



8th session of the Expert Mechanism on the rights of indigenous peoples

Agenda item 8: United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Delivered by Deputy Permanent Representative Carl Reaich

23 July 2015

Mr Chair,

New Zealand remains committed to upholding the rights affirmed by the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and to engaging on the aspirations that it sets out. New Zealand also notes the importance of continued understanding of, and commitment to, the common objectives of the Declaration, alongside the Treaty of Waitangi, and New Zealand's existing legal and constitutional frameworks.

As the report concludes, encouraging progress is being made on the application of the Declaration. Alongside progress, though, we recognise there is still more to do in New Zealand, particularly to increase social, cultural and health indicators for Māori.

We take note of the inaugural report submitted to EMRIP by the "Monitoring Mechanism working group", representing the National Iwi Chairs Forum and the associated Iwi (or tribal groups) within New Zealand. This is a positive development in helping to sustain a constructive dialogue between Māori and the government. We hope that in the years to come it may help New Zealand monitor, evaluate, and promote the achievement of the aspirations set out in the Declaration.

New Zealand is committed to working with indigenous peoples. To that end, our Minister for Māori Development and our Attorney-General have accepted the invitation to meet with members of the Monitoring Mechanism working group to discuss the request to establish a national action plan.

New Zealand regrets that it was unable to respond to the questionnaire on best practices referenced in the report. We note that we did recently submit a response to a separate questionnaire from the WCIP which outlines New Zealand's progress on a number of related issues

In conclusion, New Zealand continues to focus on ensuring that long-term priorities for advancing indigenous rights and well-being are achieved through a range of initiatives. We will continue to engage with indigenous peoples so as to ensure that the best possible outcomes can be achieved.

Thank you Mr Chair