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Intervention Review Provides Template for Genuine Partnership with Aboriginal People

The recommendations contained in the Northern Territory Emergency Intervention Review Report were welcomed today by the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission (NATSIEC) of the National Council of Churches in Australia.

The Executive Secretary of the NATSIEC, Mr Graeme Mundine said, "We affirm the recommendations of the review and welcome the guidance it provides governments to work in genuine partnership with Aboriginal people".

Mr Mundine is in Canberra with Bishop Greg Thompson, the Anglican Bishop of the Northern Territory. Together they are visiting politicians to talk about the Make Indigenous Poverty History campaign and how the Millennium Development Goals should be adapted to alleviate Indigenous Poverty in Australia.

Bishop Greg Thompson said, "I welcome the findings of the report which provide a strong guide to steering appropriate long term support to Indigenous people. This review provides a template for genuine partnership for sustained cultural and economic development as well as for the care of children and families".

Bishop Greg and Mr Mundine particularly welcomed the report's emphasis on the need to work in genuine partnership with Aboriginal people and the acknowledgment that the success of the NTER, Northern Territory Emergency Response, has been hampered by the failure to consult and engage with those people for whose benefit it was developed.

Mr Mundine also commented that the release of the report in the midst of uncertain economic times is a reminder of the need to provide relief for the poor. "It is important that we do not lose momentum for continued social, economic and cultural development. We know that when times are tough, it's the poor who suffer most.

While it's great to give surety to the financial system, we also need to address underlying structural weaknesses in our economic system and pay more attention to ending poverty, in particular for Indigenous people".

Bishop Greg agreed and said, "We need to attend to the anxiety of the time but also give support to those who need it most".

"Implementing these recommendations will go a long way to ensuring that the hopes, dreams and aspirations of Indigenous people are listened to. We urge the Federal and Northern Territory Governments to work together to develop a proper and just implementation of the intervention measures," Mr Mundine concluded.