



United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Item 6: World Conference on Indigenous Peoples

Statement by Michelle Hippolite, Chief Executive of
Te Puni Kokiri (Ministry of Māori Development)

19 May 2014

Thank you madam Chair.

New Zealand joins others in voicing support for an inclusive World Conference on Indigenous peoples and an inclusive preparatory process.

In 2010, the General Assembly, through Resolution 65/198, expressed concern about the disadvantages that indigenous peoples have typically faced across a range of social and economic indicators and about the impediments to their full enjoyment of their rights. In that same Resolution, partially to address these concerns, the General Assembly decided to organise a high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly, to be known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples.

That consensus Resolution, which came three years after the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, signalled the willingness of UN member states to continue the discussion on the rights of indigenous peoples. It was also an acknowledgment that further work is needed to address the inequalities that exist for indigenous peoples to enable positive development of those peoples and their countries.

The Government of New Zealand welcomed the decision to hold a World Conference on Indigenous Peoples as it provides a valuable opportunity for indigenous peoples with member states to engage in meaningful dialogue, to share perspectives and best practices on the realisation of the rights of indigenous peoples and to pursue the objectives of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It is also a timely opportunity

to focus on the internationally agreed development goals in the context of indigenous peoples.

Resolution 66/296, commonly known as the modalities resolution, provides us with the blueprint for the World Conference. It provides the detail of who, when, where and how. Unfortunately, there are ongoing challenges in implementing Resolution 66/296, particularly with regard to the informal consultations on the outcome document.

New Zealand continues to advocate for a solution to this issue that is consistent with the spirit and text of Resolution 66/296 and Article 18 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Consultations on the outcome document for the World Conference must be open and inclusive, and they must allow the effective participation of indigenous peoples.

New Zealand acknowledges the statement delivered this morning by Ambassador Crispin Gregoire on behalf of the President of the General Assembly and conveys appreciation for the ongoing efforts to resolve this issue. We will carefully study the proposal that has been circulated by the President of the General Assembly today. New Zealand requests that a decision be made expeditiously by the President of the General Assembly on the date of the informal interactive hearing and we echo calls for the consideration of practical measures to enable the engagement of indigenous peoples who are not able to travel to New York for the informal interactive hearing.

New Zealand wishes to take this opportunity to convey its sincere thanks to indigenous peoples who have taken part in the various preparatory processes leading up to the World Conference. The Alta document is an achievement and provides governments with an insight into the aspirations and expectations of indigenous peoples. The Alta document contains the views of indigenous peoples and as such, according to 66/296, must be taken into account when preparing the outcome document. New Zealand was one of the member states that requested for the Alta document to be circulated as an official document of the United Nations. We hope that other member states will also consider this document in preparation for the informal consultations on the outcome document for the World Conference.

Madam Chair –

New Zealand views the World Conference as an important milestone for indigenous peoples and for Member States. It is our collective responsibility to work together to ensure that this World Conference is meaningful and supports us to move forward domestically and internationally.

There is a Māori Proverb “Ehara taku toa he toa takitahi, Engari he toa takimano, which translates to “it is not the work of one that leads to success, it is the work of many”.

Tena koutou (Greetings to you all)