

Agenda item 3: World Conference on Indigenous Peoples

July 2013

Australia welcomes all the distinguished members of the Expert Mechanism, colleagues from other governments, and – importantly – the representatives of Indigenous Peoples attending this meeting. We look forward to another constructive meeting of this Expert Mechanism.

Australia would like to particularly acknowledge that this week, in Australia, we celebrate NAIDOC Week: a celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and an opportunity to recognise the contributions of Indigenous Australians in various fields.

Australia is a proud and active supporter of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in 2014 and was pleased to show our support for the Conference by co-sponsoring Bolivia's initiative during the 65th session of the General Assembly.

We are looking forward to continuing our dialogue with all governments, civil society organisations and Indigenous peoples in sharing perspectives and best practices on the realisation of the rights of indigenous peoples at the World Conference.

We take careful note of the Alta outcome document, and welcome this important contribution to the Indigenous Peoples' regional preparatory and consultation process. We will continue to analyse the outcome document as we prepare for the World Conference in 2014.

Broad participation by Indigenous representative groups and civil society organisations in the planning, preparation and convening of the World Conference is essential in ensuring the event's success. We look forward to a Conference which leaves behind a legacy of harmonious, respectful and cooperative relations between States and Indigenous peoples. And which recognises Indigenous issues and perspectives, including traditional knowledge and local practices.

We anticipate that the Conference will be a positive step in the international community's recognition of Indigenous rights. We welcome the inclusion of distinctive roundtables and plenaries with a formalised model for Indigenous participation in recognition of the Conference's unique nature.

We acknowledge the impact of these discussions feeding into the UN Sustainable Development Goals Open Working Group in the lead up to the post-2015 development agenda.

We acknowledge the essential importance of closing the gap between the quality of life of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in the next phase of the global development agenda.

Australia is a regular contributor to funds supporting Indigenous peoples, including the UN Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations. We encourage other governments to consider contributing to the fund to assist delegations in attending the World Conference.

We look forward to ongoing consultation mechanisms in order to ensure that the World Conference is successful in furthering the rights of all Indigenous Peoples.