

NEW ZEALAND MISSION to the UNITED NATIONS



Te Māngai o Aotearoa

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**UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN**

39th SESSION

SIXTH PERIODIC REPORT OF

NEW ZEALAND

OPENING STATEMENT BY

**LIANNE DALZIEL
MINISTER OF WOMEN'S AFFAIRS**

2 AUGUST 2007

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mihi

Rau rangatira mā, tēnei te mihi ki a koutou i runga i te kaupapa o te rā – mana wahine. E ngā wāhine o tēnei whenua, o tēnā whenua, huri noa i te āo; tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā rā tātou katoa.

Madam Chair, I greet you in the Māori language, which is the language of New Zealand's indigenous people and one of our official languages. It is a greeting to the distinguished members of the Committee here today.

On behalf of the New Zealand government, it is my pleasure to present New Zealand's

Discrimination against Women. The New Zealand government takes very seriously the issues raised in our report and is committed to a constructive and substantive dialogue with the Committee.

the fact that the Cook Islands has now acceded to the Convention in its own right and is reporting to the CEDAW committee for the first time on Friday. This will be an historic moment for the women of the Cook Islands

New Zealand's Sixth Report

New Zealand has been a State party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women since 1985. This is our sixth report and covers the four years from March 2002 to March 2006

Our report should be read alongside New Zealand's most updated core document that was circulated in October last year. It is available on the website of the Ministry of Women's Affairs.

Withdrawal of New Zealand's Last Reservation to the Convention

New Zealand has withdrawn our last remaining reservation to the Convention.

women in the armed forces. This reservation permitted discrimination against women with respect to serving in combat roles. I am particularly proud to report today that New Zealand law is therefore now in full compliance with the Convention.

Monitoring and Review of the Action Plan for New Zealand Women

In our response to the Committee's written questions, we noted that the progress in monitoring the *Action Plan for New Zealand Women*, launched in February 2004, is as

There has also been strong growth of Māori women in business. Since 1991 Māori women's self-employment has increased by 167 percent. While Māori women still earn less than men and other groups of women, the disparity is reducing. Since 2000, the pay gap between Māori women's median hourly earnings and those of all women has decreased from a 12.4 percent gap in 2000 to a 6.9 percent gap in 2006. The gap between earnings of Māori men and women has also decreased - the gap was 15.4 percent in 2000, in 2006 it was 7.6 percent.

In an effort to create more choices for all New Zealanders as they care for family members and seek to achieve personal, family, and financial goals, the New Zealand government introduced the *Choices for Living, Caring and Working* Plan of Action last year.

Major initiatives since our fifth report, which are part of the *Choices* plan, include:

- extending the coverage of paid parental leave to self-employed women, and increasing the leave period from 12 weeks to 14 weeks
- improving the accessibility, quality and affordability of childcare, including early childhood education and out of school services through a variety of measures including the introduction last month of 20 hours of free early childhood education

New Zealand is proud of our leading role in developing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and was one of the first countries to sign it. We are currently reviewing our legislation and policy to enable New Zealand to ratify

for New Zealand changes implemented last year, women with disabilities are better able to access employment programmes. Greater access to these programmes has enhanced the opportunities for quality employment.

Family Violence

I would now like to address the question of family violence. The level of violence against women and girls in the home is of profound concern to the New Zealand government and the New Zealand public.

New Zealand has taken major steps since our fifth report to CEDAW to eliminate family violence, in particular the establishment of the Taskforce for Action on Violence Within Families. Our vision is that all families and whānau have healthy, respectful,

Sexual Violence

It would also like to draw your attention to the following information:

[REDACTED]

Taskforce for Action on Sexual Violence

[REDACTED]

Ministers and this Taskforce comprised of government and non-government agencies, as well as the police and the judiciary, will provide greater leadership and greater coordination of services with the aim of reducing the incidence and impact of sexual violence.

We are also concerned at the apparent low level of reporting of sexual crimes and the low prosecution and conviction rates for such offences. Work underway includes:

[REDACTED]

New Zealand has also achieved real success with its approach to...

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