



AUSTRALIA



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UNGA Third Committee
Item 26: The advancement of women – General discussion on advancement of women

National Statement delivered on 4 October 2019

Upcoming anniversaries – including ICPD, CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action and UNSC Resolution 1325 – rightly prompt a reflection on progress towards gender equality.

Just four years ago, the global community agreed an ambitious set of SDGs, which have gender equality at their heart. But gender discrimination and inequality remains pervasive.

Violence against women is a ubiquitous threat to human rights. It is an unacceptable reality in so many aspects of women's lives.

Australia is committed to dismantling the structural inequalities and addressing the harmful attitudes that underpin violence against women. This requires significant investment, co-ordinated approaches and eliminating harmful practices such as forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

We have committed to this domestically through our *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-22*. Internationally, we support the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women and the joint UN Program on Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence.

All forms of gender discrimination are intolerable, and discrimination solely on the grounds of sex is a violation of human rights. We must remove discrimination against women and girls, bridge gender gaps and tackle persistent barriers to women's advancement and full equality for all.

Australia supports actions to address discriminatory laws and policies that limit women's economic participation. We encourage all sectors to play a positive role, and harness the productivity and other benefits of engaging a diverse workforce.

Last month, here at the UN in New York we hosted an event with Elizabeth Broderick, Australia's former Sex Discrimination Commissioner and current Vice Chair of the UN Committee on Sex Discrimination – to discuss how business, sporting, and media leaders can promote gender equality and women's economic empowerment.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights are fundamental to women's rights and advancing gender equality.

Sexual and reproductive healthcare services and evidence-based information and education services are life-changing and life-saving. Even now, the WHO estimates 830 women and girls die globally every day of causes related to pregnancy and childbirth, almost all of which could be avoided with access to sexual and reproductive health services.

In this milestone year for gender equality, Australia will reaffirm its commitment to advancing the rights of all women and girls, including through the Third Committee.

372 words