



# AUSTRALIA

UNITED NATIONS  
SUB-COMMISSION ON  
PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION  
AND PROTECTION OF MINORITIES.

WORKING GROUP ON INDIGENOUS  
POPULATIONS - EIGHTH SESSION.

STATEMENT BY MR ROBERT TICKNER MP

MINISTER FOR ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

ON BEHALF OF THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

GENEVA  
1 AUGUST 1990.

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY.

AUSTRALIAN PERMANENT MISSION  
56, RUE DE MOILLEBEAU — 1211 GENEVA 19 — TELEPHONE 34 62 00

WGIP90/GOV/OCE, PUS/1

THANK YOU MADAM CHAIRMAN,

EARLIER IN TODAY'S PROCEEDINGS PROFESSOR TURK MADE, I THINK, AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION RECOGNISING THAT ALREADY A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF DIALOGUE HAD OCCURRED BETWEEN THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT AND THE NON-GOVERNMENT ABORIGINAL ORGANISATIONS REPRESENTED AT THIS FORUM. HE ASKED ME A NUMBER OF THINGS.

ONE OF THEM WAS TO COMMENT FURTHER IN RELATION TO THE PROPOSED PROCESS OF RECONCILIATION BETWEEN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE AND THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT AND IN RESPONSE TO HIS QUESTION I WISH TO ADVISE THAT I WOULD BE DELIGHTED TO REPORT BACK TO THIS WORKING GROUP AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY DETAILS OF THE SPECIFIC PROPOSAL THAT THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT WILL BE PROMOTING TO ADVANCE A PROCESS OF RECONCILIATION. THAT PROCESS IS NOT YET DETERMINED, BUT I AM VERY OPTIMISTIC AND HOPEFUL THAT THAT WILL BE ACHIEVED DURING THE COURSE OF THE COMING YEAR.

THE SECOND MATTER THAT WAS RAISED WAS THE QUESTION OF DIALOGUE AND I WOULD LIKE TO SUPPORT WHAT PROFESSOR TURK SAID IN THAT REGARD. DIALOGUE BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS AND NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IS ABSOLUTELY CRITICAL, NOT ONLY IF WE ARE TO ADVANCE THE STANDARD-SETTING FUNCTIONS OF THIS BODY, BUT ALSO THAT DIALOGUE IS IMPORTANT IF WE ARE GOING TO ADDRESS MANY OF THE JUST GRIEVANCES THAT COME BEFORE THIS FORUM. SO I UNDERTAKE IN RESPONSE TO PROFESSOR TURK'S ENQUIRY TO CONTINUE THAT DIALOGUE AND SPECIFICALLY, ON THE ISSUE OF STANDARD-SETTING, TO INITIATE DURING THE COURSE OF THE COMING YEAR SPECIFIC DIALOGUE WITH NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS, THE AUSTRALIAN DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE, THE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMISSION TOGETHER WITH THOSE NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE TO CONSIDER WAYS IN WHICH WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO FIND COMMON GROUND IN RELATION TO A NUMBER OF THE IMPORTANT ISSUES BEFORE THE FORUM. I WOULD URGE, WITH ALL GOOD WILL, OTHER GOVERNMENTS TO UNDERTAKE SIMILAR DIALOGUE WITH THEIR NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE.

I THANK YOU MADAM CHAIRMAN FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK AGAIN AND PROFESSOR TURK FOR HIS CONTRIBUTION.