

United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues – 18th Session

Item 12: Follow up on the Outcome Document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples

Australian Statement

Thank you Chair.

Australia recognises the value of the World Outcome Document in continuing to focus national and international efforts to support and include the world's indigenous peoples.

Australia is committed to partnering with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to improve outcomes for Indigenous communities.

For a decade Australia has used the Closing the Gap framework to guide and coordinate national focus and efforts to improve the economic, health and education outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. As we announced at the Forum in 2018, Australia has undertaken work to review and refresh this framework by shifting focus to a partnership model with Indigenous Australians.

Australian governments came together through the Council of Australian Governments, or COAG, and established a formal and genuine partnership for the refreshed agenda and framework for Closing the Gap.

COAG is comprised of the First Ministers of all governments and a representative of local governments. The new Joint Council on Closing the Gap was formed through a ten-year partnership. It has 12 Indigenous members, nominated by the National Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations, as well as ministerial representatives.

This Joint Council, which had its first meeting in March 2019, provides direct involvement in government decision-making processes for Indigenous Australians, as equal partners at the table, to finalise draft targets and monitor COAG commitments over the next decade.

This is the first time COAG has appointed members, other than elected representatives with the same decision-making responsibilities.

In alignment with the goals of the Outcome Document of the World Conference this partnership approach will embed shared decision making into the design, implementation and monitoring of the Closing the Gap framework, making this partnership a truly national effort and national recognition of the value and importance of shared solutions to systemic problems.

Thank you.