



# STEP IT UP FOR GENDER EQUALITY:

How business and philanthropic leaders can be game changers for women



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

Imagine a world where everyone has an equal chance, where all women can access decent jobs and equal pay, where caring for the family and home is shared equitably, where there is fair gender representation in political, economic and social leadership, and where violence against women and girls is no longer a daily threat. That is UN Women's vision of Planet 50:50 by 2030.

UN Women works for a world where:

- Women and girls live free from violence and harassment, in the home, at work, in public, online
- All forms of government, business, institutions, academia and societies can be led by women and men equally
- Women are not held back by motherhood penalties in the workplace or unpaid care duties at home
- The next generation onwards has equal opportunities for a promising future.

We can create a more equal, sustainable, peaceful and prosperous world in our lifetime - but only when we meet our gender equality commitments.

# The United Nations Sustainable Development Summit 2015 marks a turning point for the world. We invite you to take your place on the global stage.

During the Summit, for the very first time in history, Heads of State and Government gather to make commitments to gender equality at the **Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment**.

But Governments cannot do it alone. As leaders in business and philanthropy, **you too have an active, central role to play** in “transforming our world” to achieve gender equality and women’s empowerment under the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Development is no longer about “aid” or “charity” from outside. It’s about how we all choose to do business and how we organize philanthropic strategy, business, industry and society to reflect principles of equality on an everyday level, so they permeate our cultures, our values, our performance.

The stakes are high. We know that we cannot reach our goals unless women and girls are on an equal footing with men and boys.

We stand at a pivotal moment of history that will turn the tide now and for generations to come. You have the historic opportunity to drive transformative change through your ideas, actions and financial commitments, and to show that private and public leaders stand firmly together in the quest for true and lasting gender equality.

**Now is the time to take these ideas to the next level.**



# THE INVESTMENT CASE FOR ACTION

## THE PROBLEM

Our dream of a better world is held back by:

- The continued prevalence of violence against women and girls
- Limitations on women's opportunities for leadership and political participation
- Unequal pay and a lack of social policies and flexible work options for men and women in the workplace
- Poverty, war and natural disasters, all of which contribute to population displacement and disproportionately affect women and girls
- Discriminatory attitudes and deeply ingrained social norms that minimize the status of girls and women and limit their ability to learn, get decent work and thrive
- A lack of transformative financing to implement the solutions to these problems

**Without gender equality and women's empowerment it is impossible to establish fair political systems, alleviate extreme poverty or ensure comprehensive responses and recovery from war, conflict and disasters.**

Whether it is an infant girl unregistered and without official identity or status from birth onwards; a young girl held back from school to help her mother, unpaid, to care for the home and family members, or to become a child bride; a woman attacked walking home from the market or the well; a pregnant mother without access to health care or family planning; an elderly widow thrown off the family land once her husband dies; a talented entrepreneur unable to access financial services for her business; capable, experienced village elders excluded from peace and reconstruction negotiations; or a brilliant female leader prevented by death threats from transforming a nation, the cost of gender inequality to companies and nations is great.

**Gender inequality and lack of empowerment means a lack of progress for ALL.**

## THE FINANCIAL NEED: THE GENDER EQUALITY FINANCING GAP

There can be no gender equality without investment. Yet, at the same time as the world has signed up to strive together on a new sustainable development agenda that has gender equality and women's empowerment at its heart, there is a **large financing gap**. This can be seen at individual country level, where some national action plans for gender equality fall short of as much as 90 per cent of their financing. There is growing recognition, extensively backed by research, of the way in which economies and societies are failing to thrive in the absence of empowered women. This has reached a new universality in the 2030 Agenda. However, that knowledge has not so far translated into targeted investment.

**As the world moves forward with the 2030 agenda, women and girls cannot be left behind.**



## The Investment Gap

At the national level, resources allocated to gender equality are consistently low. In 2013, 13 surveyed countries reported that less than 0.4 per cent of the total budget was allocated to ministries or agencies that address women's empowerment (UN Women, 2014).

In OECD-DAC reviews, only 5 per cent of all aid targeted gender equality as a principal objective in 2012-2013. In 2013 just 2 per cent of bilateral aid going to women's economic empowerment targeted gender equality as a principal objective. Commitments in this area as a share of total bilateral aid to the economic and productive sectors have remained flat since 2007-2008.

