

# CELEBRATING THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

## Women in the Changing World of Work: Planet 50-50 by 2030



### THE SECRETARY-GENERAL Message on International Women's Day

Women's rights are human rights. But in these troubled times, as our world becomes more unpredictable and chaotic, the rights of women and girls are being reduced, restricted and reversed.

Empowering women and girls is the only way to protect their rights and make sure they can realize their full potential.

Historic imbalances in power relations between men and women, exacerbated by growing inequalities within and between societies and countries, are leading to greater discrimination against women and girls. Around the world, tradition, cultural values and religion are being misused to curtail women's rights, to entrench sexism and defend misogynistic practices.

Women's legal rights, which have never been equal to men's on any continent, are being eroded further. Women's rights over their own bodies are questioned and undermined. Women are routinely targeted for intimidation and harassment in cyberspace and in real life. In the worst cases, extremists and terrorists build their ideologies around the subjugation of women and girls and single them out for sexual and gender-based violence, forced marriage and virtual enslavement.

Despite some improvements, leadership positions across the board are still held by men, and the economic gender gap is widening, thanks to outdated attitudes and entrenched male chauvinism. We must change this, by empowering women at all levels, enabling their voices to be heard and giving them control over their own lives and over the future of our world.

Denying the rights of women and girls is not only wrong in itself; it has a serious social and economic impact that holds us all back. Gender equality has a transformative effect that is essential to fully functioning communities, societies and economies.

Women's access to education and health services has benefits for their families and communities that extend to future generations. An extra year in school can add up to 25 per cent to a girl's future income.

When women participate fully in the labour force, it creates opportunities and generates growth. Closing the gender gap in employment could add \$12 trillion to global GDP by 2025. Increasing the proportion of women in public institutions makes them more representative, increases innovation, improves decision-making and benefits whole societies.

Gender equality is central to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the global plan agreed by leaders of all countries to meet the challenges we face. Sustainable Development Goal 5 calls specifically for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and this is central to the achievement of all the 17 SDGs.

I am committed to increasing women's participation in our peace and security work. Women negotiators increase the chances of sustainable peace, and women peacekeepers decrease the chances of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Within the UN, I am establishing a clear road map with benchmarks to achieve gender parity across the system, so that our Organization truly represents the people we serve. Previous targets have not been met. Now we must move from ambition to action.

On International Women's Day, let us all pledge to do everything we can to overcome entrenched prejudice, support engagement and activism, and promote gender equality and women's empowerment.



### UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka Message on International Women's Day, 8 March 2017

Across the world, too many women and girls spend too many hours on household responsibilities—typically more than double the time spent by men and boys. They look after younger siblings, older family members, deal with illness in the family and manage the house. In many cases this unequal division of labour is at the expense of women's and girls' learning, of paid work, sports, or engagement in civic or community leadership. This shapes the norms of relative disadvantage and advantage, of where women and men are positioned in the economy, of what they are skilled to do and where they will work.

This is the unchanging world of unrewarded work, a globally familiar scene of withered futures, where girls and their mothers sustain the family with free labour, with lives whose trajectories are very different from the men of the household.

We want to construct a different world of work for women. As they grow up, girls must be exposed to a broad range of careers, and encouraged to make choices that lead beyond the traditional service and care options to jobs in industry, art, public service, modern agriculture and science.

We have to start change at home and in the earliest days of school, so that there are no places in a child's environment where they learn that girls must be less, have less, and dream smaller than boys.

This will take adjustments in parenting, curricula, educational settings, and channels for everyday stereotypes like TV, advertising and entertainment; it will take determined steps to protect young girls from harmful cultural practices like early marriage, and from all forms of violence.

Women and girls must be ready to be part of the digital revolution. Currently only 18 per cent of undergraduate computer science degrees are held by women. We must see a significant shift in girls all over the world taking STEM subjects, if women are to compete successfully for high-paying 'new collar' jobs. Currently just 25 per cent of the digital industries' workforce are women.

