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International Women's Day

On the 8th of March, as the world observes International Women's Day, the National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) is urging all New Zealanders to reflect on the valuable contribution that women make to society.

"International Women's Day is a time to reflect on the achievements and challenges in the promotion of women's economic, political and social rights," says Elizabeth Bang, NCWNZ National President.

Right now, the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women is gathering in New York to review progress towards gender equality since the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. The Minister of Women's Affairs, Pansy Wong, will be attending to report on the current status of women in New Zealand.

"It is disappointing to see that the Minister is sugar-coating the current situation and relying on achievements from years ago, before the current government was elected, to highlight the progress made," says Elizabeth Bang.

"The report also contains misleading information relating to the Pay and Employment Equity Unit and Paid Parental Leave."

The National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) is concerned that New Zealand has not made any significant progress towards gender equality in the last few years. The economic status of women has been negatively impacted by the recession, while the social and political advancement of women has not been supported with adequate policy formation.

Alternatively, the recession has been used as an excuse by the government to narrow their focus away from social gains towards economic policy.

"Women's empowerment will not be achieved through cuts to ACE, mining on conservation land, and privatisation," says Elizabeth Bang.

"The Government must take active measures to further improve the lives of women, in particular women's safety, economic wellbeing, and status in New Zealand."

NCWNZ urges the government to fulfil its obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and produce an accurate report on the progress being made to ensure that the principles in the Convention are being applied.

NCWNZ will be producing an NGO CEDAW Report, in collaboration with over a hundred other community organisations, which highlights the many areas in which New Zealand is under-achieving in regards to gender equality.

“We will present a report outlining the current status of women in New Zealand from an NGO perspective. This will encompass all aspects of gender equality and reflect more accurately the achievements and challenges of the last few years,” says Elizabeth Bang.

More information on CEDAW: <http://ncwnz.org.nz/cedaw/>

The NZ Government Report to United Nations Commission on the Status of Women:

http://www.unescap.org/ESID/GAD/Issues/Beijing+15/Responds_to_Questionnaire/NewZealand.pdf

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"Women Influencing Policy"