

United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues 2017

Joint Statement

Australian Government and Australian Human Rights Commission

Item 8

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Discussion on the theme: "Tenth anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: measures taken to implement the Declaration"

Check against delivery

Thank you [Mr or Madam Chair],

We are honoured to join world indigenous peoples and member states in celebrating the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

This is a joint statement of the Australian Government and the Australian Human Rights Commission.

The Australian Human Rights Commission is Australia's preeminent national human rights institution. We are pleased to introduce Ms June Oscar, Australia's new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner and the first woman appointed to this position. June is a proud Bunuba woman and is deeply committed to ensuring that the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are elevated and acted upon by Government.

The Declaration recognises the rich heritage of indigenous peoples and their entitlement to the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Australia believes the tenth anniversary provides an opportunity for states to reflect on whether responsibilities are being met, and how we stand in relation to the articles.

An ongoing and open dialogue between indigenous peoples, governments and human rights institutions will ensure the Declaration continues to make a difference.

In Australia, the Federal Government, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and representative bodies such as the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples and the Indigenous Peoples Organisations Network, and the Australian Human Rights Commission, are working together to take stock of the current standing of the Declaration in Australia today, and to look at how we can deepen awareness and action on the Declaration in our country.

For example, Australia is undertaking an analysis of government policies and initiatives against the articles of the Declaration, which will include collaborating with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and bodies, to identify successes as well as gaps, and inform future actions to maintain and enhance efforts.

Internationally, the agreement of the Outcome Document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples demonstrated the ongoing commitment by states and world indigenous peoples to work together.

We are interested in learning from other member states, and from indigenous peoples, lessons they have learnt in implementing the Declaration, both positive and negative. This sharing of stories and best practice will help us all on the journey to progressing the Declaration in Australia.