

Human Rights Council – 33rd Regular Session

Australian Statement

Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

20 September 2016

Strengthening the mandate of the Expert Mechanism on Indigenous Persons is a high priority for Australia, in line with our pledge to advance the rights of indigenous peoples internationally as a candidate for the Human Rights Council.

Australia acknowledges the important role EMRIP has in working with Member States, indigenous peoples, other UN bodies, civil society, national human rights institutions and the private sector.

Australia welcomes this opportunity to focus the mandate on supporting EMRIP's stakeholders to achieve the ends of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Australia is pleased with EMRIP's proposal to study the economic rights of indigenous peoples.

Australia welcomes the coming visit of the Special Rapporteur in March 2017, and looks forward to constructive engagement on a wide range of issues.

In relation to the comments in the Special Rapporteur's report about the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement, Australia notes that our International Investment Agreements and Trade Agreements do not constrain indigenous rights or policy-making on indigenous issues.

In addition to preserving the Australian Government's right to regulate in the public interest, including related to indigenous rights and indigenous policy, Australia can confirm that we have secured specific safeguards relating to preferences to, and favourable treatment of, any indigenous persons or organisations as well as traditional knowledge, cultural expressions and other cultural heritage. This is a common practice in Australia's recent trade agreements.

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