

**EMRIP4: Agenda Item 5: Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**  
**Statement by New Zealand**

Kia Ora Tatou, greetings to you all.

Thank you, Mr Chair, for this opportunity to speak about the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

In keeping with New Zealand's strong commitment to human rights, and indigenous rights in particular, New Zealand took the opportunity at the opening of the Permanent Forum in 2010 to express support for the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, both as an affirmation of fundamental rights and, in its expression of new principles, as an important statement of support for Māori aspirations. New Zealand's statement of support reaffirmed the legal and constitutional frameworks that underpin New Zealand's legal system, noting that those existing frameworks define the bounds of New Zealand's engagement with the aspirational elements of the Declaration. There are four key areas of work within the New Zealand Government that illustrate our engagement with the Declaration. Those are: Treaty settlements; social services; constitutional issues; and Māori participation in decision making. Having spoken about participation in decision making under the previous agenda item, we should like to offer some brief comments on the other three areas of engagement in New Zealand with the Declaration.

***Treaty settlements***

At the centre of the relationship between the Government and the Māori people is the Treaty of Waitangi, signed in 1840. New Zealand is committed to settling outstanding historical grievances under the Treaty of Waitangi and has set the

aspirational goal of completing this work by 2014. The Treaty settlements process continues to be supported by increased resources and funding.

### ***Social services***

In June 2010, the New Zealand Government commenced implementation of a new culturally-anchored approach to family wellbeing and development, called Whānau Ora. This is an inclusive approach to providing services and opportunities to families. It requires multiple Government agencies to work together with families rather than separately with individuals. The aim of the approach is to empower families to take control of their futures, to live healthy lifestyles, to participate fully in society and to be economically secure.

As part of the new approach, a Whānau Ora governance group made up of three community representatives and the Chief Executives of the Ministries of Māori Development (Te Puni Kōkiri), Social Development and Health, have assessed and selected health and social service providers to deliver Whānau Ora services. The governance group is planning with those providers the delivery of whānau or family-centred initiatives. Further funding has been approved to expand Whānau Ora, enabling nationwide coverage of this initiative.

### **Constitutional issues**

Also in 2010, the Government agreed to a wide-ranging review of New Zealand's constitutional arrangements. This includes a review of the role of the Treaty of Waitangi in those arrangements. The initial stage of this consideration of constitutional issues is focused on stimulating public interest in, and awareness of, constitutional matters that may be considered in the review process. It includes the development of a strategy to share a range of views, including the views of Māori, in a manner that is reflective of the Treaty of Waitangi relationship and responsive to Māori consultation preferences.

Public engagement, including engagement with Māori, will begin in 2012 and should be completed in 2013. The Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Māori Affairs are the responsible Ministers for the consideration of constitutional issues. The development of the strategy and engagement will be lead by a Constitutional Advisory Panel which will include two co-chairs with sufficient standing with Māori, and the wider public, and other necessary skills and expertise. Funding has been announced that is targeted at this Maori engagement process.

Kia ora, I thank you.