



## Key Messages, IWD 2016

### **On International Women's Day, Step It Up for Planet 50-50: Gender Equality by 2030.**

International Women's Day comes at a pivotal moment in history, with gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls having been recognized as a precondition to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A stand-alone Sustainable Development Goal on gender equality aims to end discrimination and violence against women and girls and ensure equal participation and opportunities in all spheres of life; important provisions for women's empowerment are included in most other goals.

In conjunction with the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, [no less than 91 Governments](#), most of them represented at the Heads of State and Government level, answered UN Women's call for action to Step It Up for Gender Equality and pledged concrete and measurable actions to make strides towards gender equality in their countries.

Together, the Sustainable Development Agenda and the Step It Up commitments are an unprecedented expression of the political will by governments for the gender equality agenda. Now is the time to ensure that the commitments made translate into reality for women and girls on the ground.

On International Women's Day, we call for their reaffirmation and implementation through visible and measurable actions under the motto: Planet 50-50: Step It Up for Gender Equality.

Empowered women and girls make for empowered nations, stronger economies, and healthier societies.

- If all women completed primary education, there would be 66% fewer maternal deaths, saving 189,000 lives per year and if all women completed secondary education in low and low-middle income countries, the under-5 mortality rate would fall by 49%, saving 2.8 million lives every year<sup>i</sup>.
- If all girls completed primary school in sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia, the number of girls getting married by age 15 would fall by 14 per cent; with secondary education, 64 per cent fewer girls would get married.<sup>ii</sup>
- The International Labour Organization estimates that the total cost of gender inequality in employment across Asia alone is 45 billion dollars a year<sup>iii</sup>. If women were to participate in the economy identically to men, it would add up to \$28 trillion, or 26 percent, to annual global GDP by 2025<sup>iv</sup>.
- When women influence peace negotiations, they are much more likely to end in agreement and to endure. The chances of the agreement lasting 15 years goes up by as much as 35 per cent<sup>v</sup>.



## PLANET 50-50 BY 2030 STEP IT UP FOR GENDER EQUALITY



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- Women grow 40 per cent of food worldwide<sup>vi</sup> and are household managers of energy. By engaging women in climate action, we can build a healthier planet.

Although we have witnessed significant progress in advancing women's rights in the last decade, there are persistent legal and cultural structures, social norms and gender stereotypes that are holding women and girls back. Sustainable development needs planet 50-50.

- As of 2014, 143 countries guaranteed equality between men and women in their constitutions<sup>vii</sup>, but in practice, women continue to face discrimination on a daily basis. We must repeal discriminatory laws and enact laws that promote gender equality.
- At least 125 countries have outlawed sexual harassment and domestic violence<sup>viii</sup>, yet 1 in 3 women worldwide experience violence<sup>ix</sup>. 700 million women alive today were married before the age 18<sup>x</sup>, and 200 million girls and women have suffered female genital mutilation (FGM)<sup>xi</sup>. Laws that are in place must be implemented, survivors must be supported in their recovery, and prevention strategies must be prioritized to stop this violence from happening in the first place.
- Out of the 781 million adults and 126 million youth worldwide who are illiterate, more than 60% are women<sup>xii</sup>. We need substantial investment in improving girls' access to quality education, beyond secondary school, including in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, so that education paves the way for decent work and equal opportunities.
- Today, only 22 per cent of the world's parliamentarians are women<sup>xiii</sup>. At the current rate of progress, it will take another 50 years to reach gender equality in government positions. We must make sure that there is equal representation of women in decision-making and leadership in political, social and economic spheres.
- The global gender pay gap stands at 24 percent<sup>xiv</sup>. It could take another 118 years to close this gap, if steps are not taken immediately to reduce it and to ensure equal pay for equal work. At the same time, women do nearly two and a half times more unpaid care and domestic work than men.
- More than 140 million women have unmet needs for family planning<sup>xv</sup>. Meeting the global agenda for better health cannot be accomplished without ensuring women's access to reproductive health and rights.
- Women and girls are among the hardest hit in conflicts, disasters and displacements, and are critical agents for the recovery of their communities. Their needs, priorities and leadership must be an indispensable component of humanitarian response, climate action and peacebuilding.

Reaching Planet 50-50 is everyone's business. We call upon men and boys to join women and girls everywhere on International Women's Day and say NO to discrimination and violence against women. On this International Women's Day, and in the years that follow, the rallying call for action to Step It Up for Gender Equality will escalate to reach a Planet 50-50 – no later than 2030.



PLANET 50-50 BY 2030  
**STEP IT UP**  
FOR GENDER EQUALITY



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## Data Sources:

<sup>i</sup> UNESCO, [Education for All Global Monitoring Report](#), (2013-20014)

<sup>ii</sup> UNESCO, [Education for All Global Monitoring Report](#), (2013-20014)

<sup>iii</sup> ILO, ADB, [Women and Labour Markets in Asia: Rebalancing for Gender Equality](#), (2011)

<sup>iv</sup> McKinsey Global Institute (MGI) report, [The power of parity: How advancing women's equality can add \\$12 trillion to global growth](#), (2015)

<sup>v</sup> UN Women, [Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, and Securing the Peace: A Global Study on Implementation of Security Council resolution 1325](#), (2015)

<sup>vi</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), [The State of Food and Agriculture](#), (2014), p. 35.

<sup>vii</sup> UN Women, [Constitutional Database](#), (2014)

<sup>viii</sup> UN Women, [Progress of the World's Women](#), (2015)

<sup>ix</sup> World Health Organization, Department of Reproductive Health and Research, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, South African Medical Research Council (2013). Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence

<sup>x</sup> UNICEF, [Ending Child Marriage: Progress and Prospects](#) (2014)

<sup>xi</sup> UNICEF, [Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: A Global Concern](#), (2016)

<sup>xii</sup> UNESCO, [International Literacy Data](#), (2014)

<sup>xiii</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union, ["Women in national parliaments, as at 1 August 2015"](#)

<sup>xiv</sup> World Economic Forum, [The Global Gender Gap Report](#) (2015)

<sup>xv</sup> United Nations Population Division Data on Unmet Need among Married Women and Married Women of Reproductive Age, 15-49