



Commonwealth Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs

Beijing + 10 Review, United Nations, 28 February – 11 March 2005

Message from Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers to the United Nations Beijing+10 Review

We, the Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers, meeting on 27th February 2005 in New York, representing 53 member States and covering 5 regions, affirmed our commitment to implementing the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005-2015. The four critical areas of the Plan of Action are: gender, democracy, peace and conflict; gender, human rights and law; gender, poverty eradication and economic empowerment; and gender and HIV/AIDS.

We strongly reaffirm our commitment to the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2000 Beijing+5 Outcome Document and stress the importance of their full implementation at national, regional and international levels.

We equally support CEDAW and UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in advancing women's rights and gender equality. We also emphasise the essential need for the Beijing Platform for Action and CEDAW implementation to realise the MDGs.

Having agreed to the Commonwealth Plan of Action at the 7th Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting in the Fiji Islands, 30 May-2 June 2004, we acknowledge that women's rights and gender equality continue to be essential preconditions for national advancement. Recognising that much progress has been made in advancing women's rights in key areas, we note that more needs to be done to achieve gender equality at all levels.

Acknowledging that some governments have achieved the Commonwealth target of 30 per cent women's political representation, we strongly urge governments to take all possible action to promote women's full and equal participation in decision-making.

Recognising that women's rights are human rights, we call for further and immediate measures to address violence against women, and to promote and protect women's rights to land, housing, inheritance, property and livelihoods.

Acknowledging the critical importance of women's economic empowerment, we emphasise the need for gender-responsive macroeconomic policies and processes. We support the creation of an enabling environment for enhanced opportunities for women's employment, including increasing access to productive resources and improving educational opportunities for girls.

Acknowledging the importance of women's health, the health of their families and communities, and the impact of HIV/AIDS, we affirm our commitment to ensuring the overall health of women including their reproductive health and rights.

Acknowledging the negative impact of conflicts on women and children, we urge governments to fully implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR1325).

Resolving to build on the Commonwealth's shared values, we call for strengthened partnerships at all levels: between Commonwealth governments, civil society and other partners.

We also emphasise that partnership with men and boys is critical to advancing the rights of women and girls.

Together, let us work to achieve equality, peace and development for all.