



AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION SOUTH AFRICA

Chargé d’Affaires, Mr Chris Munn

Talking Points for the International Women’s Day Dinner, Friday 6 March 2015

- the Hon Susan Shabangu, Minister in the Presidency Responsible for Women
 - the Hon Elizabeth James Bol, Deputy Minister of Petroleum and Mining, South Sudan
 - the Hon Zainab Kalekye Chidzuga, Member of the Parliament of Kenya and the Parliamentary Committee on Environmental and Natural Resources
 - Ms Rondromalala Andriamahaso, Mayor, Commune of Ampasy-Nahampoana, Madagascar
 - Dr Lulu Gwagwa, Chief Executive Officer of Lereko Investments and Moderator for the Mining and Gender Forum
 - Ms Noleen Pauls, Chairperson, Women in Mining South Africa
 - Ms Simone Ellis Oluoch Olunya – Deputy Regional Director, UN Women East and Southern Africa Regional Office
 - Students and staff from the Moletsane Secondary School in Soweto
 - Other participants in the Mining and Gender Forum
 - Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen
- Good evening and welcome
 - International Women’s Day is celebrated globally each year on 8 March to commemorate the economic, political and social achievements of women
 - In 2015, Australia is using International Women’s Day to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
 - Australia believes that gender equality is central to economic and human development and to supporting women’s rights
 - equal opportunity for women and men supports economic growth and helps to reduce poverty

- As such, gender equality and women’s empowerment are priorities for the Australian Government, both domestically and internationally
- Australia is focussing its work in areas where persistent challenges and progress toward gender equality has been slow:
 - increasing women’s voice in decision-making, leadership and peace-building
 - promoting women’s economic empowerment; and
 - ending violence against women and girls.
- Australia continues to make significant progress in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
 - last year, during Australia’s Presidency, **G20** Leaders agreed that reducing the gender gap in workforce participation was important, and committed to the goal of reducing the gap in participation rates between men and women in their countries by 25 per cent by 2025
 - : reducing this gap could bring an extra 100 million women into the labour force across the G20 and will help to address poverty in the most sustainable way possible – through education, workforce participation and jobs
 - but we have not achieved success in all areas
 - : the difference between women’s and men’s average weekly full-time equivalent earnings in Australia has hit a record high of 18.8 per cent
 - : globally, including in Australia, one in three women who have been in a relationship have experienced physical and / or sexual violence by their intimate partner
 - in September 2014, **Our Watch**, an initiative of the Foundation to Prevent Violence Against Women and their Children, was launched to drive nation-wide change in the culture, behaviours and attitudes that underpin and create violence against women and children in Australia.
- 2015 also marks the 15th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325—a ground breaking resolution that represents a commitment by the international community to ensure women’s participation and protection in fragile, conflict and post-conflict settings.

- Resolution 1325 was followed by six resolutions, each strengthening the commitment to women’s participation and including a focus on preventing, and responding to, sexual violence in conflict.
 - Together, these resolutions frame the women, peace and security agenda
- Australia has been a strong and consistent advocate for women, peace and security.
 - This agenda was a priority for Australia during our recent term on the UN Security Council
 - : During our Presidency, the Security Council adopted Resolution 2185 which includes practical steps to improve the effectiveness of police components in peacekeeping and peacebuilding and aims to increase the participation of female police in UN peacekeeping missions.
 - Australia’s work to implement the seven resolutions is guided by the Australian National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security 2012–2018
 - : This whole-of-government plan provides a coordinated approach to integrating gender into Australia’s peace and security efforts. It identifies the strategies and actions that Australia is undertaking, nationally and internationally, to advance this important work.

Australia’s commitment to gender in Africa

- In Africa we have been supporting women’s empowerment in a number of ways
- The Australian Government, in partnership with the South African Government, and in particular through the support of Minister Shabangu, has supported two study tours for African government officials to tap into South African and Australian successes and lessons learnt on mining and gender - this forum is the third in that series.
- We have supported research in four African countries on issues that affect women in mining communities, such as Land Use Agreements. This is research that will help us all to understand better how sustainable outcomes can be achieved for women through mining activities.
- Education and training for women working in the minerals and related sectors has also been a focus of our work, both through study tours like

this one and through Australia Awards, our flagship scholarships program in Africa

- We have provided scholarships to over 2,000 African women
- In 2014, women represented 47 per cent of the total Awards to Africa, up from 38.5 per cent in 2011.
- And we continue to try to improve these figures and broader gender outcomes from the program in a number of ways:
 - : establishing the Australia Awards Africa Women in Leadership Network to support female awardees apply for and undertake Australia Awards and successfully return to their workplaces
 - : regular professional development opportunities for female alumni
 - : an inclusiveness fund to provide support for female and disabled awardees
 - : the creation of a small grants scheme for our alumni to support innovative efforts to address gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in their countries.
- We are also supporting Australian NGOs to work with local counterparts on women's empowerment issues.
 - For example, Mozambican NGOs have received support to improve the health of more than 24,000 women and children in Mozambique through modern family planning methods, child vaccinations and safe and clean maternity services
- This work is all driven by a performance framework for the Australian aid program that our Minister for Foreign Affairs released last year
 - Under this framework, the Government set a target requiring that at least 80 per cent of aid program investments, regardless of their objectives, effectively address gender issues in their implementation
- I would now like to take this opportunity to play for you a message by Australia's Special Ambassador for Women and Girls, Natasha Stott Despoja
 - The Ambassador for Women and Girls is responsible for high-level advocacy to promote Australian Government policies and activity regarding gender equality and the social, political and economic empowerment of women and girls

- : We believe that the role of the Ambassador has helped us make progress domestically and internationally on gender issues and we are encouraging other countries to consider appointing similar ambassadors
- Ms Stott Despoja herself has a remarkable and inspiring professional story
 - : she entered the Australian Senate at only 26 years of age and was, at the time of her election, the youngest woman ever to enter the Australian Federal Parliament.
 - : she was re-elected twice, she held the positions of Leader and Deputy Leader of the Australian Democrats' party and she is the longest-serving Democrat Senator in the party's history
 - : She is also the founding Chairperson of the Foundation to Prevent Violence Against Women and their Children
- Ms Stott Despoja also hails from South Australia, a state with a proud history of women's suffrage
 - : South Australia was the first jurisdiction in the world to grant women the right to vote **and** stand for election in 1894 (New Zealand was the first to grant the right to vote in 1893)

PLAY NSD MESSAGE

- I would now like to introduce the Honourable Susan Shabangu, Minister responsible for Women in the Presidency
 - Minister Shabangu also has a distinguished and inspiring career which is very relevant to the theme of mining and gender
 - : before her current role, she served as South Africa's Minister for Mineral Resources for five years
 - : and was Deputy Minister for Minerals and Energy from 1996-2004.
 - And she is a good friend of the Australian Government, having played a leading role in our first mining and gender forum here in South Africa.
- Ladies and gentleman, Minister Shabangu.