

Indigenous Expert Mechanism

Item 4: Lessons learned and challenges to the implementation of the right of indigenous peoples to education.

2 October 2008

NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand supports the Human Rights Council's request to the indigenous expert mechanism to prepare a study on lessons learned and challenges to the implementation of the right of indigenous peoples to education.

The Human Rights Council must contribute in a meaningful way to the effective implementation of the right to education for all people, and we welcome the contribution that the indigenous expert mechanism will provide to the Council in respect of the perspective and needs of indigenous peoples for the effective realisation of this right.

We hope the expert mechanism's study will contribute to a greater awareness of options to effectively implement this right at the national level, based on shared experiences of what is needed and what works.

In the preparation of the study, coordination will be important. We note the 2005 report on the right to education completed by the former-Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, Professor Stavenhagen, in addition to the number of resources listed in previous interventions today. We also note the ongoing work of the Council's Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, with whom we hope the expert mechanism will be in contact in the preparation of this study.

We see that it is critical to look not only at the challenges indigenous peoples face in the realisation of their right to education but also to identify lessons learned, with a specific view to finding workable solutions or good practices to ensure more indigenous people enjoy their right to education. This necessarily involves looking at the specific needs and data on the experiences of indigenous people, taking into account the huge variety within and between indigenous communities and intersecting factors, for example, that women and girls often face multiple discrimination.

In respect of our own efforts to ensure the indigenous Māori people of New Zealand reach their full potential through better educational achievement, the Government of New Zealand has adopted a Māori Education Strategy for 2008-12, *Ka Hikitia– Managing for Success*, implemented through the Ministry for Education.

The strategic intent of *Ka Hikitia* is 'Māori enjoying education success as Māori'. This recognises the widespread aspirations of Māori to live and succeed as Māori in te Ao Māori, in Aotearoa New Zealand society and in the wider world.

Succeeding as Māori captures and reflects that identity and culture are essential ingredients of success. The strategy takes a broad view of success and recognises the multiple concepts of success held by students, whānau, hapū, iwi, and education professionals and providers.

At its heart, *Ka Hikitia* is about having a high quality education system that is accessible, equitable and responsive to different learning aspirations, ensuring every education option is a quality choice. It is an action-orientated strategy designed to concentrate on what evidence shows will achieve a transformational shift in the performance of the education system for and with Māori.

Key features of the *Ka Hikitia* Strategy for 2008-12 include:

- A move away from a focus on deficit, problems, failure and risks, to a focus on making the most of opportunities for success.
- It incorporates a "Potential approach" for Māori in education, which has three key underlying principles:
 - *Māori Potential*: all Māori learners have unlimited potential
 - *Cultural Advantage*: all Māori have cultural advantage by virtue of who they are – being Māori is an asset; not a problem
 - *Inherent Capability*: all Māori are inherently capable of achieving success
- Goals for each focus area, specific actions to achieve these goals, targets and measures for monitoring progress.

The New Zealand Curriculum, released in November 2007, is also partnered with, *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa*, which sets the direction for student learning for Māori-medium schools. *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* is written in Māori – an official language of New Zealand - from an indigenous perspective.

We would be happy to submit a copy of both documents and related materials to the members of the expert mechanism, including examples of annual reports on Māori Education, *Ngā Haeata Mātauranga*, which provide data on Māori education, as well as case studies about those practices and options that have been effective in ensuring high quality teaching for Māori students.

Thank you Mr President.