

ITEM 3(b): Follow-up to the recommendations of the Permanent Forum – Indigenous Languages: preservation and revitalisation

E ngā mana, e ngā reo, e rau rangatira mā, tena koutou katoa.

Mr Chair. Distinguished members of the Permanent Forum.

New Zealand is pleased to congratulate the Chair on his appointment, and would like to acknowledge the indigenous peoples of this place – *ka nui te mihi ki a koutou e ngā mana whenua o tēnei wahi.*

I also greet all indigenous peoples as well as the nations and their representatives who have gathered here for this session.

Aotearoa New Zealand welcomes the report of the Expert Group Meeting on the preservation and revitalisation of indigenous languages and supports its recommendations.

Te Reo Māori (the Māori language) remains a crucial cultural asset for Māori – the indigenous peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand. Te Reo Māori is protected under the Treaty of Waitangi and is considered a taonga (treasure) of iwi (tribes) and Māori people. Successive New Zealand Governments have acknowledged the status of Te Reo Māori as an official language, and as the indigenous language of New Zealand. The New Zealand Government recognises the enduring responsibility it has to take active steps to support its growth and development.

At the end of last month, Te Ture mō te Reo Māori/the Māori Language Act 2016 was enacted. It is the first piece of legislation in New Zealand to be enacted in both the Māori and English languages with the Māori version to prevail in the event of conflict between the two versions.

The legislation includes an acknowledgement from the Crown that it contributed towards the decline of te Reo Māori and its previous actions have had a negative impact on te Reo Māori and Māori culture. The legislation also acknowledges the Crown's commitment to work in partnership with iwi and Māori to actively protect the language for future generations.

The Crown and Māori have distinct but complementary roles for revitalising the Māori language. The responsibility for the revival of Māori language is shared between Māori and the Crown. Te Reo Māori cannot be secured by the efforts of either party acting alone. It depends on the ability of all parties to cooperate, participate and contribute and Te Ture mō te reo Māori / the Māori Language Act 2016 provides for this.

No reira, tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa.

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