



ANNUAL REPORT  
2014-2015



**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.

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Foreword by the Executive Director

## Leveraging strategic partnerships for transformative action in gender equality

In 2015 we look to a new sustainable development agenda for ‘people, planet and prosperity’, with gender equality and women’s empowerment at its heart. UN Women is rising to that challenge and building upon a history of achievement, including major results for women and girls in 2014.

In everything we do, we recognize that success is founded on partnership. We have taken every opportunity to encourage the world to live up to the commitments made 20 years ago in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. In 2014, in a review of unprecedented scale, 167 countries undertook national stock-taking of their implementation of those gender equality promises. The process, and the

results, have supported an intense programme of mobilizing re-commitment to stepped-up, transformative action before 2020, culminating in a “Planet 50:50 by 2030”.

A growing share of our strategic partnerships are now starting to take root in the corporate sector as we work together on fostering women’s economic empowerment and calling on men to take responsibility and be accountable for change.

In September 2014 we launched the HeForShe campaign and generated millions of conversations both through social media and in person, as those who signed up also spread the word. The initiative “IMPACT 10x10x10”, launched in January 2015 at the World Economic Forum, engaged champions



within governments, corporations and universities as leaders of immediate change in each sector, using technology creatively to targeting influential issues like financial inclusion, quotas for political representation, wage parity and elimination of gender-based violence.

In our flagship report *Progress of the World's Women, 2015-2016: Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights* released in April 2015, we exposed the stark gender imbalances in the global economy, with new data, and recommended solutions for governments to implement. Work across the United Nations system with partners such as ITU and ILO is helping us to entrench domestic and international development policies that support women's access to decent work and equal pay and alleviate the crippling burden of unpaid care carried by women the world over.

Civil society, including trade unions and workers' movements, remains a bedrock partner for all our endeavours, both as the everyday voice of conscience and the invaluable "feet on the ground" in times of humanitarian crisis, such as during the Ebola Virus Disease outbreak, Tropical Cyclone Pam, and the growing number of complex, interconnected threats to international peace and security, in particular the emergence of a rising wave of violent extremist groups who are directly and explicitly targeting women's rights.

Ultimately, all our work is directed towards changing lives, and helping women and girls achieve their full potential. We are driving for better educational opportunities for girls and women, including through the increased use of technology, as well as measures to continue to increase and consolidate women's political leadership and ensure they are included in peacebuilding and recovery efforts during times of crisis. All of this requires increased and renewed investments, a strong commitment to improve data collection and analysis, accountability frameworks for leaders, and established responsibilities for all stakeholders, including the private sector.

This year's report provides examples that demonstrate UN Women's impact from the global to the individual level.

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ABOVE: *UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka visits Cairo's Safe City Programme, one of 21 that are part of UN Women's Safe Cities global initiative to end harassment and violence against women and girls in urban spaces. Around the world, from localities to global forums, UN Women forges partnerships and mobilizes people around a common purpose fundamental to sustainable development: the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment.*

PHOTO: UN Women/Mohamed Ezz Aldin

We are proud to have been part of the increase from less than 30 per cent to more than 50 per cent of women elected to the House of Representatives in Bolivia; the improved economic rights of 21,350 women home-based workers in Pakistan through increased access to registration services, food security and income-generating opportunities; the increase in Rwanda of capably-staffed one-stop crisis centres from 2 to 11 for women who have experienced violence; and the deployment of 23 experts in investigation and documentation of gender-based crimes to support international investigations or prosecutions in 12 different countries, leading directly to building cases against perpetrators of atrocities against women and girls. Across the world, UN Women is present, working with its partners, in its role as catalyst, supporter and leader for a gender-equal world.

The aspirations and actions set in motion this year will influence generations to come. We know this well and strive to achieve the maximum impact with the resources entrusted to us. We invest in evaluating our work so that we can continue to learn from what we do and to improve further. Independent evaluations by a number of key partners in 2014 confirmed our relevance and efficacy.

Gender equality remains underfunded on so many levels; yet a raised level of financing is essential to complete the ambitious agenda.

In this year's review process of the Financing for Development agenda UN Women is calling for transformative financing for gender equality. This requires unprecedented levels of funding—in scale, scope and quality. Prioritized, dedicated resource allocation and investment for gender equality are urgent imperatives. We will continue to work on aligning all sources of development funding and the institutions that manage them, whether public or private, domestic or international, with gender equality goals and we will promote multi-stakeholder partnerships as key to ensuring adequate and robust financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women.

As this report underscores, UN Women strongly commits to disrupting the status quo and collaboratively setting of new norms, delivering well-targeted programmes, and enlisting game-changing partners both within and outside the UN system to accelerate the pace of change.

Together we can usher in a new era that is more just, resilient, and inclusive of all.



# Raising the bar with global standards

## Celebrating a landmark

The 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action charged governments and people around the world with achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. It remains a landmark commitment, and UN Women seized its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary to step up action to make all parts of its far-reaching vision real in women's lives.

Early in 2015, the UN Commission on the Status of Women met to assess the status of global implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and to take stock of where women stand in the world today. An unprecedented 167 countries undertook national reviews, with findings summarized in an authoritative report issued by the UN Secretary-General. While governments set a high bar in Beijing, and there have been many advances, the report declared unequivocally that progress must accelerate.

