

United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues 2017

Australian Statement

Item 11b

Follow up to the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples: Ways to enhance the participation of indigenous peoples at the United Nations

**Delivered by Ms Rachel O'Connor, Assistant Secretary, Strategy Policy and Coordination Branch,
Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet**

Thank you Mr/Madam Chair,

I will focus our statement on item 11 (b) on ways to enhance the participation of indigenous peoples at the United Nations. I would briefly however like to note on item (a) on implementation of National Action Plans that Australia continues to progress this item.

This includes working collaboratively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and representative bodies such as the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples, the Indigenous Peoples Organisations Network, and the Australian Human Rights Commissioner to consider achievements to date, identify gaps and inform future national actions.

As demonstrated by our constructive engagement in the consultations on this issue, Australia strongly supports the enhanced participation of indigenous peoples at the United Nations.

It is integral that we strengthen the voices of indigenous peoples at United Nations bodies and fora.

Their increased engagement will assist in ensuring that the work of the United Nations, including the Sustainable Development Agenda for 2030, will truly make a difference on the ground.

We commend the four advisers appointed by the President of the General Assembly for the transparent and comprehensive manner in which they have conducted the consultations thus far and we look forward to engaging in the consultation next week.

Madam Chair, Australia has demonstrated its strong commitment to ensuring that the independent voices of indigenous peoples are heard and recognised in both reporting and decision making here at the United Nations.

Specifically, we support moves that ensure indigenous peoples are represented with a balance of geography and gender, and by those that are truly representative and able to voice the concerns of indigenous peoples. Although we recognise that further discussions will be required to ensure balanced representation does not work to limit levels of participation from other regions.

It is important that the outcome of this process are inclusive and ensure all indigenous peoples are able to benefit, including those that may not have formal self-government and those that suffer from severe disadvantage, with the goal of ending disadvantage and creating opportunities.

We look forward to engaging constructively with States, agencies and Indigenous representatives in the second consultation next week.

Australia will also be looking to ensure that the voices of Indigenous peoples are not lost when we move our discussions into the intergovernmental process.

Thank you.