

Submitted in the context of the Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, but not delivered in person.

**Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's
Empowerment - Commitment to Action
27 September 2015**

Australia's Commitment Statement

Australia thanks UN Women and the People's Republic of China for convening this landmark meeting of global leaders on gender equality and women's empowerment.

Twenty years ago, the historic Beijing Declaration on Gender Equality and Platform for Action was signed. It remains a high-water mark for the articulation of women's and girls' human rights, and a blueprint of enduring relevance for our efforts to achieve gender equality.

This 20th anniversary year is a time for celebration of the gains made at Beijing, and since.

I pay tribute to the government and civil society representatives who secured such a progressive agreement and all who have been working to implement it over the past two decades.

It is also a time for sober reflection. There is a long way to go to achieve the empowerment of women and girls globally.

This year, as we mark the Beijing + 20 anniversary, and in preparation for the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, Australia has worked closely with other countries to ensure that progress since Beijing and through the Millennium Development Goals is safeguarded and accelerated.

We have made this a priority not just because it is the right thing to do but because we know that achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls is essential to sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and development.

We commend global leaders on the strong commitments to gender equality in the 2030 Agenda. Achieving the ambitions of this Agenda will be crucial to the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration.

In this anniversary year and to progress the 2030 Agenda, Australia is making new commitments both internationally and at home to empower women and girls.

Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs has launched a new Gender Equality Fund. This Fund will accelerate support for gender equality in our overseas development program with a focus on women's economic and leadership participation and addressing violence against women.

Women's economic empowerment programs in the Indo-Pacific region are a particular focus. Australia has recently announced funding to assist women entrepreneurs in Indian Ocean Rim countries to build their export competitiveness. We are launching a new partnership with the IFC that will advance South East Asian women's contribution to the private sector as employees, entrepreneurs, and business leaders. It will expand opportunities for women entrepreneurs in supply chains and distribution networks.

In Australia, as we confront record levels of homicide of women, and domestic and family violence, we are committing new funds for frontline services, support for women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who are experiencing violence, and primary prevention initiatives to change the attitudes of young people towards violence against women and their children.

To increase women's workforce participation, responding to G20 commitments of 2014, Australia is providing new financial literacy projects for women, improved assistance for child care and small business reforms that will deliver new opportunities for women in the workforce.

The 2030 agenda is an enormous opportunity to accelerate progress towards the unfinished business of the MDGs and the Beijing Platform for Action, and to accelerate inclusive and sustainable development for all – girls and boys, women and men.

Australia is unwavering in our commitment to the full realisation of the Beijing Declaration and women's human rights and gender equality in the 2030 Agenda.

Natasha Stott Despoja AM
Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls
27 September 2015