensions for all students and particularly for Māori.

Changes in how schools manage student behaviour are definitely having an impact. Funding schools for enhanced learning and study support centres are examples of positive initiatives being developed to encourage student participation. The rate for Māori students participating the initiative schools dropped from 76 per 1000 students in the year 2000, to 43 per 1000 students in 2003.

Mr Chairman

In 2002, Māori had the highest rates of participation in tertiary education of any group at aged 25 and over. Over 29 percent of Māori students attended tertiary for the first time that year, the highest proportion for any ethnic group. Enrolments by Māori at degree level and higher have also grown faster than non-Māori.

Wānanga continued their significant growth, increasing from 26,000 students in 2001, to 45,500 in 2002. Wānanga now represent 11 percent of all students who studied in tertiary institutions in 2002. While there is some concern regarding the exponential growth of students attending wānanga and the impact this has on the quality of programme delivery, the reality is that if Māori providers were not there, many Māori would not be attending tertiary education.

Participation in wananga is complemented by participation in a range of other tertiary learning pathways. For example the Modern Apprenticeships scheme was introduced in 2000. This is a work-based training initiative encouraging and helping young people, particularly those aged between 16 and 21 years, to take up and complete apprenticeship training. The scheme helps to address barriers to industry training faced by young people. In 2002, 15 percent of the 4,344 people in the Modern Apprenticeship programme identified as Māori compared with 17 percent in the previous year.

These developments sit in the context of a comprehensive programme of reforms for the tertiary education sector. These reforms included the Tertiary Education Strategy and an associated Statement of Tertiary Education

Priorities, which provide a map of the Government's goals for tertiary education and represent the key building block for the reforms. All aspects of the Strategy relate to Māori tertiary education.

Mr Chairman,

The kaupapa mātauranga Māori (education) sector has grown, in particular, Māori-medium schools such as kura kaupapa Māori.

Kaupapa Māori education initiatives such as kōhanga reo (early childhood), kura kaupapa (primary education) Māori, wharekura (secondary education) and wānanga (tertiary education) have all grown from Māori initiative and their success and growth is in part due to the fact that they are designed and delivered to meet Māori needs. Kaupapa Māori education is characterised by reo Māori, tikanga Māori and whānau involvement.

Kaupapa mātauranga Māori initiatives have been influential in providing learners with a strong sense of their identity, language and culture as key skills required for operating within te ao Māori. They deliver a national curriculum that provides learners with the skills required to operate within te ao whānui. Whānau involvement is fundamental to the governance and management of kōhanga and kura, in particular, therefore these initiatives not only play a role in supporting students' learning, but also provide support networks for parents and enhancing parent/adult skills and capability

Supporting the particular needs of kaupapa Māori education has continued to be a challenge. Therefore, the focus has been on building a quality infrastructure to support kaupapa mātauranga Māori including information and communication technology support for wharekura to create access to a wider range of curriculum areas, and continued development of teaching and learning resources and materials. Professional development initiatives have continued to support quality teaching within kaupapa Māori settings.

Mr Chairman,

Working with Māori is leading to tangible improvements in educational outcomes for Māori. The success of our experience leads us to suggest that the Forum should recommend that States foster indigenous education initiatives and provide appropriate funding. We hope UN agencies will also consider supporting indigenous education programmes. Mr Chairman, I thank you.