

## **Ministerial Roundtable One**

### **New Zealand statement by Hon Jan Tinetti, Minister for Women**

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

Translation: Honoured leaders, I acknowledge and greet you all

I am grateful for this opportunity to learn from each other how we can best serve women as we face this global pandemic.

The pandemic has radically changed our lives. COVID-19 has made clear just how interconnected health, economic, and social issues are in our society. The health of our people impacts, and is impacted by, the health of our economy, and vice versa. It has also highlighted and exacerbated structural inequalities that disproportionately affect women and girls.

In this context, it is more important than ever to ensure women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life.

In New Zealand, we have been working hard to improve women's participation in decision-making roles: 48% of our members of parliament are now women, and 42% of elected positions in local government are held by women.

We have also just reached 50% women's representation on state sector boards, and 53% of our senior leadership in the public service are women. This has been guided by the work of my Ministry's Nominations Service, which links board-ready women to state sector board and committee roles.

In 2020, we passed the Equal Pay Amendment Act, to make it easier for female dominated professions to be paid fairly for the work they do. We have also worked to close our public service gender pay gap. The gap in 2020 closed to 9.6% – the lowest on record.

Meanwhile, we are removing barriers to women's participation by confronting some issues that are still surrounded by stigma.

In 2019 we introduced availability of 10 days' paid domestic violence leave each year, to help people affected by violence to keep themselves and their dependents safe. For example, this leave could be used to move house, attend court or doctor's appointments, or settle children into a new school.

I'm also delighted to share that we have just launched a programme to offer free period products to school students across New Zealand, because students should not miss school for something that is a natural part of life for half the population.

There is a long way to go to achieve women's full and effective participation and decision-making – but we are making good

progress. Sharing our lessons from around the world is making a difference and I'm proud of the work we are doing towards gender equality.

Ngā mihi nui. Thank you.

