

### Article 3 – Equal rights of men and women

#### Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 10 of the list of issues

**Please indicate whether the implementation of the Gender Equality Declaration has helped to accelerate women’s access to decision-making positions in the public and private sectors. Please provide an assessment of the remaining obstacles to the achievement of gender equality.**

137. Promoting women in leadership is one of the Government’s top priorities for women. New Zealand’s membership to the Pacific Leaders’ Gender Equality Declaration (PLGED) has been a practical and valuable vehicle through which New Zealand has tracked its progress on increasing women’s participation in leadership roles. In its membership to the PLGED, New Zealand has a strong commitment to supporting Pacific Island nations to track their progress and strengthen their efforts to address women’s representation in leadership.

138. Women in New Zealand have made steady gains in representation at central and local government level and on statutory boards. Representation at top levels in the private sector has improved, but is still relatively low.

#### *Representation at central and local government*

139. The gender representativeness of Parliament has increased significantly since the advent of the Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) voting system in 1996, although it still has some way to go before it reflects the gender balance in New Zealand society. There are 41 women (34 percent) Members of Parliament (MPs) in the 51st Parliament, equal to the record 41 elected to the 49th Parliament in 2008. Ten of 27 Ministers of the Crown (37 percent) and seven of 20 Cabinet Ministers (35 percent) are women.<sup>26</sup> The Green Party and Māori Party have women co-leaders, both of whom are MPs.

#### *Local government*

140. The proportion of women elected to local bodies has risen from one-quarter to one-third (33 percent) over the past 25 years, with the number of women candidates also increasing (to 31 percent).<sup>27</sup> Community and district health boards tend to have greater proportions of women standing compared to other electoral positions. In 2013 these were at 37 percent and 47 percent respectively. The number of women elected city mayors rose from 19 percent in 2007 to 31 percent in 2013.

#### *Women’s representation in the public service*

141. The Government continues to monitor women’s participation in the public service. Women’s overall representation in the public service remained stable between 2005 and 2015, at approximately 60 percent.

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.dpnc.govt.nz/cabinet/ministers/ministerial-list>

<sup>27</sup> [https://www.dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.nsf/wpg\\_URL/Services-Local-Elections-Local-Authority-Election-Statistics-2013?OpenDocument#two](https://www.dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.nsf/wpg_URL/Services-Local-Elections-Local-Authority-Election-Statistics-2013?OpenDocument#two)

142. The number of women chief executives has increased. As at 30 June 2015, 41 percent (12 of 29) of chief executives were women compared with 24.1 percent in 2012. Women occupied 44.2 percent of senior leadership positions in the public service (the top three tiers of management) as at 30 June 2015.<sup>28</sup>

*Women's representation on statutory boards*

143. Government continues to work to increase women's participation on statutory boards, and to create an environment where key decision-makers accept the importance of appointing women and actively seek out suitably qualified women candidates.
144. Government has an aspirational goal of 45 percent participation of women on state sector boards. As at December 2015, women made up 43.4 percent of state sector boards and committees. This is a significant increase on 41.7 percent in 2014. In 2015, 51.4 percent of Ministerial appointments to boards were women.

*Increasing the representation of women on private sector boards*

145. Women made up 17 percent of directors and 19 percent of officers (chief executives and senior managers) of all listed companies in 2015. There is a range of private sector initiatives to encourage women onto private sector boards and into senior roles.

*Remaining obstacles to the achievement of gender equality.*

146. The Government's priorities for women reflect the areas where obstacles to gender equality remain and more work is needed: supporting more women and girls in education and training; utilising women's skills and growing the economy; encouraging and developing women leaders; and ensuring women and girls are free from violence. The Government's work programme is focussed on actions to address these areas.

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<sup>28</sup> SSC. (October 2015). Human Resources Capability in the New Zealand State Services. Wellington.