

SPEECH FOR HON PAREKURA HOROMIA
Minister of Māori Affairs
The Development Studies Network Conference
Conference, Victoria University, Wellington
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- Tēnā koutou. Tēnei te mihi atu ki a koutou kua huihui mai nei i runga i te karanga o te kaupapa whakahirahira rawa atu o te ra nei.
- Thank you for the invitation to address this conference.
- I'm very interested in the theme of "Poverty, Prosperity, Progress".
- In New Zealand, the government believes that our nation cannot develop if a growing slice of its population suffers from poverty.
- We can debate the definition of poverty and we can debate the difficulties around measurements of poverty.
- But to deny that it exists here in New Zealand, either temporarily or for a prolonged period, would be irresponsible.
- The coalition is concerned about the growing gap between groups within our society and the effect this gap has on future generations.
- Therefore I think improving the well-being of all New Zealanders is critical.
- When I say well-being, I'm not only talking about access to income and resources.
- I'm talking about using a holistic and inclusive approach, that covers health, education, social, cultural, environmental and political outcomes for our society.
- It's about finding the balance that provides positive outcomes for our nation. It's about building a society that can confidently and successfully move our people from where they are to a state of prosperity.

THE TREATY

- For our overseas visitors, in New Zealand the Government has special obligations to Maori because of the Treaty of Waitangi.
- It is a document about the relationship between the Crown and Maori, the indigenous people of this nation.
- My speech today is focused largely on development and specifically, the development of Māori communities.
- I am not dismissing poverty but rather I want to look at ways to move forward.
- Analysing a bad situation is important but it is even more important to plan the way forward and then do it.

GAPS

- One of the major Labour Alliance Coalition policy strategies is "Closing the Gaps".

- For me "Closing the Gaps" is about ensuring those who are most disadvantaged in our "fair and democratic society" get the leg up that they need.
- It is a simple fact that Maori make up a significant proportion of that disadvantaged group of New Zealander.
- The statistics are bad. Maori have some of the worst health statistics in the world. We are not achieving at school. We feature badly in the justice system statistics. The picture is bad.
- For me the present is critical. We need to find solutions for the present issues because you can't think about tomorrow if you are struggling with today.
- Closing the Gaps is about dealing to the needs of today. Providing better housing, better education, better health statistics.
- This becomes even more important when you know that last year 42% of the Maori population was aged under 17 years of age.
- Closing the Gaps also presents a key challenge to mainstream organisations.
- They are required to be more accountable for the existing programmes they presently have and to improve the ways in which their services are delivered to Māori people.
- Unfortunately there is a dearth of information and this policy has been more difficult that first envisaged.

CAPACITY BUILDING

- Building capacity can close several gaps with one hit.
- If you educate someone well, then they have a better chance of getting a good job, getting a good house and a better life for their children.
- If you improve a young person's housing conditions then chances are they'll be healthier, be better learners and have goals and ambitions.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- While the wellbeing of the individual is important, we also want to ensure that equal importance is given to building strong communities.
- Past government policies have marginalised and alienated some communities.
- Earlier economic policy left many communities, or portions of communities, in a vulnerable position, with insufficient resources and a high level of unemployment.
- Communities have felt detached and, sadly, left with the feeling that they have no control over their own lives.
- Our government wants to re-engage these communities, which includes Māori and Pacific Island communities who have feared worse in the poverty bracket.
- We want to rebuild communities and resource them to become strong so that there people are making decisions for themselves and driving their future.
- For many communities, this will require a concerted effort to rebuild themselves.

GRASS ROOTS DEVELOPMENT

- As I said before I will look specifically at the development of Maori communities, but I think it applies across the board.
- The plain truth is that, to improve social and economic outcomes for Māori people, development must start from within the Māori community itself.
- Māori need to take, and must be given, ownership and responsibility for shaping their own development.
- This provides the opportunity for Māori to develop their own initiatives, their own solutions to respond to their needs and aspirations.
- I would say no-one knows the problems and the solutions better than those in the middle of it.
- Flexibility is a significant aspect to consider when looking at what works for Māori and what doesn't.
- It ensures that innovative and new initiatives that are working in communities or have the potential to work, are given a chance.
- The need for holistic solutions to close the social and economic gaps between Māori and non-Māori, involving Māori communities and government departments has been realised in New Zealand.
- Building strong community infrastructure requires commitment from the government and it requires buy in from the community.
- We will only get this buy-in if we work in partnership – and I mean real partnership at all levels.
- Māori communities need to become active participants in policy design and delivery.
- This will enable policies and programmes to more fully incorporate Māori priorities, traditions and values.
- For too long we have funded and resourced programmes imported from overseas, and yet we have so many sound initiatives developed from within our own shores.
- The beauty of the development of local level solutions is that they are driven by communities at the grassroots level.
- Like the Information Technology initiative in Te Whanau a Apanui in the eastern Bay of Plenty.
- The iwi or tribal group have developed a partnership with an international company to train people up to international standards, in such things as software engineering, networking and hardware maintenance.

ASSESSMENT

- Many programmes and services do not have the necessary information to enable us to judge exactly how successful they are.
- There is a need for developing new and more appropriate benchmarks and targets.
- For Maori, these measures need to take into Maori values and processes.
- For example programmes are usually evaluated on quantitative targets. Even if qualitative information is gathered, it is not valued to the same extent.

- I think it is also important that a programme is evaluated by the impact that it has on the daily lives of participants.
- If we do not, then we may fail to recognise the true success, or failure of the programme.

EMPLOYMENT.

- Employment is a central means by which individuals and groups meet both their economic and social goals.
- While the government's role in employment is broad, it must effectively cover capacity building, opportunity creation and the linkages between them.
- Priorities include the movement of people from being economically and socially dependent on the government to a state of positive well being.

LAW vs LORE

- I think it is about Law Versus Lore.
- Law – spelt L A W – is about the British rules and regulations that came with the arrival of Captain Cook.
- Lore – spelt L O R E – is about the practices and values of our ancestors which make us who we are, what we are and give us our cultural identity. .

SUMMING UP

- I think progress and development comes down to Mana and Moni... In English that equates to power and resources.
- Mana is about what we are, who we are, by right. By indigenous right as tangata whenua. Doing things in a way that is appropriate for us.
- Moni is about being able to wake up in the morning and knowing that you can pay your bills, your kids have a better lot than you did.
- We need both Mana and Moni to go forward successfully in the future.
- I look forward to seeing the outcomes that will arise as a result of the contributions that will be made at this conference over the next few days.
- Thank you. Noho ora mai nā.

MAIN POINTS OF SPEECH

- Analysing a bad situation is important but it is even more important to plan the way forward and then do it.
- For me the present is critical. We need to find solutions for the present issues because you can't think about tomorrow if you are struggling with today.
- If you educate someone well, then they have a better chance of getting a good job, getting a good house and a better life for their children.
- If you improve a young person's housing conditions then chances are they'll be healthier, be better learners and have goals and ambitions.
- Building strong community infrastructure requires commitment from the government and it requires buy in from the community.
- We will only get this buy-in if we work in partnership – and I mean real partnership at all levels.