



PRIME MINISTER

PRESS STATEMENT NO. 409

9 DECEMBER, 1974

POLITICAL RIGHTS OF WOMEN

The Australian Government has taken action to accede to the UN Convention on the Political Rights of Women and to ratify ILO Convention No. 100 (Equal Remuneration).

Announcing this today, the Prime Minister, Mr. Whitlam, said 10 December 1974 was a fitting date for Australia to become a party to those two Conventions. It was on 10 December 1948 that the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The purpose of that Declaration was to ensure fundamental rights and freedoms for all persons, without discrimination of any kind, arising from race, sex, religion and political or other opinions. Since it came to power, the Government has sought to pass legislation to guarantee fundamental rights without discrimination on grounds of sex and to take other steps to ensure that it acted in the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Mr. Whitlam said that the Government's decision to become a party to these two Conventions was evidence of its desire to ensure that Australia's policies were soundly based on respect for, and on the protection and enhancement of, civil liberties and basic human rights for all its people, regardless of their sex. The Government had signed the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and would proceed to ratification of them as soon as enabling legislation had been passed by Parliament. Australia would also ratify the International Convention of the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination as soon as Parliament had passed the appropriate legislation.

Mr. Whitlam said 1975 had been designated by the United Nations as International Women's Year. The Government had, since it came to office, been active in promoting equal opportunities for women in all fields of public life and ensuring that all discriminatory legislation was removed which might prevent women from taking their rightful place in society.

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