



Antonio Guterres UN General

ANTONIO GUTERRES UN SECRETARY-GENERAL MESSAGE ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

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in international organizations, including the United Nations. Gender equality is enshrined in countless laws, and harmful practices like female genital mutilation and child marriage have been outlawed in many countries. But serious obstacles remain if we are to address the historic power imbalances that underpin discrimination and exploitation.

More than a billion women around the world lack legal protection against domestic sexual violence. The global gender pay gap is 23 per cent, rising to 40 per cent in rural areas, and the unpaid work done by many women goes unrecognized. Women's representation in national parliaments stands, on average, at less than one quarter, and in boardrooms it is even lower. Without concerted action, millions more girls will be subjected to genital mutilation over the next decade.

Where laws exist, they are often ignored, and women who pursue legal redress are doubted, denigrated and dismissed. We now know that sexual harassment and abuse have been thriving in workplaces, public spaces and private homes, in countries that pride themselves on their record of gender equality.

Achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls is the unfinished business of our time, and the greatest human rights challenge in our world. The activism and advocacy of generations of women has borne fruit. There are more girls in school than ever before; more women are doing paid work and in senior roles in the private sector, academia, politics and

tenure last year, I have set change in motion at UN headquarters, in our peacekeeping missions and in all our offices worldwide. We have now reached gender parity for the first time in my senior management team, and I am determined to achieve this throughout the organization. I am totally committed to zero tolerance of sexual harassment and have set out plans to improve reporting and accountability. We are working closely with countries around the world to prevent and address sexual exploitation and abuse by staff in peacekeeping missions, and to support victims.

We at the United Nations stand with women around the world as they fight to overcome the injustices they face – whether they are rural women dealing with wage discrimination, urban women organizing for change, women refugees at risk of exploitation and abuse, or women who experience intersecting forms of discrimination: widows, indigenous women, women with disabilities and women who do not conform to gender norms.

Women's empowerment is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals means progress for all women, everywhere. The Spotlight initiative

launched jointly with the European Union will focus resources on eliminating violence against women and girls, a prerequisite for equality and empowerment.

Let me be clear: this is not a favour to women. Gender equality is a human rights issue, but it is also in all our interests: men and boys, women and girls. Gender inequality and discrimination against women harms us all.

There is ample evidence that investing in women is the most effective way to lift communities, companies, and even countries. Women's participation makes peace agreements stronger, societies more resilient and economies more vigorous. Where women face discrimination, we often find practices and beliefs that are detrimental to all. Paternity leave, laws against domestic violence and equal pay legislation benefit everyone. At this crucial moment for women's rights, it is time for men to stand with women, listen to them and learn from them. Transparency and accountability are essential if women are to reach their full potential and lift all of us, in our communities, societies and economies.

I am proud to be part of this movement, and I hope it continues to resonate within the United Nations and around the world.



STATEMENT BY PHUMZILE
MLAMBO-NGCUKA, UN
UNDER-SECRETARY-
GENERAL AND EXECUTIVE
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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S
DAY

TIME IS NOW:
Rural and Urban Activists
Transforming Women's Lives

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka
Executive Director of UN
Women

Date: Thursday, March 1, 2018

This year's theme captures the vibrant life of the women activists whose passion and commitment have won women's rights over the generations, and successfully brought change. We celebrate an unprecedented global movement for women's rights, equality, safety and justice, recognizing the tireless work of activists who have been central to this global push for gender equality.

What we see today is a remarkable gathering of strength among women all over the world, demonstrating the power of speaking with one voice, as they call for opportunity and accountability, drawing momentum from grassroots networks and coalitions that stretch right up to government leadership. These movements grow from the work of multigenerational activists—from the late feminist human rights leader Asma Jahangir of Pakistan, to the powerful new generation represented by young women like Jaha Dukureh of The Gambia, UN Women's Regional Goodwill Ambassador for Africa on ending FGM and child marriage.

Healthy societies have a wide mix of voices and influences that provide the checks and balances, the differing threads of experience and perspectives, and the debate that shapes good decision-making. Where voices are missing, there is an important gap in the fabric of society. When those quietened voices count in the millions, we know there is something wrong with our world. Similarly, as we see and hear those voices rise in strength and solidarity, we feel the power of something right.

We salute those who have bravely spoken out to gain access to justice, such as those from the #MeToo movement, who in recent months have found their voice in social media in more than 85 countries to expose those who have preyed on the less powerful and shown how when women support one another, they help to overcome stigma and ensure that their stories are believed.

We commend the women who spoke out in the International Criminal Court where their testimonies have held to account those who used rape as a weapon of war. We celebrate activists who campaigned for equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people, and we recognize those who advocated for legal reform in countries such as Tunisia, to end

The time is NOW.

MINISTRY OF GENDER, LABOUR AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT ON THE OCCASION TO MARK THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY, 2018

Theme: "Empowerment of Rural Women and Girls: Opportunities and Challenges"

Venue: Busuubizi Core Primary Teachers' College (PTC), Mityana District.



