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Standing Ovation For New Zealand's Leading Feminist

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Press Release: Zonta International

MEDIA RELEASE

10 March 2015

Standing Ovation For New Zealand's Leading Feminist

Dr Marilyn Waring, guest speaker at the 2015 International Women's Day Breakfast at Parliament in Wellington, spoke on "Empowering Women, Empowering Humanity: Picture it!"

She received a standing ovation from the audience. Amongst them young women students from eleven colleges in the greater Wellington region. The breakfast was organised by the Zonta Club of Wellington in partnership with UN Women and hosted by the Hon. Louise Upston, Minister for Women.

The gathering proved a huge success exciting those present to enhance the cause of women and clarify Zonta's mission, to work together to empower women globally through service and advocacy.

In 1975 Marilyn Waring became the youngest member of the New Zealand Parliament at the age of 23. Since that time, she has dedicated her career to empowering women internationally. Dr Waring is best known as the principal founder of feminist economics, which argues that women's work has not traditionally been factored into economic study. Her 1988 book, *If Women Counted*, persuaded the United Nations to redefine gross domestic product and inspired new accounting methods in dozens of countries, all to make women a more significant factor in the economy.

Dr Marilyn Waring told us that, "Forty years of feminist activism and there are issues with no progress at all – violence against women, the recognition of unpaid work; where we are going backwards – numbers of women in parliament, numbers of women appointed to Government Boards and Commissions; and a systemic failure to provide leadership on all human rights issues. It's an interesting day when I can conclude, from evidence, that there were greater and more female human rights legislative changes and changes in resourcing under Muldoon than there have ever been under Key. Two generations later a parliament still dominated by white middle class middle aged men needs to hear the truths of the ongoing exploitation of and discrimination against the women of New Zealand. So on International Women's Day in 2015 I have a message for the Prime Minister: Get some guts and join the right side – but this time in your own back yard. I bet you can't."

Since 1911 International Women's Day, also known as United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace, has been celebrated on March 8th. All around the world the achievements of women are celebrated, while, at the same time, calling for greater equality. Thank you Dr Marilyn Waring for your contribution.

ENDS

Dr Jan Pearson
President
Zonta Club of Wellington

Background on Dr Marilyn Waring

Since 2006, Dr. Waring has been a Professor of Public Policy at the Institute of Public Policy at AUT in Auckland, focusing on governance and public policy, political economy, gender analysis, and human rights. She has received numerous awards and accolades for her work and has studied, lectured and consulted overseas and in New Zealand on women's issues. In 2010, she was appointed Technical Expert on Gender and Poverty for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

In 2014 Dr Marilyn Waring was made a Zonta International Honorary Member. The Zonta International Board awards International Honorary Membership to individuals who have helped to change societal attitudes about women, or have improved conditions for women beyond the national level. Since 1970, Zonta International has recognized 35 women for their significant contributions to advancing the status of women worldwide. Included in this illustrious group is another New Zealander who has made a significant contribution to women nationally and internationally, Dame Silvia Cartwright PCNZM DBE QSO DStJ.

Background on Zonta International

Zonta International, founded in 1919 in the USA, is a global organization of business and professional women working together across political boundaries to empower women globally through service and advocacy. There are over 30,000 members belonging to just under 1,200 Zonta clubs in 67 countries. Membership is both a personal and professional benefit and a responsibility that requires time, resources and financial commitment. The Zonta Club of Wellington is one of 28 clubs in New Zealand. This year we celebrate 50 years of Zonta in New Zealand following the establishment of the Zonta Club in Auckland in 1955. New Zealand is the first country in the Pacific to host a Zonta club. For more information about Zonta in Wellington email wellington@zonta.org.nz and refer to the New Zealand website www.zonta.org.nz or international www.zonta.org