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Human Rights
Commission
Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
EXPERT MECHANISM ON THE RIGHTS OF
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

SIXTH SESSION, JULY 8 – 12, 2013, GENEVA

Mihi

[Translation:]

Thank you Mr Chairperson for this opportunity to speak again on behalf of Commissioner Karen Johansen, Commissioner Representative of the New Zealand Human Rights Commission.

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON
THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

The Government announced New Zealand's support for the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2010. This positive expression of New Zealand's commitment to human rights, has not yet been followed by a comprehensive implementation strategy to attain the goals of the Declaration.

However the potential for progress in the current political climate is clear. 145 years after the first Māori (the indigenous people of New Zealand) were elected to the colonial government, the Constitutional Review could further realise articles 4 and 18 of the Declaration and the Treaty of Waitangi. Māori throughout Aotearoa New Zealand have the opportunity to express what self-determination and tino rangatiratanga means to them.

The standard of free, prior and informed consent may not be formally incorporated into domestic law when it comes to Māori seats in Parliament, but there seems to be growing moral recognition that change to this convention should only take place if Māori want it.

Groupings of Māori such as the Iwi Leaders Group are becoming increasingly influential as the burgeoning size of the Māori economy and asset base provides even more incentive for the Government to pursue the standards of the Declaration. As more iwi (Māori nations)

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settle Treaty claims with the State and move into the post-settlement phase, the negotiation of partnership arrangements in areas such as education, social services and resource management as envisaged by articles including 14, 23 and 32 have become increasingly commonplace.

The NZHRC continues to actively promote the Declaration and the particular human rights dimensions of the Treaty of Waitangi. The Commission delivers workshops to community groups, Government agencies and indigenous groups. These workshops now include train the trainer models to develop the internal capacity of large organisations to promote the human rights affirmed in the Treaty and articulated in the Declaration.

The 145 year anniversary of the Māori seats was marked by the NZHRC with the launch of a poster incorporating student artwork, that promotes the Declaration and the Treaty. The poster is the result of a collaboration between the Commission and a Māori university, Te Wānanga o Aotearoa.

One clear challenge in this process is a focus on the realisation of the rights of all Māori. Māori with disabilities warrant particular attention under article 23 in the face of increasing marginalisation and multiple barriers to the realisation of their rights. The Commission supports the recommendation of the Preparatory Meeting for Pacific Indigenous Peoples on the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples 2014 that the WCIP and UN address the increasing marginalisation of Indigenous peoples with disabilities.

Thank you for your attention, sisters and brothers.

Nō reira, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa [*And finally, greetings to you all*]

On Behalf of Commissioner Karen Johansen,
New Zealand Human Rights Commission
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