

## EXPERT MECHANISM ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

## NINTH SESSION - GENEVA

10-14 July 2017

**Agenda Item 7: Indigenous Peoples' participation in the United Nations System as follow up to the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples**

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**INTERVENTION DELIVERED BY CATHRYN EATOCK AS CHAIR OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ORGANISATION:**

Thank-you Mr/Madam Chair, I am presenting here today as Chairperson of the Indigenous Peoples Organisation of Australia.

I'd like to first recognise the outstanding work undertaken by both Claire Charters and James Anaya in striving to maintain the strongest position whilst developing further drafts in response to a number of intransigent States who have been resistant to expanding Indigenous participation.

I'll also take the opportunity to acknowledge the constructive approach the Australian Mission in New York has undertaken in supporting Indigenous peoples globally through the establishment of a new Indigenous category and strengthening Indigenous participation within the United Nations.

The extension of Indigenous participation at the United Nations is critical to provide a voice to the 370 million plus of the worlds Indigenous peoples. It is a key outcome of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples and implements the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to establish minimum standards on the rights of Indigenous peoples and which was broadly endorsed by the General Assembly. Our traditional knowledges have much to offer the world in living in harmony with the lands and waterways, both honouring our ancestors and as guardians for future generations.

However there have been serious concerns with the process to date. There has been insufficient regional input into the earlier Indigenous consultations processes which was constrained through a global on solely global Indigenous processes. While the latter Intergovernmental stage has excluded Indigenous input altogether which is a fundamental breach of the principles endorsed by the General Assembly in the Declaration. Indigenous peoples have always and continue to assert our right, '*Nothing about us without us!*'.

Unfortunately, the intergovernmental stage has been impinged by significant divisions among States. While these intergovernmental negotiations are continuing this week in New York an agreed outcome must be reached to be provided to the General Assembly in September 2017. Declaration Articles 1-5, 18 and 39.

Given the revised mandate of EMRIP, conferred through the Human Rights Council Resolution 33/25 section 2(e), the IPO seeks a formal communication from EMRIP to the President of the President of the General Assembly and to the President of the General Assembly Advisors outlining:

- 1) EMRIP's concern that some form of progress needs to be achieved through these processes to expand the participation of Indigenous Peoples within the United Nations; and
- 2) That it is crucial these processes are followed up with further reporting at the 75<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly and that Indigenous peoples, representing the seven Indigenous geo-cultural regions, need to be fully engaged through all future consultations and negotiation processes to give effect to those commitments made in the Outcome Document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples.

Thank you, Mr/Madam Chair.