



October 9 2007

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### **WOMEN SUPPORT VISIT BY RAPPORTEUR**

At the National Council of Women of New Zealand's (NCWNZ) National Executive Meeting last weekend it was voted unanimously to invite an UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women to New Zealand.

The possibility of a visit from a Special Rapporteur to New Zealand was suggested by one of the CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) committee members in an informal meeting with NGO delegates from New Zealand in early August of this year. The committee was concerned with the level of violence that women and children experienced in New Zealand.

The CEDAW committee member suggested such a visit from a Special Rapporteur would be helpful identifying areas where mechanisms could be improved, rationalized and provide possible alternative models that could be helpful.

"A visit from an international expert will bring disengagement from the emotion that we as local communities have in this issue. The Special Rapporteur has undertaken these reviews in other countries, and this will give a broad interpretation for a multicultural society such as ours," said NCWNZ National President Christine Low.

Though New Zealand has good legislation in place with the Domestic Violence Act, it is the access to provisions such as protection orders and legal aid lawyers that needs to improve.

"We have reached a critical where the community and the government are increasingly concerned about the issue and level of violence in New Zealand," said NCWNZ National President Christine Low. "We need to have this assessment at a time when we are all looking for solutions for it to be of maximum value," concluded Christine Low.

ENDS

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*"Women Influencing Policy"*