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Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples – Fifth Meeting

Australian Statement for Agenda Item 3

World Conference on Indigenous Issues (2014)

July 2012

The Australian Government has long supported convening a World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in 2014. We were pleased to co-sponsor the initiative to convene the World Conference during the 65th session of the UN General Assembly in 2010, and we wish to acknowledge the commitment and leadership of the Plurinational State of Bolivia to achieving this outcome.

The 2014 World Conference on Indigenous Peoples will provide a critical opportunity for Indigenous peoples, civil society and national governments to share their experiences and best practices on the realisation of the rights of Indigenous peoples. The Australian Government is committed to working with others to ensure a collaborative, constructive outcome to the World Conference that builds on the commitments enshrined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The Australian Government firmly believes that the participation of Indigenous peoples needs to be ensured throughout all stages of the planning, preparation and convening of the World Conference. We are committed to ensuring that the voices of Indigenous people – including Indigenous women and Indigenous people with a disability – are heard.

As we move towards 2014, Australia will continue to work with those who have championed this initiative and today we look forward to hearing the views of Indigenous representatives on their vision for the Conference. Important issues include: when the Conference should be convened to ensure the highest-level participation; what format it should be held in; what themes should be discussed and what the outcomes of the Conference should be.

Australia trusts that the World Conference will consider as a matter of priority the particular concerns of Indigenous women, including how to promote leadership, capacity training, deal with the endemic nature of violence against women, and political participation.

Australia is not alone in its efforts to end the disadvantage of Indigenous peoples, and we acknowledge the efforts of other countries in this regard. Australia would particularly emphasise in this context its efforts to end Indigenous disadvantage in the form of its Closing the Gap Strategy. This work is broad-ranging and includes activity on multiple fronts. We will expand on these efforts in our remarks against agenda item six, and anticipate that this work will inform Australia's contributions at the 2014 Conference.