



# AUSTRALIA



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**Third Committee**  
12 October 2010

## **Advancement of Women** **Statement on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand**

**Statement by Helen Horsington**  
**First Secretary**  
**of the Australian Mission to the United Nations**

(Check against delivery)

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I have the privilege of speaking today on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Canada, Australia and New Zealand reaffirm our unwavering commitment to advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women. This year marks the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. This landmark framework remains, 15 years on, the key instrument for the advancement of women and gender equality internationally.

CANZ welcomes and supports the commitments made at the Commission on the Status of Women in March this year to intensify efforts to fully implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and advance gender equality globally. We welcome the comprehensive Ministerial Declaration adopted at ECOSOC this year on implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and empowerment of women.

The international community also came together in September this year to lay the foundation for the progress we need to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Gender equality and the empowerment of women are not only goals in their own right, but are also an essential means by which to achieve all of the Millennium Development Goals. Gains have been made towards gender equality over the last decade, but there is no region in the world where women fully enjoy equal rights.

It is fitting that in this year, the 15 year review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, new institutional arrangements for the advancement of gender equality have been put in place at the highest level, the United Nations. CANZ applauds the establishment of UN Women. UN Women will provide an integrated and comprehensive mechanism to promote equality for women and girls and facilitate better coordination of global efforts. We welcome the appointment of Michelle Bachelet as the Head of UN Women and look forward to the establishment of a strong and accomplished Executive Board which is representative of all regions of the world, including the Pacific.

We applaud also the establishment last week by the Human Rights Council of the new Working Group on Discrimination against Women in Law and Practice. This new mechanism will be able to provide the necessary sustained follow-up and tailored advice to States, which is simply not possible under the other existing mechanisms.

By way of example, and as underscored in the recent study by OHCHR on preventable maternal mortality and morbidity and human rights, the impact of discriminatory laws, policies and practices is demonstrated by the unacceptably high number of women who continue to die due to preventable causes in pregnancy and childbirth. CANZ is pleased that much political will has been demonstrated on the issue of maternal mortality and morbidity during the last 12 months. That political will must now be translated into action.

Mr. Chairperson,

This month marks the 10 year anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. Resolution 1325 outlines key international commitments to protect women's rights and empower women in conflict-related situations. The recent mass rapes that took place in July/August 2010 in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo are of grave concern and are utterly unacceptable. Such incidents are a stark reminder of the work still ahead to ensure that resolution 1325 and its related resolutions – 1820, 1888 and 1889 - are fully implemented. Impunity cannot be tolerated. The perpetrators must be brought to justice.

In the lead-up to the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of resolution 1325, we have witnessed a renewed momentum on the resolution's implementation and a focus on taking concrete action and ensuring accountability. Women's rights must not only be protected in conflict-related situations but women must also be able to fully and effectively participate in all aspects of conflict prevention, resolution, and peace-building activities. For our part, Australia has this year has committed itself to the development of an Australian national action plan on women, peace and security, and Canada has recently launched its own action plan. In preparation for the Security Council Open Debate on October 26<sup>th</sup>, CANZ calls on all member states to commit to concrete, time-bound and measurable actions to ensure the principles of resolution 1325 become a reality. CANZ also looks forward to the Security Council endorsing the global indicators on Resolution 1325.



Mr. Chairperson,

Finally, we commend the renewed focus and efforts taken by the UN and member states this year to achieve gender equality. The establishment of UN Women and renewed international efforts to dramatically accelerate MDG progress and implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace and Security provides an unprecedented opportunity to coordinate and redouble our efforts to deliver gender equality and improve the status of women around the globe.

We know the importance of equality. We have the frameworks in place to guide us. We have the establishment of UN Women. We must now ensure we see real progress towards gender equality.