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Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples - Eighth Session 20-24 July 2015

Australia Statement on Item 3: Follow-up to the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples including the review of the mandate of the Expert Mechanism

Australia reiterates its support for the Outcome Document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples.

In particular, Australia supports the intention expressed in Paragraph 28 of the Outcome Document to modify and improve the mandate of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples so that it can more effectively assist in the achievement of the goals of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The Expert Mechanism has a unique position in the United Nations system, where it provides valuable knowledge and themed advice to the Human Rights Council. The Expert Mechanism enables the development of in-depth studies that can assist indigenous groups and Members States.

Australia believes the sharing of experience, knowledge, expertise and best practice is invaluable in the ongoing effort to achieve better outcomes for indigenous peoples.

Australia believes that the mandate of the Expert Mechanism could be expanded to include independent study of progress towards the goals of the Declaration, and to make recommendations to assist in this progress.

Australia would support that the Expert Mechanism maintain its unique position and that it should:

- Collect and disseminate information about good/best practices;
- undertake thematic studies and make recommendations to support ongoing progress against achieving goals of the Declaration;
- issue observations regarding the provisions of the Declaration with a view to ongoing study of progress against the achievement of the Declaration's goals; and
- provide practical information that contributes to capacity building by all stakeholders, including Member States, indigenous peoples, non-government organisations and others.

To be effective, the Expert Mechanism should not duplicate the work of other UN bodies and roles but rather complement their work by focusing on the achievements of the goals of the Declaration.

Australia has in place activities in line with the Outcomes Document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples 2014 including capacity building and leadership initiatives, processes for engagement with Indigenous communities to develop local solutions, as well as specific initiatives to address the disadvantage experienced by Indigenous people.

Australia supports the Expert Mechanism, and the important role it can play in addressing indigenous disadvantage.