

Introductory remarks at Pacific Women's Watch (New Zealand) Conference

on Saturday 8 November 2014 by Jane Prichard, Panel Speaker

Title of Presentation: *From Beijing to Post-2015*

Tena Koutu, tena koutu, tena koutu katoa, warm greetings

Can I ask who in the audience today attended the 4th World Women's Conference in Beijing?

It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge my colleague Bette Cuthbert with whom I shared a room for ten days at the NGO Forum in Huairou. It was a truly special experience. Also Dianne Glenn and Beverley Turner who were also with us. Wilma Harland from St Heliers accompanied me for ten days at the Conference in Beijing where the Association of Presbyterian Women of Aotearoa New Zealand had observer status. Wilma regrets she is not able to attend today. After almost 20 years New Zealand women who attended have scattered, with some overseas and some no longer part of the women's movement. So we four are veterans of Beijing!

Today I bring a strong message for this gathering of informed and committed women 20 years after Beijing. There have been huge numbers of words on paper- statements, urgings - but what have we achieved? No substantial, concrete action!. What can I do as my last effort before I finally retire? Work to reduce violence against women and children - YES. But now, NO. Ten days ago the Global Gender Gap Report 2014 covering 142 countries was released. We were shocked to learn that in 2010 New Zealand was in fifth position for gender equality but in 2014 we had fallen to thirteenth. This is totally unacceptable. We must work to ensure we are a society that demands change.

On Wednesday of last week the *New Zealand Herald* highlighted this dismal result and the cartoon that day conveyed a disgraceful message with the image of a corporately dressed woman riding a rodeo steer with the words 'Gender Pay Gap' on its back and the cartoon caption 'The Other Bull Ride'. I hope you all saw it. The message was outrageous. We cannot put up with this kind of insulting language. Either it intended making us laughing stocks or hoped it will be a wakeup call to action. For me it is a wakeup call to action. We must all join together in taking out the message to the community that women will no longer accept lower rates of pay than men, for the same work.

Engaging with both women and men who are outside of our traditional women's organisations with the message that women must have equal pay with men in the workplace is fundamental to securing full gender equality. As the country where men supported the suffragists in first securing the vote for women men must also support the call for equal pay in the post-2015 development agenda. Together we will move forward to reclaim our high position on in the Global Gender Gap Report. Anything less is unacceptable.

Winning a seat for New Zealand on the Security Council in the first round of voting was considered a coup when Italy and Spain were also in the running. It has already been suggested that as a result New Zealand could play a leading role in promoting gender equality, building on our being the first country to grant the vote to women. This is an exciting possibility. Let us pursue that as well!

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