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EQUALITY IN LAW FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS BY 2030

A MULTISTAKEHOLDER STRATEGY FOR ACCELERATED ACTION

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**LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE SECTION
UN WOMEN**

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CSO	Civil society organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNAMID	United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

A CALL TO ACTION

In 1979, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) laid out a blueprint for women's rights, including commitments to embody the principle of equality between men and women in law and in practice. In the years since, the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development have built on these commitments and reinforced the global drive to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women.

We are fast approaching 2020, when the world must review the progress that has been made in 25 years of implementing the Beijing Platform for Action and its 12 critical areas of concern. This means taking a hard look at the laws, policies and norms that govern our societies, how they are enforced and the ways in which laws and practices enable or hinder the rights of women and girls. Assessments must in turn lead to action. *Equality in Law for Women and Girls by 2030* marks a timely and important contribution to that process.

Equality in law is crucial to gender equality, as women and girls look to the laws of their State to protect, fulfil and enforce their rights. Laws that discriminate and deny them equal rights with men and boys betray their trust in society and signal that gender discrimination is acceptable, normal and expected. Women and girls left behind by discriminatory laws are often permanently excluded from the benefits of development. Conversely, the implementation of good laws that conform to the human rights

revision of discriminatory laws is imperative, along with the work to more quickly enact and put into action laws that enhance existing legal protections and ensure backing by adequate resources. A law that is not being implemented is not working for those who may need it most.

Thus, the partners issuing this strategy for equality in law are calling for full legal protection for women and girls, in all sectors, in line with CEDAW, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Among other aspects of discriminatory laws, we urge the immediate repeal of:

- “Clawback clauses” and other constitutional provisions that override non-discrimination guarantees;
- Personal laws that deny women equal rights as spouses by restricting their ability to exercise agency in the management and distribution of marital property, choice of residence, parental rights and responsibilities, and the right to inherit equally with men and boys;
- Discriminatory civil laws that deny women the ability to apply for a passport without the permission of their husbands or transfer their nationality to their child or foreign spouse and place restrictions on physical mobility, employment, decisions on where to live and sexual and reproductive autonomy;
- Labour and social security laws that perpetuate discriminatory pay structures, divisions of labour and pension schemes, while at the same time

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