Achieving equality in the workplace will require an expansion of decent work and employment opportunities, involving governments' targeted efforts to promote women's participation in economic life, the support of important collectives like trade unions, and the voices of women themselves in framing solutions to overcome current

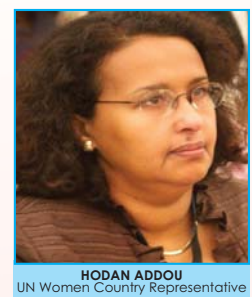
barriers to women's participation, as examined by the **UN Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment**. The stakes are high: advancing women's equality could boost **global GDP by USD 12 trillion by 2025**.

It also requires a determined focus on removing the discrimination women face on multiple and intersecting fronts over and above their gender: sexual orientation, disability, older age, and race. Wage inequality follows these: the average gender wage gap is 23 per cent but this rises to 40 per cent for African American women in the United States. In the European Union, elderly women are 37 per cent more likely to live in poverty than elderly men.

In roles where women are already over-represented but poorly paid, and with little or no social protection, we must make those industries work better for women. For example, a robust care economy that responds to the needs of women and gainfully employs them; equal terms and conditions for women's paid work and unpaid work; and support for women entrepreneurs, including their access to finance and markets. Women in the informal sector also need their contributions to be acknowledged and protected. This calls for enabling macroeconomic policies that contribute to inclusive growth and significantly accelerate progress for the 770 million people living in extreme poverty.

Addressing the injustices will take resolve and flexibility from both public and private sector employers. Incentives will be needed to recruit and retain female workers; like expanded maternity benefits for women that also support their re-entry into work, adoption of the **Women's Empowerment Principles**, and direct representation at decision-making levels. Accompanying this, important changes in the provision of benefits for new fathers are needed, along with the cultural shifts that make uptake of paternity and parental leave a viable choice, and thus a real shared benefit for the family.

In this complexity there are simple, big changes that must be made: for men to parent, for women to participate and for girls to be free to grow up equal to boys. Adjustments must happen on all sides if we are to increase the number of people able to engage in decent work, to keep this pool inclusive, and to realize the benefits that will come to all from the equal world envisaged in our Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.



### Statement By Hodan Addou, UN Women Country Representative

This year's International Women's Day celebrations come at a pivotal moment when all countries have embarked on implementing Sustainable Development Goals.

Today is a time to celebrate achievements but also to focus greater attention on the future, reiterating the importance of an inclusive process and greater participation of women in the world of work as one of the prerequisites for successful implementation and achievement of Agenda 2030.

This year's theme for IWD, women's empowerment in the changing world of work is not only pertinent but also timely.

Women's empowerment and active participation in labour force has been shown to have a multiplier effect in ending poverty, achieving food security, improving family health, stemming violence against women, and promoting justice and general welfare of societies

The world of work is changing, with significant implications for women. On one hand, technological advances and globalization bring unprecedented opportunities for those who can access them. On the other hand, there is growing informality of labour, income inequality and humanitarian crises. At national level we need to work together as partners to enable women and girls to access available opportunities through relevant policies and programmes. We also need to make the necessary adjustments to increase the number of women engaged and retained in decent work both in formal and informal sectors.

Recent studies show that only 50 per cent of working age women are represented in the labour force globally, compared to 76 per cent of men. What's more, an overwhelming majority of women are in the informal economy, subsidizing care and domestic work, and concentrated in lower-paid, lower-skill occupations with little or no social protection. Achieving gender equality in the world of work is imperative for economic and sustainable development.

Women still predominantly occupy jobs that pay less and provide no benefits. They earn less than men, even as they shoulder the enormous—and economically essential—burden of unpaid care and domestic work. Realizing women's economic empowerment requires transformative change so that prosperity is equitably shared and no one is left behind. We must therefore work together to ensure that the world of work works meaningfully for all women.

We applaud the establishment of Women's Economic Empowerment Fund. We believe the fund will enable women to engage their full potential to contribute to a sustainable economy in Uganda. We also appreciate the government's commitment in ensuring that gender targets are included in national planning and budgeting frameworks by establishing the Gender Certificate.

Together with all Ugandans, UN Women, and the leadership of the government of Uganda we can make gender equality a reality in Uganda by 2030.

Happy International Women's Day.