



Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples – 10th Session 10-14 July 2017

Australia Statement on Item 6: Ten years of implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: good practices and lessons learned

**Wednesday, 12 July 2017
3-6pm**

Chair,

Australia joins the world in celebrating the ten-year anniversary of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and we welcome the report of the Expert Mechanism.

The anniversary provides the opportunity for us to reflect on the importance of the Declaration, on what has been achieved both globally and locally, and on what more needs to be done. Reflection gives us all a basis for substantial action.

Although in 2007 Australia did not support the Declaration, in 2009 we moved to endorse it. Now Australia is working to strengthen our understanding of what the Declaration means for our country.

To achieve the aims of the Declaration it is essential that Australian governments work in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We understand, in line with the principles of the Declaration, that it is essential for governments and indigenous peoples to work together.

We have, and will continue to, work with the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples and the Indigenous Peoples Organisation Network and with our peak human rights institution, the Australian Human Rights Commission.

Together, we are taking stock of how Australian policies and programmes are practical demonstrations of the principles of the Declaration, and identifying any gaps.

We will also examine how we can raise awareness of the Declaration across governments, civil society and the community.

Australia has taken many important steps that honour the principles of the Declaration.

Undertaking this process has left us with unanswered questions to which we do not, as yet, have the answers. These questions will inform our future actions to maintain and enhance our efforts in further meeting the principles of the Declaration.

As we learn more, we will share our experiences with others on similar journeys.

Can the Expert Mechanism share examples of reforming government systems to take forward the ends of the Declaration?