

United Nations General Assembly Third Committee Item 68 - Report of the Human Rights Council

Working Group of the Commission of Human Rights to elaborate a draft declaration in accordance with Paragraph 5 of General Assembly Resolution 49/214 of 23 December 1994: African Amendments (A/C.3/61/L.57/Rev.1)

Explanation of Vote by HE Rosemary Banks New Zealand Permanent Representative to the United Nations, 28 November 2006

Mr Chairman

New Zealand supported a call at the Human Rights Council in June to reflect further on the Chair's text of the indigenous declaration. We therefore support the proposal put forward by the Africa Group for further consultations on the declaration.

New Zealand's position remains firm that the text is fundamentally flawed and the product of a deeply unsatisfactory process, where the discussion on the text only became open four years ago. It is not the result New Zealand wanted or worked hard to achieve.

New Zealand has long been committed to advancing the rights of indigenous people domestically and in internationally forums. We are one of only a few countries to have established procedures in place to resolve contemporary and historical grievances with Maori, and these do not relate solely to grievances over land.

Mr Chairman, for these reasons, New Zealand wants a declaration on indigenous rights that can be held up as a standard of achievement for all States. Proceeding to action on a human rights instrument in the context of widespread and deeply felt reservations would be counterproductive.

A vote in favour of the African amendments in a spirit of dialogue and inclusiveness, as the distinguished delegate of Namibia has said, holds out the opportunity of finding a consensus among States that would make a real difference in the lives of indigenous peoples.

Thank you Mr Chairman

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