

Item 4: Implementation of the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum with reference to the Declaration

Tēnā koe Madam Chair

All of the six mandated areas are equally important to New Zealand I will focus on some of the key developments that New Zealand have made progress on.

Māori, iwi and hapū have a unique relationship with New Zealand's environment and natural resources as tangata whenua. Discussions on the environment are a key component of Treaty of Waitangi Settlements.

A unique demonstration of this is the ground breaking Treaty settlement which establishes a new legal framework for the Whanganui River. Through the settlement process the Whanganui River has gained legal recognition in its own right as a legal personality. The River is an indivisible and living whole from the mountains to the sea, incorporating all its physical and metaphysical elements. This settlement is considered a first internationally, it provides for the deep spiritual connection between Whanganui Iwi and their ancestral river.

Language is essential to the identity and existence of Māori. On 29 April 2016 the New Zealand government enacted Te Ture mō Te Reo Māori 2016. It is the first substantive enactment written in both the Māori language and English, with the Māori version to prevail in the event of conflict between the two versions.

The legislation established an independent statutory entity, Te Mātāwai, that will provide leadership on behalf of iwi and Māori in their role as kaitiaki (guardians) of the Māori language.

New Zealand is continually focused on improving **social development** outcomes for Māori. One of the innovative solutions is Whānau Ora. To support Whānau Ora the Government has implemented a commissioning model that supports innovation. Commissioning Agencies work with whānau, families and communities to fund initiatives and activity that focus on improving wellbeing.

There have been some good progress in **education**. This progress has been achieved through the setting of targets and high expectations of learning institutions to raise Māori achievement. We are seeing the benefits of this with achievement levels growing to 75% for NCEA level 2 (year 12).

In terms of work underway, the Waitangi Tribunal recently released a report regarding disproportionate re-offending rates within Corrections. The Government acknowledges that the rate of Māori offending is unacceptable and presents an extremely serious issue for New Zealand. The Government accepts the Waitangi Tribunal's recommendation are fair and an indication that there is still much work

Justice sector agencies acknowledge that a whole-of-justice sector approach to address the criminal justice disparities between Māori and non Māori is required. These agencies, led by a Justice Sector Leadership Board are developing a long term strategy aimed at improving criminal justice outcomes for Māori.

Central to the strategy is for agencies to partner and work with iwi and Māori organisations to identify, co-design and co-deliver interventions that address the underlying causes of offending and re-offending. Our research tells us that Māori over-representation in the criminal justice system is more closely related to socio-economic status and demographics rather than ethnicity.

Although gains are being made and there are many initiatives in the pipelines, we acknowledge there is still more that can be done and we look forward to continuing our efforts and contributing to the discussions on the implementation of the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum and indigenous rights more generally.

No reira, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa.