



TURNING PROMISES INTO ACTION:

GENDER EQUALITY IN THE 2030 AGENDA
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



View the report at: www.unwomen.org/sdg-report

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FOREWORDS



ANTÓNIO GUTERRES
SECRETARY-GENERAL
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development sets out a transformative vision for preserving our planet, promoting peace and ensuring that prosperity is shared by all. Human rights and gender equality are core principles of this bold agenda, underpinning our efforts to prevent conflict, overcome divisions and address the root causes of inequality, instability and injustice.

This report by UN Women, *Turning Promises into Action*, comes at a critical time. More than two years into the life of the 2030 Agenda, it calls for dramatic advances in statistics, financing and policies for gender equality, as well as more determined steps towards democratic governance and accountability. Based on robust data and expert analysis, the report takes stock of where we stand on key aspects of gender equality globally; tells us what is needed to monitor progress meaningfully; and provides wide-ranging recommendations for change.

The report leaves no doubt: Gender equality is fundamental to delivering on the promise of the 2030 Agenda. As long as women are economically and socially disempowered in the world of work and in their homes and communities, growth will not be inclusive and we will not succeed in ending poverty. The creation of inclusive and peaceful societies will also remain out of reach until women and girls are safe from all forms of violence and can shape the decisions that affect their lives.

It is therefore crucial to integrate a gender perspective into the implementation and monitoring of all the Sustainable Development Goals. With the targets and indicators, we already have the benchmarks for seeking out and tracking the women, men, girls and boys who are being left behind. Now, using the findings of this report, it is time to accelerate implementation with gender equality front and centre. Leveraging the capacities, skills, financing, technology and networks of all stakeholders will be essential.

Gender equality is a goal in its own right and a powerful force for upholding the main promise of the 2030 Agenda: to leave no one behind. I commend this volume to policymakers, researchers, civil society groups and others worldwide as a source of knowledge and a call to action. Let us work together towards a world of empowerment and dignity for all.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'António Guterres'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

António Guterres



PHUMZILE MLAMBO-NGCUKA

UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL AND
UN WOMEN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015 was a global victory for gender equality. Not only did United Nations Member States commit to making sustainability, equality, peace and human progress a reality for all countries and all people; they also recognized that gender equality is central to this transformative vision as an important goal in itself and a catalyst for progress across the entire Agenda.

Our monitoring report points clearly towards what is needed to get to the goals by 2030. Progress for women and girls remains unacceptably slow. Despite advances in girls' enrolment in primary education, 15 million girls of primary-school age will never get the chance to learn to read or write compared to about 10 million boys. Violence against women and girls remains a global pandemic, with one in three women and girls experiencing physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetimes. Today, women hold 24 per cent of parliamentary seats globally – still only half way to parity – and the gender pay gap stands at 23 per cent.

Even where progress has been made, it has been highly uneven. Looking beyond national averages, our report uncovers yawning gaps between women and girls who, even within the same country, are living worlds apart. For example, in Nigeria, women and girls from the poorest households are nearly five times as likely to be married before the age of 18 as those from the richest households. In the United States of America, the share of black and Native American women who live in poverty is twice as high as the share of white women. To reach those currently being left out of progress we must take action on the multiple and intersecting inequalities that hold down women and girls in cycles of poverty.

Alarmingly, many hard-won gender equality achievements are under threat. Climate change and

environmental degradation are undermining the livelihoods of millions of women and men; economic slowdown, recession and austerity measures have exacerbated inequality; and millions are being forcibly displaced due to violent conflict and humanitarian catastrophes. A shift towards exclusionary and fear-based politics is deepening societal divisions, breeding conflict and instability, as well as renewed resistance to women's rights. The unprecedented expression of political will that culminated in the 2030 Agenda is meeting formidable push-back.

The full and equal realization of women's and girls' rights must remain the centre of implementation. We must move towards an integrated way of tackling different forms of inequality and deprivation, as mandated by the 2030 Agenda. Better gender data, statistics and analysis will be critical to show who we are helping and what is working and to hold stakeholders accountable for commitments made but not met.

Indispensable in this effort is a vibrant civil society with space to express itself. Across the world, women's movements have advocated for gender equality and women's rights, and systematically challenged broader structures from authoritarianism, militarism and violence to economic policies that perpetuate inequalities of many kinds. It is thanks to their mobilization that the gender equality commitments of the 2030 Agenda are so comprehensive. Their sustained involvement in implementation and monitoring will be critical to turn the transformative promise of the SDGs into progress for women and girls on the ground.

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACS	American Community Survey	FIES	Food Insecurity Experience Scale
ADB	Asian Development Bank	GDP	gross domestic product
ADEV	Association des Acteurs de Développement	GMD	Global Micro Database
AJWS	American Jewish World Service	GRB	gender-responsive budgeting
APWLD	Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development	HLP	High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda
ARROW	Asia-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women	HLPF	High-level Political Forum
BMI	body mass index	IAEG-SDGs	Inter-Agency and Expert Group on the Sustainable Development Goals
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	ICRW	International Centre for Research on Women
DFID	Department for International Development, UK	ICT	information and communications technology
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey	IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
EGEC	early grade education and assessment	IDS	international development studies

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