

Suicide

Thank you Madam Chair

Similar to my indigenous brothers and sisters - suicide is a significant issue for Maori the indigenous peoples of Aotearoa, New Zealand.

When we consider our rangatahi or our youth these rates are heart breaking.

Suicide rates of Maori and Pacific youth are 70 per cent higher than those of other young New Zealanders.

The causes of suicide are complex.

There are many factors associated with suicide, such as

- deprivation,
- abuse,
- issues relating to sexual identity and
- issues associated with social and environmental factors

And suicidal behaviours are often linked to mental health problems.

The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (article 21) calls upon states to take effective measures to ensure the continuing improvement of their economic and social conditions with particular attention to the rights and special needs of youth. The Declaration also recognises our right to culture.

The statistics indicate that the current **State based initiatives** to address youth suicide rates **are not working** - and in light of these continuing disproportionate suicide rates of our youth I stress the need of Member States to meaningfully engage with indigenous peoples and continue to support the initiatives that are culturally and community focused.

I also note the need of UN Agencies to continue to address this – regarding the recent UNICEF annual report to the UNPFII - I would like to suggest that the disproportionate youth suicide statistics for the Pacific to be considered and included.

In conclusion Madam Chair I support the recommendation of the Youth Caucus for a dedicated UN Rapporteur.