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Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Tenth Session 10-14 July 2017

Australia Statement on Item 4: "Study and advice on good practices and challenges, including discrimination, in business and in access to financial services by indigenous peoples, in particular indigenous women and indigenous persons with disabilities"

Tuesday 11 July 2017

Australia is pleased EMRIP has taken forward our suggestion to conduct a study into Indigenous businesses. This important study will help the international community to realise the economic rights in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Governments deploy policies, regulations and infrastructure to grow their own economies. Governments cooperate to create rules for the international trading system in order to facilitate trade across their borders. Business thrives because of the actions of governments. However, the 2030 Agenda recognised that Indigenous peoples remain excluded from participating fully in the economy. Indigenous leaders have taken action by forming the World Indigenous Business Network to grow the global Indigenous business sector according to the values, aspirations and beliefs of Indigenous peoples. Governments should now take action as well.

Australia is stepping up to the challenge by deploying government procurement policies to drive demand for goods and services produced by Indigenous Australian businesses whilst supporting Indigenous suppliers to meet this demand. We are increasing Indigenous labour market participation and fostering Indigenous business performance through our employment policies and large-scale government infrastructure projects and grants. We are also transforming our service delivery and capital models in partnership with Indigenous businesses and the private sector. We are supporting Indigenous women and girls and Indigenous persons with disability to access all of these opportunities. Australia is also assisting our partner governments across the Asia-Pacific region to build their own enabling environments for businesses to flourish, including Indigenous-owned businesses.

However, national efforts are not enough. The interconnected nature of the global economy means that the economic articles in the Declaration will not be realised unless governments take individual as well as collective action. Developing countries will benefit from assistance from international

donors to help them build the capacity of their Indigenous peoples and empower them to seize other future economic opportunities.

And most importantly, all nations need to ensure that Indigenous peoples also have a voice in international economic decision-making forums

Mr Chair, Australia urges EMRIP to disseminate its business study to all relevant stakeholders and encourage them to take action. We also urge EMRIP to utilise its convening power to support the World Indigenous Business Network to influence global economic policy makers to advance the economic human rights of Indigenous peoples. Thank you.