Everywhere there were signs that more and more people recognize the gaps and are ready to speed up change. To mark Beijing+20 leading up to the Commission, UN Women ignited global public and political engagement with its campaign titled "Empowering Women, Empower Humanity—Picture It!" Through online and news media, it reached over 280 million people, inspiring an ever-growing circle of interest and action. A media compact with over 30 leading global outlets led to scaled-up, high-quality coverage of key gender equality concerns.

Forty events on the Beijing Platform for Action's 12 critical areas of concern, held around the world, convened leading experts, advocates and opinion-shapers to map future directions on issues from education to jobs to political participation or media. These included, for example, a partnership with the Geena Davis Institute that produced the first-ever global study on the often limited, discriminatory portrayal of women in films.

The Commission brought government representatives and a record 4,500 NGO participants together for a vibrant discussion and debate. Over 650 events covered topics from increased financing for gender equality to the roles of men and boys. Stock exchanges in New York, Cairo, Warsaw, Stockholm, Istanbul, Lagos and Bombay rang their bells for gender equality, and thousands of people marched in the streets of New York City with the call "Planet 50-50 by 2030: Step It Up for Gender Equality."

At a star-studded event to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in New York, leaders from the arts, philanthropy, politics,

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ABOVE: UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka (centre) and Deputy Executive Director Lakshmi Puri (right), joined by Secretary General of La Francophonie Michaëlle Jean (left), led thousands of activists to march through New York on International Women's Day. Their call: "Planet 50-50 by 2030: Step It Up for Gender Equality!"

PHOTO: UN Women/Ryan Brown

Setting global norms and standards is a critical step towards action to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment. Through annual meetings of key UN bodies as well as other intergovernmental negotiations, UN Women offers expertise and evidence, good practices and lessons learned, to help governments make commitments that are fully aligned with women's rights. We call for specific attention to be paid to gender equality, and for gender dimensions to be integrated across all issues fundamental to human progress.

business and activism insisted that gender inequality have a 2030 expiry date and urged concrete actions to “Step it Up.” Media coverage during the Commission, including on International Women's Day, totaled 5,000 news reports in 90 countries, while social media engagement reached nearly 1.2 billion unique users.

The Commission concluded with governments committing in a political declaration to six core strategies to accelerate progress towards gender equality. They agreed to significantly ramp up investment in empowering women and ending discrimination, and pledged to do more to implement laws, transform discriminatory stereotypes and enhance data to track progress. Starting in 2016, the Commission will devote a segment of its session to discussions among government ministers, a signal of strong political commitment.

### Advancing regional commitments

Preparations for Beijing+20 included not only 167 in-depth national reports, but also progress reviews for all regions. In the Arab States region, for example, UN Women joined the League of **Arab States** and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia in 2015 to conduct the region's most comprehensive review of Beijing to date—21 out of 22 countries participated. It reaffirmed Member State commitment to all 12 areas of concern in the Beijing Platform for Action and explicitly committed to provide resources to implement it.

The regional review built on consultations, hosted a year prior by the League of Arab States and UN Women resulting in the Cairo Declaration, considered the most progressive political commitment to women in the region to date. In a transformative shift, it pushed forward agreement on upholding women's reproductive health and rights, long a contentious topic, and issued the first formal call for referring all cases of violence against women to formal judicial systems. The meeting marked the first time that the League of Arab States considered civil society perspectives in talks on gender equality and women's empowerment.

### Putting gender equality at the centre of new and historic agendas

UN Women has been the major global advocate and maker of the substantive case for putting women and girls at the centre of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, slated for completion at a Summit of Heads of State and Government in September 2015. Governments responded to our early call for a gender equality goal as well as the integration of gender equality considerations in targets under other goals of the agenda.

Intersecting with the post-2015 agenda are historic talks on financing for development and climate change. UN Women has led calls for dramatically scaling up investments in gender equality and the empowerment of women, including by ensuring that official development assistance helps advance the Beijing Platform for Action. We urged recognition of the gender dimensions of climate change as a general principle, and specifically with regard to adapting to climate shifts, building capacities to respond, technology transfer and financing. A new draft climate agreement to be considered at the end of 2015 now refers to all of these elements. For the 2015 Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, UN Women successfully called for governments to agree to include gender equality dimensions in all related policies and practices, such as early warning systems, and response and recovery efforts. At the 2014 UN Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, UN Women had a major part in ensuring that the agreement, known as the SAMOA Pathway, recognizes the centrality of gender equality and women's empowerment to sustainable development, spells out commitments to women's special needs and roles in key areas such as water and sanitation, and vows to end violence against women.

UN Women's concerted advocacy on the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the World Summit on the Information Society persuaded governments to call for closing the technology gender divide, including by using innovations to expand women's opportunities in employment and as entrepreneurs.





# Leading the way to parity in politics

## Parliaments

**Turkey's** June 2015 elections brought encouraging news as women took nearly 18 per cent of parliamentary seats, up from just over 14 per cent. While this remains far below parity or even the global average, it signals the stirrings of change beginning within the soaring white marble walls of the Grand National Assembly.

now serve on parliamentary bodies, including the powerful Committee on Planning and Budgeting. Greater gender responsiveness became a plank in the Assembly's institutional strategy. Turkey's first comprehensive gender review of fundamental legislation put proposals on the table to usher in changes in laws related to local administration, education and employment among other areas.

## Elections

Gender imbalances in political representation can sometimes be dramatically redressed during election processes. In **Bolivia**, engagement with the electoral tribunal and UN partners to advocate for political parties to comply with new regulations on gender parity led to spectacular results in the 2014 elections. Bolivia became

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