

## WORKING GROUP ON PROPOSED UN PERMANENT FORUM FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

### Membership/Participation : New Zealand Statement

- Emphasise that question of *participation is closely linked to the nature and mandate* of the forum;
- New Zealand considers it very important that the *forum be of a type and status that would permit indigenous representatives to participate as fully as possible alongside states.*
  - This would underline the shared partnership between states and indigenous peoples - a key theme of the International Decade of Indigenous Peoples.
  - It would also assist in improving access for indigenous peoples into the UN system, and ensure their interests and concerns are taken fully into account.
- New Zealand supports a body comprising representatives of both states and indigenous peoples, operating by consensus;
- On *numbers*, we have no settled view. But the body should be large enough to ensure adequate representation of both states and indigenous peoples;
- We also have no firm view on whether members should be elected or appointed, and look forward to hearing the views of others on this point;
- We consider it important to ensure also that *representation has a proportionate geographical balance*, reflecting the global distribution of indigenous peoples.
- We see value in the participation of specialised agencies and independent experts as observers.

**Type of Body and Placement in the UN system**

These issues are linked closely to the mandate of the forum. We favour a *broad advisory and coordinating mandate*;

Our concern to ensure that *indigenous peoples are able to participate as fully as possible alongside states* is also a key consideration.

These factors suggest that the forum would be an advisory body, comprising representatives of states and indigenous peoples, operating by consensus;

As for placement in the United Nations system, the most relevant existing organs, with which the forum might be associated, are the Economic and Social Council, and the Commission on Human Rights;

New Zealand has no firm view as to which of these bodies the proposed permanent forum might be responsible to, and would be guided by the consensus;

But the proposed broad mandate, and advisory and coordinating role envisaged for the forum suggest that it might appropriately report directly to ECOSOC.