

United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting

“Accelerating the Realization of Gender Equality and the Empowerment of all Women and Girls”

on the 25th Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women

1 October 2020

Australian Statement

**Delivered by Senator the Hon Marise Payne
Minister for Women, Minister for Foreign Affairs**

It's a pleasure to address you today as Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Women.

I'm delighted to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which remains the most comprehensive global commitment to equality, development, and peace for all women and girls.

The world has made progress since Beijing towards equality for women and girls, particularly in education and maternal mortality. However, COVID-19 is a real threat to this progress. It's now more important than ever that we build on these gains.

Australia recognises that women's equal participation and leadership are critical to inclusive economic growth and recovery in a post-COVID world. For Australia's part, we have made real progress in advancing gender equality and the rights of women and girls in the past twenty-five years. Notably, we have reduced gender gaps in income and increased the number of girls in education and women in formal employment.

As is the case globally, Australia also faces continuing challenges with regard to violence against women. Australia has made reducing violence against women a national priority, as well as a priority in our engagement with our region. Women and girls should always feel safe in their homes, their communities, their workplaces, and online.

In 2020, I'm working closely with Pacific women leaders in convening important region-wide virtual meetings of women from eighteen countries to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on women's health, economic security, and personal safety.

We are each of us committed to leading a regional response to COVID-19 that puts the interests of Pacific women and girls at the forefront of government responses. There is a strong desire to elevate gender equality in our future key regional meetings.

On women's sexual health and reproductive rights, Australia supports services that recognise sexual health and reproductive rights as human rights; inextricable from women's health, development, wellbeing, and equality of opportunity.

So in this twenty-fifth anniversary year of the fourth world conference on women, Australia remains resolutely committed to achieving gender equality, especially at this critical time in our history.

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