Our Shared Purpose: Gender Equality in Our Lifetime

UN WOMEN CONNECTS PEOPLE, ISSUES AND IDEAS BEHIND ONE SHARED PURPOSE: MAKING GENDER EQUALITY A REALITY IN OUR LIFETIME.

Working and thinking together propels global action that reaches women and girls the world over, going far beyond what any single organization could ever hope to do alone.
IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM, UN WOMEN IS THE ONLY ENTITY SOLELY DEDICATED TO ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERING WOMEN AND GIRLS. It helps advance internationally agreed standards on gender equality and support countries in translating them into practice through laws, policies and services.

Reactionary forces continue to rise. Yet everywhere, women and girls are on the move, calling for more progress. Governments, businesses, civil society, faith-based organizations, men’s groups and other allies are coming on board to achieve gender equality, many through partnerships with UN Women.

AIMED AT INNOVATION AND SCALE, OUR EFFORTS ARE HELPING TO SHIFT MARKETS AND MINDSETS, STRENGTHEN STATISTICAL MEASUREMENT, SHARPEN PUBLIC POLICY-MAKING AND SHAPE HUMANITARIAN ACTION.

It uses experiences in countries to inform agreement on new gender equality norms. And through its links across the United Nations, it puts gender equality at the centre of all three pillars of global progress: peace and security, human rights and sustainable development.

In 2018-2019, the backdrop for UN Women’s mission is a time of immense challenges in the world. Inequalities remain acute. All over the world, people join forces with UN Women because they trust us as a champion of gender equality and women’s empowerment. They value our expertise and reach, and our historic relationship with feminist and women’s rights movements. They know we lead new thinking and alter the frontiers of public debate. And increasingly, in line with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action agreed at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, we are working to bring lasting change. Aimed at innovation and scale, our efforts are helping to shift markets and mindsets, strengthen statistical measurement, sharpen public policy-making and shape humanitarian action. UN Women’s commitment to reaching women marginalized by multiple forms of discrimination and bias is unwavering. At the 2018 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, United Nations Member States issued a Ministerial Declaration highlighting the role of gender equality in realizing the 2030 Agenda, and supporting UN Women’s role in leaving no one behind.

Gender equality can never be a partial project. It must be a hope and a reality for every woman, man, girl and boy – in our lifetime and for generations to come.

Photo: In Nepal, Chandra Kala Thapa celebrates new earning power gained by switching to high-value crops on her small farm.
UN WOMEN’S PROGRESS OF THE WORLD’S WOMEN REPORT PROVIDES FORWARD-THINKING ANALYSIS OF GLOBAL CONCERNS THAT ARE FUNDAMENTAL TO GENDER EQUALITY. The 2019 edition is no exception, taking up the theme “Families in a Changing World.” It asks: How can laws, policies and public action support households and families so that women realize their rights to resources, bodily integrity and voice?

The report chronicles how families can make or break women’s and girls’ chances to realize their rights. Some families are places of love and care, but many others stifle rights and voices. The worst cases are sources of life-threatening violence.

Families are diverse and need society’s support to ensure that all members can thrive. The report calls for a comprehensive, family-friendly policy agenda oriented around gender equality. It envisions families as a home for equality and justice, where women can exercise choice and voice, and have economic security and physical safety. A series of recommendations summarize essential ways forward, such as ending discrimination in law, recognizing diverse families in laws and policies, adopting gender-responsive social protection and investing in care services.

Photo: A woman in Ghana takes advantage of free, high-quality child care for market vendors.
GEARING UP FOR THE 25th ANNIVERSARY OF A LANDMARK AGREEMENT

IN 2020, THE WORLD WILL CELEBRATE THE 25th ANNIVERSARY OF THE LANDMARK 1995 WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN, held in Beijing. It will be a chance to scrutinize what has – and has not – been done on the agreement negotiated at the conference. Known as the Beijing Platform for Action, the agreement outlines actions under 12 critical areas of concern.

The anniversary will be a rallying point to insist on finally achieving the human rights of all women and girls. As an essential part of global mobilization, UN Women is bringing together the next generations of women’s rights activists with the gender equality advocates and visionaries who were instrumental in creating the Beijing Platform for Action. Collectively, these change-makers of all ages and genders can tackle the unfinished business of empowering women through a new, groundbreaking, multigenerational campaign: “GENERATION EQUALITY: REALIZING WOMEN’S RIGHTS FOR AN EQUAL FUTURE”. It will demand equal pay, equal sharing of unpaid care and domestic work, an end to sexual harassment and all forms of violence against women and girls, responsive health-care services and equal participation in decision-making in political and all other areas of life.

A series of national and regional reviews will mark the anniversary. By 2019, these were already underway, coordinated by UN Women in partnership with national institutions and the UN’s regional economic and social commissions. The reviews look at progress as well as challenges in fulfilling the promises of the Beijing Platform for Action, including those that may influence the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In JORDAN, for example, UN Women has supported a national review aligned with the development of the next national women’s strategy. A regional steering committee for ASIA AND THE PACIFIC will connect regional and sub-regional civil society organizations, and serve as a channel for diverse inputs into the regional review. To mobilize the next generation, a Young Women’s Beijing Conference for those aged 25 and below is planned for AFRICA.

Photo: Racha Haffar, founder of the Tunisian organization “Not for Trade”, is among many young activists gearing up to tackle the unfinished business of the Beijing Platform for Action.