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16th Session Universal Periodic Review
New Zealand's statement during Tuvalu's UPR
Delivered by Ambassador Dell Higgie, 24 April 2013

Thank you Madame Vice President

Talofa

New Zealand warmly welcomes our Pacific neighbours to the Human Rights Council. The bonds between our two countries are strong, based on our shared Polynesian culture and heritage and strong people-to-people links. This has been enhanced further with the appointment of a non-resident High Commissioner to Tuvalu in 2012. We value the opportunity to engage on human rights issues here in the Council, building on the close cooperation we already have on the ground.

In working with Tuvalu over the past 4 years we have witnessed the Government's commitment to improving human rights, including addressing **domestic violence** through legislative means and awareness raising campaigns. Despite progress, more does remain to be done in this area and we **recommend** that Tuvalu enact the Family Protection and Domestic Violence Bill and continue efforts to increase and extend public awareness to Outer Islands.

In 2008, New Zealand recommended that Tuvalu consider giving an **Ombudsman** responsibility for investigating alleged violations of human rights as an interim measure before an independent human rights body is put in place. We would be interested to learn more about what steps the government has taken to ensure there is a mechanism, such as an Ombudsman Commission, specifically responsible for investigating allegations of human rights violations.

New Zealand is acutely aware of the resource constraints and geographical challenges Tuvalu faces in improving its human rights situation. The global economic crisis has had a severe impact on Tuvalu's economy, resulting from a decline in seafarer remittances and returns from Tuvalu Trust Fund investments. We therefore commend Tuvalu's efforts over the last two years in the area of **financial governance**, in particular managing public expenditure and undertaking reforms to ensure greater accountability and the efficient and effective use of resources. It is critical that essential health and education services are prioritised in annual budget allocations to ensure essential service delivery obligations can be met. New Zealand reiterates its commitment to supporting Tuvalu in addressing these challenges through continued development assistance.

Fakafetia Lasi