



Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers Inc

On Human Rights Day, 10 December 2010, ANZASW acknowledges a MAJOR STEP FORWARD TOWARDS HUMAN RIGHTS with the Aotearoa New Zealand Government adopting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2010.

New Zealand was one of the last remaining countries to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This declaration sets out the individual and collective rights for the world's 370 million native peoples including Maori. It calls for the maintenance and strengthening of their cultural identities, emphasizes their right to pursue development in keeping with their own needs and aspirations.

A non-binding text, the Declaration states that native peoples have the right "to the recognition, observance and enforcement of treaties" concluded with States or their successors. It also prohibits discrimination against indigenous peoples and promotes their full and effective participation in all matters that concern them.

On a national and international level the importance of this document for indigenous peoples and, more broadly, for the human rights agenda, cannot be underestimated, said ANZASW spokesperson, Tauha Te Kani. Indigenous peoples still face marginalisation, extreme poverty and other human rights violations. They are often dragged into conflicts and land disputes that threaten their way of life and very survival, as shown recently happening in Rapanui/Easter Island where rubber bullets were fired by the Chilean paramilitary. In addition there is suffering from a lack of access to quality health care and education.

On Human Rights Day - 10 December 2010 ANZASW acknowledges that, by adopting the Declaration, the Aotearoa New Zealand Government took another major step forward towards the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all indigenous peoples.

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