

Hon Dr Pita Sharples

Minister of Maori Affairs



16 July 2010

Media Statement

Welcome to the Special Rapporteur

The Minister of Māori Affairs, Dr Pita Sharples, is pleased to welcome United Nations Special Rapporteur, Professor James Anaya to New Zealand on behalf of the New Zealand Government.

Professor Anaya will be in New Zealand for a week, from 18 July to 23 July, to meet with Ministers, iwi and other interested parties to discuss human rights and indigenous development. Professor Anaya's full title is United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous Peoples.

"The New Zealand Government has a standing invitation to all United Nations Special Rapporteurs to visit New Zealand. We are pleased that Professor Anaya has chosen to take up that invitation at this time" says Dr Sharples. "He has a busy programme over the week that he is here. This will provide him with a wide range of perspectives about the position of Māori in New Zealand society".

Following his visit, the Special Rapporteur will prepare a report about the situation of indigenous people in New Zealand, which will be provided to the New Zealand Government for its consideration. "This Government remains committed to building and maintaining constructive relationships with Māori to achieve better results for Māori, which will benefit New Zealand as a whole. We welcome the UN's perspective of our country's progress" says Dr Sharples.

Professor Anaya was appointed as the Special Rapporteur in 2008. He has a background in international human rights, constitutional law and issues affecting indigenous peoples. As part of his mandate, he is able to review progress in New Zealand since his predecessor's report in 2005. He is also able to review other issues of interest to him.

ENDS

Andrew Robb
Press Secretary
04 817 6772 or 029 482 8494