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**New Zealand**

**12th Session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

**Item 3: Study on Indigenous Peoples' Rights in the Context of Borders,  
Migration and Displacement**

**15 July 2019**

Tēnā koe Mr/Madam Chair

New Zealand congratulates the Expert Mechanism for their study on indigenous peoples' rights in the context of borders, migration and displacement.

New Zealand is committed to a strong and healthy relationship with Māori, the indigenous peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand. As an island nation on the edge of the Pacific, many of the challenges in the Expert Mechanism's study are not directly relevant to the experiences in New Zealand. Some, however, are.

One in particular is the experiences of Māori over the twentieth century in rural to urban migrations. Before World War Two, upwards of 80% of Māori lived in or near their ancestral homes. By the late 1970s around 80% lived in cities.

The Expert Mechanism's study notes that migrations like these can lead to the loss of indigenous knowledge and identity, which may lead to significant health problems such as drug dependency and alcohol abuse. In moving into urban areas, indigenous peoples are also often met with insufficient supports and inadequate standards of living, as well as increased incidents of discrimination and exploitation.

This resonates with the experiences of many Māori in the twentieth century, and impacted on Māori communities in ways that are now rooted across generations.

Some Māori, however, also worked tirelessly to design and implement initiatives to address the needs of the growing urban Māori communities. Pan-Māori and tribal communities that had moved away from traditional papakāinga (or tribal lands) emerged, that nurtured whānau (or extended families), and were a foundation for key initiatives for Māori development that have continued to grow and expand to this day – for example, Kōhanga Reo (Māori language nests). Today, the New Zealand government also recognises the strengths that a whānau or extended

family approach brings to the intergenerational wellbeing of Māori, with the Whānau Ora programme in particular designed to put whānau at the centre of decision-making.

We are also aware that next on the horizon is the role that emerging technologies like blockchain can play in connecting communities within and across borders, protecting their indigenous knowledge on their terms. We ask the Expert Mechanism about their view on these technologies in the context of the challenges noted in the study on borders, migration and displacement, and the ways that government policies promoting the self-determination of indigenous peoples can play a part.

No reira, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa.

*Te Puni Kōkiri*

*July 2019*