



NEW ZEALAND
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Peoples

Statement delivered by

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Please check against delivery

Madame Chair,

New Zealand is committed to ensuring the fulfilment of the rights of indigenous peoples, and we recognise the significant contribution of UN processes for advancing indigenous rights. We take this opportunity to reaffirm our support for the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Declaration is a milestone, an affirmation of fundamental rights, and an expression of important and widely supported aspirations.

New Zealand was pleased to give its full support to the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, and to the Outcome Document adopted by the General Assembly last month.

We commend Member States for ensuring the World Conference was inclusive and that indigenous peoples participated throughout the process. We also acknowledge the indigenous representatives, particularly the Global Coordinating Group, and their unwavering commitment to achieving effective outcomes for indigenous people.

The Outcome Document of the World Conference marks an important next step in advancing indigenous rights. It is comprehensive and action-oriented, and covers a range of important thematic areas. New Zealand was particularly encouraged by the outcomes for vulnerable groups, including indigenous youth, persons with disabilities, and women and children, as well as the focus on health and education, and on addressing discrimination and violence.

Member States and the UN system should build on the momentum of the World Conference, and follow up with practical steps towards implementing the Outcome Document.

Madame Chair, New Zealand has been honoured to demonstrate our strong support for the advancement of indigenous issues and rights through high-level representation at events this year. Our Governor General Lt Gen The Rt Hon Sir Jerry Mateparae, New Zealand's first Māori Governor General, took great pride in representing New Zealand at the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in May. More recently, our outgoing Minister of Māori Affairs, the Hon Dr Pita Sharples lead our delegation to the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples.

While developments over the past year should be celebrated, we must remain seized of the challenges that persist. Commitments need to be translated into actions that lead to meaningful change. The New Zealand Government is committed to building and maintaining meaningful relationships with Māori, and to better empower Māori to be actively involved in achieving better results. We place strong focus on working inclusively with Māori, and on developing Māori-driven strategies, including in the areas of health, housing, education, economic development, and justice. The Government recognises that New Zealand cannot reach its full potential unless Māori are empowered to achieve their aspirations and potential.

Finally Madame Chair, we should all keep in mind the relevance of indigenous issues to other areas of the UN work programme. The coming year will be critical to the setting of the post-2015 development agenda. And as we look towards that work and the year ahead, we must ensure that indigenous peoples are not left behind.