

New Zealand Permanent Mission to the United Nations



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52nd COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

**FOLLOW-UP TO THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN, WITH
A FOCUS ON FINANCING FOR GENDER EQUALITY**

STATEMENT BY

THE NEW ZEALAND REPRESENTATIVE

MS SONYA RIMENE

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Check against delivery

Tena koutou katoa
He mihi ki nga tangata o nga hau e wha
Kei te mihi ki a koutou

Mr Chair

New Zealand has on many occasions, reaffirmed the standards set out in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Beijing Declaration, and at the International Conference on Population and Development. We do so again here today, with purpose and commitment. These international commitments together remain the blueprint for making real improvements in the lives of women and their families and communities around the world.

New Zealand welcomes the priority theme of financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women. Gender equality, poverty elimination, and economic growth are all inextricably linked. To achieve our targets for gender equality set down in Beijing and in the Millennium Development Declaration, we must commit adequate resources and we must ensure that the promotion of gender equality is at the heart of all policy-making and delivery. By removing barriers and empowering women and girls to fully realise their potential we will all benefit.

Domestically, New Zealand is committed to incorporating a gender perspective into the design, development, adoption and execution of our policy and budgetary processes. New Zealand has learned that to improve outcomes for women, we must take gender into account at the earliest stage when the policy problem is first being defined. New Zealand has a central, stand alone, Ministry of Women's Affairs focused primarily on policy. We also have a whole of government approach to gender mainstreaming, where all agencies are responsible for conducting gender analysis.

Policy must be designed, implemented and evaluated in a way that takes into account the real life situations of all women, including those who are particularly disempowered by social and other barriers.

Mr Chair,

It is not enough to consider women and girls as a homogenous group. Over the last 30 years New Zealand has undergone a profound transformation to address the rights and needs of its indigenous people. This has led to a commitment to improved outcomes for Maori whanau, hapu and iwi. New Zealand also takes account of a range of other specific groups of women and girls in policy-making, including Pacific Islands peoples, those with disabilities, and migrant women and girls. Responding to the needs of different communities is not always a simple task, particularly when it comes to collecting data on small groups of women. However, we must persist as accurate data is essential to make good policy.

Externally, our agency for international development, NZAID, is mandated to mainstream a gender perspective across its work. As well as gender mainstreaming, New Zealand considers it important to support initiatives that are specifically targeted at reducing gender disparities and empowering women. It is important that these activities cover economic, social and political spheres, as women should experience equality in all areas of their lives. New Zealand encourages all donors and development partners to commit to increasing financial resources in this area, and to prioritise the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Much of the focus of New Zealand's international aid work is in the Pacific Island region. As in other regions, the issues of gender equality in Pacific Islands are different from country to country and from community to community, and they require a context appropriate response. The region is struggling to meet international targets with respect to gender, and concerted efforts and resources are required, including increased attention from the UN system. We wish to acknowledge here today the presence of high-level Pacific Island delegations, regional organisations and civil society, who will be able to share with us this unique perspective, and we would also like to take this opportunity to associate New Zealand with the Pacific Islands Forum statement.

New Zealand is committed to the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. We acknowledge that the aid effectiveness agenda poses particular challenges for advancing gender equality. These challenges arise if women's voices are not heard in national decision-making, or if a gender perspective is not adequately taken into account in the development priorities of a country or in aid delivery. We should not ignore these challenges, rather New Zealand urges States to give careful thought to how evolving aid modalities can ensure better outcomes for women and girls in the lead up to the 3rd High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Accra this September.

The United Nations has a vital role to play in promoting effective gender mainstreaming and resourcing for gender equality. New Zealand urges States to continue to work towards a strengthened, coherent, adequately resourced gender architecture and for debate and action based on the High-Level Panel's report on System-Wide Coherence. We see a need to revitalize the commitment and responsibility of the entire UN system to effectively contribute towards gender equality and women's empowerment, with a focus on improving gender-related development outcomes at the country level. We also see the promotion of sexual and reproductive health rights as central to the achievement of gender equality and development goals.

Mr Chair,

The establishment of the new United Nations Human Rights Council and the transfer of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women to Geneva together present a tremendous opportunity to ensure that the UN's human rights machinery fully addresses the human rights of women. Accordingly, New Zealand has actively supported initiatives to make

sure gender equality and women's rights are firmly on the new Council's agenda. We are running for election to the Council in 2009, and we are committed to advancing this important area of work as a member of the Council and to eliminating discriminatory barriers that face women and girls.

In addressing the challenges ahead, we acknowledge and welcome the important contribution of civil society. Mr Chair – we all benefit when women are able to participate fully and equally in our society. We should finance gender equality, not only because it is the right thing to do, but because the world cannot afford not to make the full use of the talents and skills of women and girls. By working together towards better opportunities for women and girls we are also working for a better world for everyone, for men and boys as well as for women and girls. That is an aim we should all be able to fully embrace.

No reira, tena koutou tena koutou tena koutou katoa.

