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United Nations Commission on International Law

High Level General Debate  
on the occasion of the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of  
the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

Statement

by

NEW ZEALAND

Hon. Pansy Wong

Minister of Women's Affairs

Monday, 1 March 2010

Check against delivery

Tena koutou katoa

Chair

On the occasion of the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, New Zealand reaffirms our enduring commitment to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

We celebrate today the progress we have made since that momentous meeting in Beijing.

Chair, as we declared at Beijing fifteen years ago, the empowerment of women and girls is essential to the achievement of development, peace and security and human rights in all our regions. The gender equality remains an essential tool.

access to education and employment at all levels. In the current economic climate, no country can afford to under-utilise women's skills and talents. That is why a key focus for us is increasing the number of women in leadership roles.

I also consider it vital for New Zealand to play its part in promoting the rights of women and girls internationally. Last year, together with Colombia, New

Zeland, recognised maternal mortality as a human rights issue. We are pleased to be supporting the resolution by the United States at the Commission this year.

at least 1,500 women die due to complications associated with pregnancy and childbirth. For every woman that dies, twenty more women suffer from serious pregnancy related injuries and disease. By any standard, this is a human catastrophe. We must redouble our efforts to improve access to health

for all women and girls, with a focus on emergency obstetric care, family

has now achieved near universal status. We call on those few non-State Parties to join without further delay.

Some women face greater discrimination than others. On the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Beijing, we have celebrated the adoption and entry into force of

the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. As the former Chair  
which includes a specific provision on women and disabilities.

Chair, we deeply regret that we have not made greater progress in combating  
violence against women. In New Zealand, one in five women will be subjected  
to violence in their lifetime, compared to one in twenty men. We are also well

reaffirm my government's commitment to ending this violence. We have

women, even the most marginalized, were subjected to an even greater  
problem to confront. It will only be through knowing the full extent of the  
number of people in our country who have a hard time to address the causes of

General on Gender without delay.

working towards improving outcomes for all people