

SUBMISSION ON RESOLUTION 44/7

Request from: The Human Rights Council.

To: The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to consult Member States and other relevant stakeholders in order to prepare and submit to its forty-seventh session

Date: Sunday, 15 November 2020

Emailed to: bschachter@ohchr.org and miyer@ohchr.org

Closing date: 31 December 2020.

This is an individual submission.

Resolution 44/7, the Human Rights Council requested the **an analytical study on the promotion and the protection of the rights of older persons in the context of climate change.**

Over the coming decades the number of older Māori (kaumātua) will increase significantly across the northern most region of Aotearoa, New Zealand. This is a good reason for celebration because the social and economic determinants of ageing well—wealth and health—continue to challenge Maori people in growing older healthily and happily; throughout Northland and Aotearoa. Yet, the kaumātua Maori population sees themselves ageing well in terms of increasing longevity and self-reported wellbeing. As the kaumātua population increases, though, a greater dependency, by them, on resources and services will also increase throughout the region. Consequently, an analytical study to promote and protect the rights of older Maori people in the context of climate change is welcome news! The study would recognise the need to plan and develop strategies and policies to promote and protect the rights of the growing number of older Maori persons or people to health and wealth in the context of climate change.

In Māori society, the people have relied on intergenerational relationships within the extended family and the wider group of collected families for cohesive social [and economic] functioning. Indeed, there is little separation between the extended family and community because the “extended family” is the ‘ground’ of collective living or a whole social system. The delivery of a ‘community service’ of health funding and services is likely to be of limited relevance to older Maori, specifically, and Maori people more broadly. The relevant point of focus of the “analytical study”, for Maori; perhaps, even, Indigenous Peoples across the world is that tribal relationships are connected to a place, language and cultural practices that will inform the development of diverse ways to promote and protect the rights of older people closer to their home. This knowledge makes the “analytical study” to promote and protect the rights of older Indigenous peoples from colonial history that continues in the context of climate change, urgent.

Nonetheless, I acknowledge that the intergenerational relationships are dynamic and change according to key events throughout life. For instance, the events might include kaumātua being made redundant from the paid workforce, the death of or separation from their spouse, suffering from illness and injury, the need for closer access to specialist services, and homelessness. The relationships are also impacted by geographically shifting employment, residential and educational opportunities for the younger people. Better understanding of the intergenerational processes especially surrounding such life events will contribute to more meaningful planning decisions about service provision for the kaumātua and the impact upon their extended family. Such information is important for ensuring various agency initiatives are well integrated with

each other as well as with the processes of the extended family if their right to longevity and good health are to be promoted and protected.

Māori collectivism is rich in concepts of extended family, shared ancestry, and sharing land. If the analytical study is to be transformative in reducing the inequity that exists for Maori people in ageing-well outcomes, then, the concepts must be developed from a base of appreciating the particular Māori communities to which any intervention will be applied. Diverse social and economic tensions occur across Northland and Aotearoa as a result of local, regional, and global inequities that lead to low employment, rural de-population, and Maori people forced return to the remnants of ancestral land; post Covid-Level 4.

A greater understanding of the interconnectedness of the social, cultural, economic and environmental contributors to Māori ageing well, across a variety of locations and situations in Northland will generate new knowledge to inform the promotion and protection of the rights of older Indigenous Maori peoples. Sharing findings with the Maori people, community organisations, and health and social service providers will ensure that the people's rights are promoted and protected within current realities. The analytical study will provide suggestions for ways in which the Maori ageing population can be a catalyst for the revitalisation of all Māori communities; urban and rural.

A Māori population engaged with the analytical study will go some way to eliminate the current inequities in age-related illnesses. The need for linguistic and culturally diverse health services is loud and clear. Older Māori who have had positive health-care experiences will be more willing to engage with service providers, will be more confident in their health professionals, will be more likely to have a better understanding of their health needs, and be more engaged in strategies to promote and protect their rights. Accessibility to support networks that are safe and inclusive of the range of Māori experiences has the potential to provide transformative outcomes for Māori. Tribal ways of caring for older Māori will not fit all extended families, but until the analytical study comes up with accurate information about promoting and protecting the people's rights, the health services and resources will continue to be inefficient in meeting older Maori people's as well as international Indigenous Peoples' needs.

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