

Hon Julie Anne Genter
Minister for Women

Cabinet paper – proactive release

**Report on Overseas Travel – attendance at 63rd session of the United Nations
Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 63), 9 to 16 March 2019**

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Cabinet Paper - details

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Title: Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Julie Anne Genter
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IN CONFIDENCE

Office of the Minister for Women

Chair, Cabinet

Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Julie Anne Genter

I recommend that Cabinet note this report on my travel to New York City, United States of America from 9 March 2019 to 16 March 2019 to attend the 63rd session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

Report

- 1 CSW is the principal global policy-making body dedicated to gender equality and the advancement of women. Representatives of member states and observers gather at the UN Headquarters to evaluate progress on gender equality, identify challenges, set global standards and formulate policies to promote gender equality worldwide. The theme for CSW63 was *Social Protection Systems, Access to Public Services and Sustainable Infrastructure for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls*.
- 2 New Zealand's reputation remains strong internationally and CSW63 presented an opportunity to ensure that New Zealand remains visible, active, and participatory in international fora on women's issues. My attendance ensured that New Zealand's domestic policy development continues to be informed by international best practice. It was also an opportunity to engage with our Pacific neighbours, in support of the Government's Pacific Reset.
- 3 I delivered New Zealand's National Statement, highlighting the Government's priorities for women, including the importance of recognising and valuing unpaid work predominantly performed by women, the government's commitment to working with Māori to improve outcomes for Māori women and their whanau, and New Zealand's efforts to address climate change.
- 4 Events I hosted included a New Zealand led Side Event, co-sponsored by Sweden, Papua New Guinea and UN Women, on the importance of using data to better plan and design sustainable infrastructure with a gender specific perspective; a luncheon for leaders of Pacific nations where we discussed issues facing women and girls in the region, including representation in leadership roles, and addressing domestic violence. I also participated in a Side Event on closing the gender pay gap, alongside the Prime Minister of Iceland.
- 5 An important focus of my attendance at CSW63 was bilateral engagements with my counterparts from a variety of countries. I met with the Prime Minister of Iceland, and Ministers from the Netherlands, Germany, Ireland, France, Australia, and Fiji. Discussion topics included measures to close the gender pay gap and address pay equity, how to value and recognise women's unpaid work, ways to increase the numbers of women in leadership, measures to

prevent violence against women and girls, and improving access to safe, affordable and sustainable transport.

- 6 A non-government organisation (NGO) delegate was again included in the official delegation to CSW. Hellen Swales, President of Business and Professional Women, was chosen for her expertise and experience in both international fora and the broad topic of CSW63. Ms Swales' participation enhanced the effectiveness of New Zealand's contribution to CSW63 and emphasised both domestically and internationally the importance the New Zealand Government places on the contribution of civil society.
- 7 Negotiations on the CSW63 Agreed Conclusions around this year's theme were more difficult and lengthy than they have been in previous years. New Zealand engaged throughout the issues to ensure our national positions on sensitive topics were maintained in the final outcome. We also focused on four key areas to insert new language into the text. These reflected both our traditional priorities and newer areas of focus. Specifically: the gender pay gap and equal pay for equal work or work of equal value; the impacts of climate change; valuing and recognising women's unpaid care work; and the importance of birth registration to access social protection systems and public services.
- 8 New Zealand also supported the joint positions of the Pacific Island Forum member states in their efforts to ensure the challenges of climate change, violence against women, and women's economic empowerment, as they relate to women and girls in small developing island states, were well reflected in the text.
- 9 The CSW63 Agreed Conclusions were adopted on 22 March 2019. New Zealand's priorities are well represented. While the document was adopted by consensus there were a number of reservations made by states, largely around the expected contentious language of sexuality and reproductive rights.
- 10 The terrorist attack in Christchurch occurred during CSW63. The New Zealand delegation and I have been humbled by the numerous messages of condolences and support from Ministers and delegations from around the world.

Proactive release

- 11 I intend to proactively release this paper in full within 30 business days of Cabinet's consideration.

Recommendation

I recommend that Cabinet note this report.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Julie Anne Genter

Minister for Women

RELEASED BY THE MINISTER FOR WOMEN