



New Zealand Permanent Mission to the United Nations

Te Māngai o Aotearoa

United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Item 5(d) (Human rights dialogue with
the Special Rapporteur on the rights of
indigenous peoples and the Expert
Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous
Peoples)

New Zealand verbal statement

Delivered by Hon Willie Jackson
New Zealand Minister for Māori Development

22 April 2021



Tēnā koutou katoa – Greetings to everyone

The government of Aotearoa New Zealand is committed to honouring the Treaty of Waitangi signed between the Crown and Māori in 1840 as a founding document of our nation. We are also dedicated to fulfilling the aspirations of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The Declaration contains principles that are consistent with the Treaty, such as operating in the spirit of partnership and mutual respect. As a whole, the Declaration supports the government's commitment to build and maintain constructive relationships with Māori, and to achieve better outcomes for all in Aotearoa. When Māori thrive on their own terms, we all thrive, and the Declaration provides a roadmap towards a better future for everyone.

In March 2019, our Cabinet agreed to develop a national plan to implement the Declaration. A technical working group made up of indigenous experts and government officials, was established. This group provided advice on the potential form and content of the plan, as well as options for engagement with Māori and the wider public.

Progress on developing a plan slowed in 2020, as our focus turned to the national COVID-19 pandemic response. However, we are now in the process of confirming the next steps in the development of the plan. The advice provided by the United Nations Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP), during their visit in 2019, will guide us as we move forward, especially to ensure the central involvement of Māori in all steps of the process.

I see implementing a Declaration plan as an important goal for all in our country, Māori and non-Māori, as it points towards indigenous self-determination, equity and improved wellbeing for our country as a whole. We will report back to you with further progress on this plan at the next session of the Expert Mechanism later this year.

Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou.- Many thanks to you all.