

Dear **Madam Chair**,

My name is Charm Kataraina Skinner, I am from Aotearoa. I am a current Indigenous Fellow of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Without this fellowship I would not have the opportunity to present the voices of my people before you today.

I will be speaking to agenda Item number 6 in relation to EMRIP's country engagement to Aotearoa in April and the recent advisory note which was made in relation to the national plan of action.

I represent generations of Māori communities that have been oppressed and have felt the ongoing effects of colonisation. I am a voice for my family and my people of Waikato Tainui who cannot be here with me today but in spirit know that I bring their mana with me. I am a voice for Māori students at The University of Auckland who are fighting against oppression every day. But most importantly I am a voice for Māori who do not have access to the mechanisms before us at present in this very room.

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the Aotearoa Independent Monitoring Mechanism and the New Zealand Human Rights Commission who jointly requested that EMRIP carry out a country visit.

Secondly, I would like to thank EMRIP for the recommendation's they have made as set out in their advisory note to the New Zealand Government. EMRIP has clearly articulated what Māori want and that is their right to tinorangatiranga (self-determination).

Thirdly, I'm sure many of you in this room have heard that ***"Māori in New Zealand have it good and that things are going well for them"***. However, why would I have travelled almost 24 hours to be here today to speak to this delegation and say things are going well for my people? We are still the most overrepresented group in all socioeconomic areas in New Zealand society and the statistics prove and show this.

Thus, I urge the New Zealand Government, to seriously consider and implement the detailed and helpful recommendation's that EMRIP has provided on the advisory note. Be genuine and include us as part of the dialogue to turn statistics around and be a leader for our international global community.

I can tell you right now that as a statistic myself it has not been an easy journey to get here to this platform because all the odds in society have been against me, which is the case for many of my people.

**Madam Chair**, finally for my last point I wish to address every state in this room. I am tired that we as indigenous people have to keep coming here to speak because our voices at home are ignored.

You cannot ignore us anymore. We are here. We are relevant and you must do more to honour us in a more dignified way as human beings.

***"He aha te mea nui o te ao. He tāngata, he tāngata, he tāngata"*** ***What is the most important thing in the world? It is people, it is people, it is people.***