

New Version # 8  
ID Item 3/5



**27<sup>th</sup> session, Human Rights Council  
Interactive Dialogue: EMRIP and Special Rapporteur  
on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples  
Delivered by First Secretary Jarrod Clyne  
17 September 2014**

Mr President,

We welcome the opportunity to join together to consider the range of issues and challenges that indigenous peoples continue to face around the world. Next week, member states will join with indigenous representatives in New York for the first World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. The World Conference, and the outcome document to be adopted by member states, signals an important step forward in progressing indigenous rights and issues through international processes.

New Zealand affirms its full support for the World Conference, and welcomes its inclusive preparatory process. We look forward to coming together with members and with indigenous representatives to share perspectives towards the realisation of indigenous peoples' rights. It is important that the situation of all indigenous people remains in sight – particularly those most vulnerable: children, youth, women, and persons with disabilities.

Mr President, while we welcome the progress that has been made to advance indigenous rights and issues around the world, we recognise that there is still much work to be done. In this regard, New Zealand expresses its appreciation for the Special Rapporteur's report, and in particular, her identification of some of the key challenges that still confront indigenous peoples.

The New Zealand Government continues its work to address many of the underlying concerns raised in the Special Rapporteur's report. In our domestic context, the Treaty of Waitangi represents a unique partnership. It has long been recognised as a founding document forming the basis of the relationship between Māori and the Crown (represented by the New Zealand Government). The Treaty affirms both the rights of Māori as the indigenous people of New Zealand and as citizens of New Zealand. And as noted in the Special Rapporteur's report, it underpins our own unique processes for resolving historical grievances.

New Zealand takes particular note of the Special Rapporteur's concerns regarding the social and economic conditions of indigenous peoples. These are challenging and complex issues for many member states, and New Zealand is no exception. Statistically, Māori tend to have lower socio-economic status, poorer health, and higher rates of unemployment than the rest of the population. The Government continues to work with

local communities and family groups (whānau), Māori, and iwi, hapū, and whanau to identify long-term solutions to these issues.

A partnerships approach is key. For example, *He Korowai Oranga* – the Māori Health Strategy – sets the overarching framework to guide the Government and the health and disability sector to achieve the best outcomes for Māori. *Pae Ora*, or healthy future, is the government's vision for Māori health. It is a holistic concept that includes three interconnected elements: *mauri ora* (healthy individuals); *whānau ora* (healthy families); and *wai ora* (healthy environments). The Government also supports Māori-led economic development, through *He kai kei aku ringa* – the Crown-Māori Economic Growth Partnership.

New Zealand also expresses its appreciation to the members of the Expert Mechanism for your comprehensive study on access to justice. This is an issue of great importance to New Zealand. The Waitangi Tribunal is central to New Zealand's restorative justice system, and significant progress continues to be made to settle historic Treaty of Waitangi claims.

We are now over half-way through completing our historic Treaty settlements. Recent settlements have achieved significant arrangements for shared decision-making over places of significance, such as Te Urewera National Park and the Whanganui River. Iwi have substantially increased the value of their settlements through commercial ventures, and strengthened their relationships with central and local government, and other key stakeholders.

As your report notes, Māori are over-represented in the justice system, as both offenders and as victims; an issue that cuts across indigenous men, women, and youth. This continues to be an issue of great concern and a priority area of focus for the Government. The New Zealand Government supports a number of programmes that take a strength-based approach to tackling the over-representation of Māori children and young people as victims and perpetrators of harm. Programmes in the area of family wellbeing, domestic violence, care and protection, and youth justice target the family setting to reinforce the many positive attributes of Māori cultural practice and to have pride in themselves, as Māori.

Recent research by Statistics New Zealand indicates gains in the health of the Māori language, with the number of people with some Māori language skills increasing from 42% in 2001 to 55% in 2013. In addition, Māori language and cultural iconography has become more prominent in wider New Zealand society. The New Zealand Government has developed legislation to strengthen the leadership roles of iwi and Māori with regard to key Māori language entities.

Finally, New Zealand supports the continuing role of the Expert Mechanism in promoting respect for the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and assisting states in achieving the ends of the Declaration.