H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni,
President of the Republic of Uganda



Hon. Janet B. Mukwaya (Hajjat)
Minister of Gender, Labour & Social Development



Hon. Peace Mutuuzo Rogis
Minister of State for Gender and Culture
Affairs.



Mr Pius Bigirimana
Permanent Secretary Ministry of Gender, Labour and
Social Development

As all Ugandans have come to appreciate and look forward to, we shall today, the 8th of March 2018, commemorate International Women's Day (IWD). This is the Day that we dedicate to taking stock of the progress made towards women's full and equal dignity as well as protection and promotion of their rights in all spheres of life as enshrined in our Constitution. On this Day we also recommit ourselves to further actions towards attainment of these goals.

The global theme for this year, "Time is Now: Rural and urban activists transforming women's lives" presents an opportunity to shore up the global movement for women's rights, equality and justice. At country level, the theme chosen for this year's commemoration is "Empowerment of Rural Women and Girls: Opportunities and Challenges".

This theme recognizes the fact that although all women living in either the rural and urban face similar challenges, rural communities have unique needs that require special attention. According to the National Population and Housing Census Analytical Report, 2017, 76 percent of Ugandans are rural based and 24% are urban dwellers. Hence the majority of women and girls, who form 51% of the entire population, live in rural areas.

One (1) in every 7 (seven) households obtain their livelihood from subsistence farming, with a majority (82%) of these households residing

in rural areas. More rural households (90%) participate in agriculture compared to the urban households (46%).

This evidence shows us that rural women and girls in Uganda constitute a larger portion of the people whose activities yield economic production, care and support to families as well as engaging in community management activities. They also fuel local and national economies through their contribution to agriculture and rural enterprises. A large proportion of them are involved in agricultural work either as unpaid or contributing family workers. Therefore, the empowerment of rural women and girls is not only central to the well-being of individuals, families and rural communities, but also to overall socio-economic and inclusive development of the country.

Furthermore, the Public Finance Management Act (2015) provides for ring-fencing finance allocation for programmes for gender equality and empowerment of women. As a flagship Programme for women's economic empowerment, the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP) managed by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development had by December 2017 disbursed a total of UGX 18,480,722,372 to finance 3,499 women projects across the country.

These projects have a total membership of 44,570 women directly benefiting from the funds.

The Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP) has financed a total of 13,107 projects supporting 163,130 beneficiaries, of whom 74,140 (45%) are female. By end of 2017, the Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment of Elderly Persons (SAGE) programme had benefited 153,221 older persons of which 91,277 (60%) are female and 61,944 (40%) are males.

Investment in health infrastructure across the country has improved accessibility of women to health facilities to obtain specialized services such as antenatal care, immunization, family planning, adolescent reproductive health services and HIV/AIDS care and counseling. Regarding water and sanitation, over 78% of the households accessed improved water sources in 2016/17, an increase from 68% in 2012/13. Seventy seven percent (77%) households in rural areas had access to improved water sources compared to 80% in urban areas. Policies that support girls' education such as the Universal Primary Education (UPE), the Universal Secondary Education (USE) and the Gender in Education Policy have led to increased literacy rates, enrollment ratios in primary and secondary schools as well as attainment. Despite these milestones, there still exist challenges and gaps to be filled.

Women and girls in the rural areas comprise the majority of people living in poverty and



Minister Janet Mukwaya with a YLP-funded youth group that produces soap

experience multi-dimensional inequalities. Rural women face challenges in terms of access to productive resources such as owning land, accessing agricultural inputs, water, transport, health care and education, financing and technologies for climate resilience. They also face disadvantages and exclusion rooted in the power inequalities associated with gender roles.

Rural women and girls continue to face serious challenges in carrying out their multiple productive and reproductive roles within their families and communities. Much of their labour remains unpaid and unrecognized, including their disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work. For example, rural women and girls spend more time and effort in collecting water and fuel, which compromise their education and income-generating opportunities. There are still some customary, traditional and religious practices which discriminate against women and girls and undermine the full implementation of some laws. Negative cultural practices like child and forced marriages, teenage pregnancies, Female Genital Mutilation continue to affect the girl-child. In spite of the existence of laws on children, awareness of these laws among people in communities is still minimal.

Gender inequalities that constrain women's decision-making power and participation in their households and their communities still exist and evidence shows that despite the progress made in tackling HIV and AIDS, prevalence is

still high among women and particularly young women. Appreciation goes to all stakeholders for their contribution to the process of women's empowerment and call on you to keep up the momentum.

As we commemorate this day, let us not forget to front and escalate those actions that bring more opportunities to rural women and girls, particularly;

- Extension of financial services, creating employment opportunities and ensuring land security.
- Prevent and respond to any kind of violence against women and girls.
- Scale up use of modern ICT tools among women. They play an effective role in exchange of critical information.
- Boost water, sanitation and healthcare services in rural areas, and lastly,
- Eliminate negative cultural practices that promote violence against women and girls such as child-marriages, teenage pregnancies, Female Genital Mutilation, unfair distribution of property and other forms of gender-based violence.

Wishing you all fruitful celebrations.

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