In a 2011 study by AWID, the majority of women's organizations sampled had never received multiyear funding; and their financial sustainability was shown to be compromised by low assets, savings, and safety nets. Half of the organizations in the sample had no assets, and only 28 per cent received core funding.

The United Nations founded UN Women with the expectation that it would need US\$ 500 million to operate as it was designed. Yet to date, only 0.27 per cent of the United Nations regular budget goes to support the entity, leaving it US\$ 170 million short of even its first financial target.



**“The unlocking of women’s potential in the global economy may well prove to be the key factor that tips the balance from a future of weak growth to one of sustained, inclusive and improving growth over time.”**

**– Women in the Economy: Global Growth Generators, Citigroup**

## INVESTING IN WOMEN AND GIRLS YIELDS DIVIDENDS

**Investing in women and girls is not just the right thing to do, it makes sound economic sense.**

- Evidence from a range of countries shows that increasing the share of household income controlled by women, either through their own earnings or cash transfers, changes spending in ways that benefit children (The World Bank, 2012).
- Increasing women's and girls' education contributes to higher economic growth. Increased educational attainment accounts for about 50 per cent of the economic growth in OECD countries over the past 50 years, of which over half is due to improvements in girls' education. (OECD, 2010).
- Evidence shows that companies with more women on their boards outperform companies with fewer or no women directors. The Credit Suisse Research Institute found that net income growth over the past six years averaged 14 per cent for companies with women directors as opposed to 10 per cent for those with no female board members.
- Ending violence against women has a quantitative economic benefit. Globally, the total economic costs of intimate partner violence has been estimated to be at least 5 per cent of global GDP. (Copenhagen Consensus Center, 2014)
- Women who experience violence are less able to contribute to productive activities, to gain skills and experience and thus to increase their productivity and earning power. Studies have found that women who are victims of violence are likely to miss work due to injuries and earn up to 70 per cent less than non-abused women (Chatham House, 2010).

## The Investment Case: Equality for Women is Progress for All

- **If female employment were to match male employment, GDP could increase everywhere, for example, by 27 per cent in the Middle East and North Africa and by 19 per cent in South Asia. (Progress of the World's Women, 2015)**
- **The International Monetary Fund has shown that “there is ample evidence that when women are able to develop their full labour market potential, there can be significant macroeconomic gains” (Elborgh-Woytek et al., 2013)**
- **The International Labour Organization estimates that of the 865 million women worldwide who have the potential to contribute more fully to their national economies, 812 million live in emerging and developing nations (ILO, 2014)**
- **Nearly one billion women will enter the global economy in the next decade. They constitute both a powerful new economic force and an emerging market comparable in scale to India or China (Fortune Magazine, 2012).**

# WHY INVEST IN GENDER EQUALITY WITH UN WOMEN?

UN Women was created as part of the UN reform agenda, in the recognition that where there is fragmentation there is no sustained progress, bringing together resources and a mandate for change for half of the world's population – women and girls. That change cannot come about without involving the other half of humanity as well. Together, women and men, girls and boys, can create a better world for all; shared humanity uplifts us all.

**This vision has partnership at its core.**

## **THERE IS NO OTHER GLOBAL OR NATIONAL ORGANIZATION LIKE UN WOMEN.**

Building on generations of work by women's movements, UN Women plays a unique role in elevating gender equality and women's empowerment issues to the top of the global political and economic agenda and setting the international standards for achieving women's full human rights. We coordinate across the UN system and engage with a vast spectrum of partners in different spheres, including world leaders, governments, academics, religious leaders, the media, corporations, civil society, and individuals to determine and best practices and spur their implementation. We are constantly working on the removal of discriminatory and restrictive policies and practices, to improve legislation for gender equality, and to change societal norms through our advocacy, programmes and successful operations in the field.

UN Women has the diplomatic authority and credibility to do this. In September 2015, for the first time in history, more than 70 world leaders gather at our invitation to commit to making changes that will substantively build towards irreversible gender equality.

We have the grassroots links to a massive global network of NGO workers and volunteers who carry this work right to the furthest villages.

We have the physical presence to carry this out, with offices in more than 70 countries.

We have a growing and committed network of private sector partners who can make transformative change in the workplaces of millions of staff, and extend influence further through making conscious decisions about the choice of suppliers and distributors.

Where we need truly massive change, we need a kind of universal revolution that ultimately involves us all, men and boys as well as women and girls.

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