



ITEM 8: FUTURE ROLE OF THE WORKING GROUP

**ITEM 9: POSSIBLE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PERMANENT FORUM FOR
INDIGENOUS PEOPLE**

**STATEMENT BY THE NEW ZEALAND GOVERNMENT
OBSERVER DELEGATION**

Mr Chairperson

I would like to offer comments under both Items 8 and 9.

With respect to Item 8, New Zealand last year put forward the idea of a possible broadening of the membership of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations to include 5 indigenous representatives. This suggestion was made as one possible mechanism by which the participation of indigenous people, and the contribution of their expertise to the work of this Group, might be enhanced while consideration of the broader question of a permanent forum was advanced.

We recall that other options have been floated for strengthening indigenous participation in United Nations fora. Thus, at the Technical Meeting in 1994 it was agreed to establish two indigenous vice-chairs to assist the work of the Chairman.

Mr Chairperson, you have also made the constructive suggestion of the possibility of some form of advisory group of indigenous persons to assist the Working Group from time to time, perhaps in relation to particular areas of interest.

We would be interested in the views of others on these and other possible mechanisms for enhancing the contribution of expertise from indigenous people in the work of the Group.

With respect to Item 9, I would like to express our appreciation to the Government of Denmark for hosting the recent workshop in Copenhagen to advance consideration of the issues related to the question of possible establishment of a Permanent Forum. The Workshop has proven useful for this purpose. We strongly support the suggestion that to assist further consideration of this question there be a review of existing activities of United Nations agencies for indigenous people.

Thank you.