

New Zealand Permanent Mission to the United Nations



Te Mana Rauhī o Aotearoa

600 THIRD AVENUE 14TH FLOOR NEW YORK, NY 10016 USA
TELEPHONE (212) 876-1960, FAX (212) 750-0327 E-MAIL info@nzuny.org WEB <http://www.nzuny.org>

The 55th Session to the Commission on the Status of Women

National Statement by New Zealand

Statement by Prue and Phair
Head of Delegation
Chief Executive, Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade

24 February 2011

Check Against Delivery,

Tena koutou Tena koutou Tena koutou katoa

Chair,

I bring warm greetings to you, and to all the participants in this conference, from New Zealand's Minister of Women's Affairs, the Hon. Te Heke Hinerangi Parata, who also welcome and endorse the statement made by the Minister from Timor-Leste on behalf of the Pacific Island Forum.

I'd like to convey our appreciation of the sympathy and support New Zealand has received following our devastating earthquake last week.

We are here because we want positive and faster change. We must live this here in the bar on our expectations for each other and for each other. Women must work together to find more effective ways forward. We must find new and better priorities and policies that are not achieving the progress we want.

Working at the frontier of gender equality is not always comfortable – but we must all be there, as challenges are ahead for all of us. While change is inevitable, it can be forced. Regardless, we must have optimism and a determination that gender inequality will become a curious fossil in our history. Encouraging young women, across our many countries to work hard. And I believe we can support each other to do this...

Consistent with our strong support for UN Women, New Zealand endorses the five priorities in the 100 Day Action Plan. We wish Michelle Bachelet and her team all the best for their challenging tasks ahead.

Thank you for your attention to ending once and for all gender violence in all its forms. Let's work together to move forward in achieving a better future.

New Zealand reaffirms its unwavering commitment to gender equality. Behind the Declaration and the Platform for Action, there remains, however, much more to be done. The Millennium Development Goals relating to gender equality, such as maternal health, have made the least progress. Yet ending poverty is much more possible when women are empowered.

New Zealand continues to be an active State party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Its seventh periodic report, submitted last year, presents a picture of mixed results.

When our forebears won the right to vote for all New Zealand women in 1893, they probably envisaged that 118 years later we would have achieved full equality in outcomes.

We are encouraged by the fact that women now have high levels of education at high levels of education. In fact, we see that women under the age of 50 have a higher level of tertiary education than men under the age of 50. So we know that education is a key factor in achieving equality between brothers and sisters.

Our experience is that improved educational outcomes are necessary but not sufficient condition for achieving equality in employment and economic independence. Women's labour market participation rates and relative pay levels have increased as a result of higher qualifications, but the impact is not as great as we'd expect. We still have a pay gap – at just under 11 per cent – and our labour market is still characterised by both vertical and horizontal segregation.

In addition, outcomes for some groups of women are notably poorer than for others, others, including for Maori, New Zealand's indigenous population, despite recent and rapid improvements in Maori, Māori educational outcomes.

The economic value of women's skills contributes positively to productivity. For women, economic independence also provides a protective factor from violence. It is not a guarantee but it increases the chances for women's basic human right to be safe.

New Zealand continues to work to rid ourselves of the toxic branches of family violence, sexual violence and child abuse. We have a solid legislative framework, responsive Te Reo, a nationwide network of women's refuges and high profile social marketing to change attitudes. Despite the last two decades of effort, one in three New Zealand women still experience at least one episode of domestic violence in their lifetimes.

The Ministry of Women's Affairs has been operating as a strong agency in New Zealand for 25 years. In our experiences, some of the factors that support progress on gender equality are:

strong and visible leadership

- accurate gender disaggregated data
- accountability – both domestically and internationally, and
- an effective civil society.

Chair, we look forward to continuing to share experiences and gain insights into how we can all advance towards the realisation of women's equality.

No reira, tēnei kōrero kārena

and what kind of behavior students think is necessary to succeed in science and how their own goals in science class compare to students with different levels of achievement in science. This study also examined the relationship between achievement in science and the amount of effort invested.

In secondary school girls the average age of onset of secondary puberty was 11.2 years old, while boys began to experience secondary sexual characteristics at 13.0 years old. Secondary sexual characteristics are signs of maturation that are visible changes that occur in both males and females. These changes include breast development, pubic hair growth, and the onset of menstruation. In addition, secondary sexual characteristics include changes in body shape, such as increased muscle mass and decreased body fat.

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