

## **Opening statement by New Zealand**

Madame Chair

Aotearoa New Zealand supports the continuing mandate of the IGC and is supportive of this Committee's programme of work.

In New Zealand, the Government is bound by obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi) which creates a unique and enduring relationship between Māori and the Crown. Recognising this, the New Zealand Government has invested in a work programme to develop a sui generis system and legal framework for the protection of mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) and other taonga (treasures).

As a Pacific nation, we value our close relationship with our neighbours in the region, and our enduring connections through shared histories, culture and interests. The benefits of protecting, promoting and preserving traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions are equally important for our local island nations. Evidence supports that providing these safeguards has the potential to deliver wide ranging cultural, economic and environmental outcomes that benefit indigenous peoples and local communities. We intend to find ways in our region to acknowledge this mutual connection relating to shared understanding of indigenous knowledge and traditional cultural expressions.

New Zealand recognises the collaborative work of the IGC as an important tool and we look forward to contributing to the progress of meaningful and workable solutions in this forum.

Thank you.