E aku rangatira, tēnā koutou katoa, ka nui te honore, ki te mihi, ki a koutou

I am honoured to be here to present New Zealand’s Country statement.

New Zealand was the first country in the world in which women gained the right to vote, and we are proud of our record as a nation that empowers women to lead independent and self-determining lives. Today, we have a strong statutory framework that provides comprehensive protection against all forms of discrimination against women, and we are pleased to reaffirm New Zealand’s strong commitment to our international obligations, including those embodied in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Over the last twenty five years the Government has continued to make steady progress in advancing gender equality, and New Zealand has implemented positive legislative and policy reforms to improve women’s lives. We have set a 50% target for women on state sector boards and committees, we are amending our equal pay law, we have an Action Plan to end the gender pay gap in the public service, we have created a Joint Venture to lead the transformation towards a more effective system to prevent and address family and sexual violence, and we are working more closely with Māori to better meet the Crown’s obligations as a Treaty partner.

But our legacy of gender equality relies on our ability to do better for all women and girls, now and in the future and we should not be complacent. Like all countries, New Zealand has work to do: we still have high rates of family and gender-based violence; the gender pay gap and pay equity remain a concern; and the numbers of women in leadership positions in the private sector continues to be low.

New Zealand is committed to demonstrating active leadership to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment. We will continue to support initiatives that change harmful social norms and practices associated with gender based violence, including female genital mutilation, engage communities and young people in sexual
and reproductive health programmes, and increase women’s representation in decision-making and leadership at all levels. We are also committed to providing a full range of sexual and reproductive health services, including the widest possible range of safe, effective, affordable and acceptable methods of contraception and safe and legal access to abortion.

As we near the midpoint of the 2030 agenda, we note with concern that many women and girls around the world are being left behind. We are alarmed to see established international norms and standards that have been collectively agreed being challenged.

This challenge was particularly evident at the UN Commission on the Status of Women this year, where concerted efforts were made to roll back advances relating to bodily autonomy, comprehensive sexuality education, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and gender-based violence. We remain concerned about this increasing politicisation of human rights in regards to women and girls, and New Zealand will continue to strongly advocate to maintain and protect these rights.

As we review our progress against the Beijing Platform for Action, New Zealand reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the advancement of the rights of all women and girls everywhere. We urge all states to continue to work together to address the challenges and barriers hindering progress of gender equality, and the fulfilment of women’s and girls’ human rights.

Kua tae mai matou / ki te tautoko te kaupapa / o tenei wa
We have come / to support the reason / of this time.
Waihoa i te toipoto / kaua i te toiroa
Let us join together / and not fall apart.
No reira, tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa
Greetings to you all.