Australia: intervention at CND/CCPCJ Beijing Declaration 25th anniversary event
12 June 2020

Thank you Ambassador [Marcondes de Carvalho].

Co-chairs, colleagues.

This year marks three important milestones. Not only is it the 25th anniversary of the adoption the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a powerful road map for women’s rights, as others have noted.

But it is also the 20th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, which recognised for the first time in a comprehensive and holistic manner the importance of ensuring women were full and equal participants in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction.

And it is the fifth anniversary of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with SDG 5 dedicated to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

These milestones — as well as the COVID-19 situation — allow us to take stock of our collective efforts on gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Others have already spoken about the impact of COVID-19 on women and girls, so I won’t repeat their observations.

But 25 years on from the Beijing Declaration, it is important that we recommit our efforts to implementing this road map.

Australia is as committed as ever to being a global leader on gender equality and women’s empowerment.

It is a key focus of our diplomatic, development and security efforts, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region. Australia delivers approximately $1.3 billion in official development assistance each year that targets gender equality and women’s empowerment, over a third of which goes directly to Pacific island countries.

Australia also has a dedicated, full-time Ambassador for Gender Equality, whose role includes oversight of Australian policies and programs designed to eradicate violence and discrimination against, and trafficking in, women and girls; ensure better educational and health opportunities and outcomes for women and girls; and enhance the participation of women in decision-making and leadership.
Gender equality and women’s empowerment must also remain a focus for all multilateral organisations and their mandates.

So too should gender mainstreaming. We know that drugs and crime affect women and men differently. Our policy responses should therefore reflect this reality.

This is why in 2017 Australia introduced the first resolution in the CCPCJ to focus attention on the importance of mainstreaming gender perspectives into criminal justice processes.

It is important member states ensure our own national crime prevention, criminal justice and drugs policies and programs — however well-intentioned — do not impact adversely on women, girls, or on men or boys.

And that we continue to support the UNODC to help all of us design and implement policies aimed at advancing gender equality.

As an example, in our region, the Pacific, the UNODC has developed and designed anti-corruption programs that focus on gender equity principles and empower women to participate meaningfully in anti-corruption activities.

It is a great example of what can be done to give practical expression to our collective commitments to gender equality and women’s empowerment.

25 years on, let us redouble our efforts to achieve these goals.

Thank you.