

Agenda item 3: Follow up to thematic studies and advice

INTERVENTION OF AOTEAROA INDIGENOUS RIGHTS TRUST

READ BY TRACEY CASTRO WHARE

1. Greetings to the members of the expert mechanism, indigenous brothers and sisters, supporters of indigenous peoples and government delegations. Special greetings also to my relations from Aotearoa/New Zealand, Ms Fleur Adcock, Ms Anahera Scott and Ms Claire Charters.
2. The Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples in his most recent report following his country visit to New Zealand made the following comment in relation to education, “the extreme disadvantage in the social and economic conditions of Maori people in comparison to the rest of New Zealand society” ... “manifests itself across a range of indicators, including education, health, and income”.
3. This comment is not surprising given recent funding cuts in education including early childhood education, adult education and education for children with special needs.
4. Funding cuts have a more significant effect on Māori due to their already poor social and economic conditions. Such cuts also have a negative effect on the ability of the New Zealand government to promote the rights related to education as set out in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We are deeply concerned about the trend of decreasing funds to key social services and call upon all states to consider the implications for the well being of indigenous peoples when budget concerns are being addressed.
5. Further, we note the request by the Mechanism expert, Ms Jannie Lasimbang for suggestions and ideas in relation to the ½ day panel to be held during the eighteenth session of the Human Rights Council, on the role of languages and culture in the promotion and protection of the well-being and identity of indigenous peoples. We make the following two suggestions, firstly that

indigenous experts on indigenous education systems be invited as panelists ensuring inclusion of indigenous experts from all regions as well as gender balance. And secondly, that the panel discussion is recorded and that recording and any documentation that is produced be made available to indigenous peoples.

6. Thank you Mr Chair.