

# ANNUAL REPORT

2015-2016



**UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.**

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.



UN Women works globally to make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## UN Women Annual Report 2015-2016

Foreword: Fast Forwarding to the Future We Want	2
Putting Women at the Centre of Global Transformation	4
<b>Priority Programmes and Results</b>	
<i>Leading the Way for Gender Parity in Politics</i>	8
<i>Empowering Women to Boost Economies</i>	12
<i>Ending Violence against Women and Girls</i>	16
<i>Advancing the Drive for Peace</i>	20
<i>Mobilizing Humanitarian Action for Women</i>	24
<i>Planning and Budgeting to Close the Gender Gap</i>	28
<b>Trust Funds</b>	
<i>UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women</i>	32
<i>UN Women's Fund for Gender Equality</i>	34
Leading UN Action to Advance Equality	36
Forging Partnerships to Speed Results	40
2015 Financial Statements	44
UN Women in the World	48
Contact us	49



# FAST FORWARDING TO THE FUTURE WE WANT

## FOREWORD BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*Above: In Cape Town, South Africa, UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka meets girls involved in the Grassroots Soccer SKILLZ programme, a grantee of the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women.*

**2015 was UN Women's fifth year.** As we marked this milestone, the United Nations celebrated 70 years of fostering human rights, and governments and civil society assessed 15 years of implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, and of Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. Informed by these reviews, we looked ahead to the world we want with the Paris Agreement on climate change, and saw the transformative power of women and girls set at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In 2016, the first year of the new Agenda, we have set the expiry date for gender inequality and are focused on the areas of impact to accelerate progress. This means achieving substantive equality and transformative change by 2030.

We know that the big vision for ‘people, planet and prosperity’ will be brought to life locally. This year’s annual report illustrates our maturing structure of resourceful and enterprising country offices. It highlights our coordination role within the United Nations and successful programmatic work last year in 93 countries, from helping to boost women’s income through climate-resilient agriculture in Morocco, engaging religious leaders to increase women’s leadership and participation in peace processes, to working with partners to develop a comprehensive framework for the prevention of violence against women and girls. With the continuing strong support of civil society and a rapidly growing network of partners in both public and private sectors, UN Women is ready to take this impact to scale.

At the 60th Commission on the Status of Women, Member States agreed on what action was needed to make the 2030 Agenda a reality for women and girls and acknowledged UN Women’s central role in its implementation. One of the ways we will do this is through the large, multi-stakeholder Flagship Programmes developed in 2015. These high-impact, scalable programmes focus on strengthening the voice of women and girls to remove the structural barriers to gender equality and women’s empowerment, and are geared to achieve life-changing results.

We are also tackling the major structural obstacles to gender equality through new instruments such as the Secretary-General’s new High-Level Panel on Women’s Economic Empowerment, locating what will most effectively support women’s greater participation in the workforce and boost their productivity.

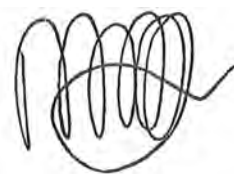
The collective commitment to the Agenda 2030 vision to ‘leave no one behind’ through the pursuit of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals was further backed by the individual pledges made by Heads of State and Government at our Global Leaders’ Meeting on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: A Commitment to Action in 2015. To date 93 governments have made concrete commitments to action that will support key facets of the Sustainable Development Goals, and Goal 5 in particular. In making these pledges they drew on their national findings from the 2015 reviews, using

“We need to frontload progress, so that by 2020 we are already seeing results among the most vulnerable and marginalized, so that we can, as Agenda 2030 promises, leave no one behind.”

the understanding of the gaps and failures in progress to commit to change. Crucially for sustained progress, they committed to finance the pursuit of gender equality as agreed in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, with targeted actions and investments.

Together, working closely with Member States on national implementation, we will build the ways in which women and girls can operate as solution makers, peace builders and change agents for more resilient communities. This role in solutions is increasingly pressing as we face the stresses and challenges of violent extremism, climate change and mass displacements of populations.

UN Women will continue to push for swift and effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda, increased investment in gender responsive budgeting, the collection of quality sex-disaggregated data, and stepped-up partnerships with civil society, business communities, the media, academia, men and boys, and youth. We need to frontload progress, so that by 2020 we are already seeing results among the most vulnerable and marginalized, so that we can, as Agenda 2030 promises, leave no one behind.



**Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka**

*United Nations Under-Secretary-General  
and Executive Director*



# PUTTING WOMEN AT THE CENTRE OF GLOBAL TRANSFORMATION

*Photo: President of Kenya Uhuru Kenyatta, UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka and President of China Xi Jinping at the Global Leaders' Meeting. 72 Heads and Deputy Heads of State and Government at the event followed UN Women's call to announce concrete commitments to Step It Up! for gender equality.*



Global negotiations among governments result in commitments that raise standards and accelerate national and international action on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. UN Women provides evidence and leads advocacy to put women's rights and needs at the centre of these processes. We bring together partners from government, civil society, the UN system and academia; provide expertise and analysis; and highlight good practices from different countries and regions. In 2015, our efforts helped drive a series of landmark global agreements with breakthrough provisions on women's empowerment and created consensus to step up the pace to reach gender equality by 2030.

## AN AGENDA FOR GENDER EQUALITY BY 2030

Agreed by all UN Member States in 2015, "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" is the first global agreement on sustainable development with goals for all countries, both developing and developed. It aims at an ambitious shift in development to meet people's rights and needs, while respecting our planet.

Critically important, the Agenda acknowledges that gender equality is a precondition to turning its trans-

formative vision into reality. Its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include one stand-alone goal on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls (SDG 5), and a second on reducing inequalities within and among countries. Targets under the gender equality goal guide countries to end all forms of discrimination and violence and ensure that women, in every sphere of life, have equal voices, choices, opportunities and access to resources, among other provisions. Eleven other goals—on topics as diverse as poverty eradication and employment, health, water and sanita-

tion, just societies and sustainable cities—include targets explicitly related to achieving gender equality.

UN Women advocated prominently for gender equality and women's empowerment at all stages leading to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and in support of Member States' aspirations. We engaged with governments and other UN organizations to build early consensus around the gender equality goal, worked closely with women's groups and civil society, and mobilized media and the public to lend broad support. We called for global recognition—now affirmed by Member States in the 2030 Agenda—that gender equality is a feasible accomplishment within the next 15 years.

Following adoption of the Agenda, the United Nations Statistical Commission agreed on a robust set of 230 unique indicators to monitor progress in achieving the SDGs. UN Women played a role as a convener, working with other UN agencies and consulting with global women's rights civil society organizations to identify indicators that would reflect the ambitions of the goals. A quarter of the indicators address gender equality, covering core issues such as unpaid care and domestic work, sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, land ownership and gender pay gaps.

As part of early moves to establish regional and subregional systems for tracking the SDGs, UN Women has already joined Caribbean countries in developing and rolling out the CARICOM Gender Equality Indicators Model. It will fill gaps in the collection of sex-disaggregated data and will be used to measure and steer consistent progress on health, education, leadership, economic opportunities and human rights.

## A HISTORIC MEETING OF GLOBAL LEADERS

With only one day to go before the formal adoption of the 2030 Agenda, UN Women seized the moment to propel its implementation forward. To mark the end of the 20th anniversary celebrations of the UN Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing and the launch of the Agenda, we exercised our global convening power to organize the first-ever meeting of Heads of State and Government on gender equality. The historic Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment brought together an extraordinary number of more than 70 world leaders at the United Nations for one powerful purpose: to commit to eliminating gaps in gender equality.

## GLOBAL LEADERS' MEETING ON GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN NUMBERS

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76

64 Heads of State and Government,  
8 Deputy Heads of State and Government  
and leaders of 4 regional organizations  
made commitments.

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By mid-2016,

93 countries

have made commitments to Step It Up  
for gender equality

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The hashtag #Planet5050 was used in  
42,000 tweets by 19,000 different users,  
and reached

76 million unique  
users

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700  
news clippings

spanning

80 countries

in major international, regional and  
national media outlets

*All commitments and more information about the Step It Up  
for Gender Equality campaign can be found at: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/get-involved/step-it-up>.*





Leader after leader took the podium to announce what they would do in their countries and globally to achieve gender equality by 2030 through the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda. News of the momentous event flashed around the world reaching 76 million people through social media and via 700 articles in 80 countries and major international media outlets.

The bold political move of the Global Leaders' Meeting has quickly gained traction with a total of 93 countries

*Above: The Paris Agreement on Climate Change includes a pivotal reference to women's empowerment. Women like Salote Tubuna in Fiji, whose house was destroyed during cyclone Pam, have been able to count on UN Women's support.*

As called for by UN Women, the Agenda unequivocally reaffirms that achieving gender equality, empowering all women and girls, and fully realizing their human rights are essential to achieving sustainable development. It reiterates the call for prioritizing investments

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