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**PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES  
THIRD MEETING**

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**STATEMENT BY THE NEW ZEALAND REPRESENTATIVE  
MS MOANA DURIE-SINCLAIR**

**TUESDAY 18 MAY 2004**

**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

Government

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Mr Chairman,

In New Zealand, Māori women play a crucial role in the economic and social development of their families and communities. Successful Māori business women are providing important job opportunities for their family groups and wider Māori organisations, making a significant contribution to regional economic development, and in turn to the national economy.

Māori women have also made significant contributions to the renaissance of Māori language and culture, and they have been instrumental in establishing and running Māori initiatives programmes (*Tu Tangata*), language nest pre-schools (*Kohanga Reo*), Māori schools (*Kura Kaupapa*) and youth mentoring (*Matua Whangai*) programmes. They have played a vital role in tribal authorities, Māori trust boards and urban Māori authorities and the creation of health and social services by Māori for Māori.

Across a range of indicators, however, Māori women are yet to experience the same economic, social and health outcomes as non-Māori women. And Māori women compared to Māori men generally receive lower incomes – despite Māori women’s generally higher educational achievement. In employment, Māori women have lower participation and employment rates than Māori men, they have among the lowest full-time employment rates of all groups, and are twice as likely as non-Māori women to be long-term unemployed.

Mr Chairman,

To help address this, New Zealand recently launched the *Action Plan for New Zealand Women* – a whole-of-government approach to improving the circumstances of women in New Zealand. In the plan, specific actions have been developed to increase opportunities for Māori women to participate more fully in the economic, social and cultural sectors of society, and to progress the aspirations of their families and tribes.

Priority actions for Māori women include:

- Identifying what makes small and medium-sized enterprises successful so as to promote sustainable growth among businesses owned and operated by Māori women;
- Exploring options to enhance Māori women’s participation in managing collectively-owned assets;
- Exploring options to increase Māori women’s participation in employment;
- Increasing the number and capabilities of Māori women in leadership and decision-making roles through monitoring Māori women’s participation and supporting programmes that enhance skills in this area; and,
- Supporting and promoting the implementation of “services by Māori for Māori.”

For further information, copies of this Action Plan are available from the New Zealand delegation.

Mr Chairman

New Zealand's indigenous women are making real progress with their economic and social development. Much remains to be done, but we believe that by empowering Māori women they will achieve improved economic and social outcomes for all Māori. And promoting indigenous development does not mean only indigenous people benefit – New Zealand's experience is that improvements to Māori economic and social status has direct rewards for society as a whole.

Mr Chairman, I thank you.