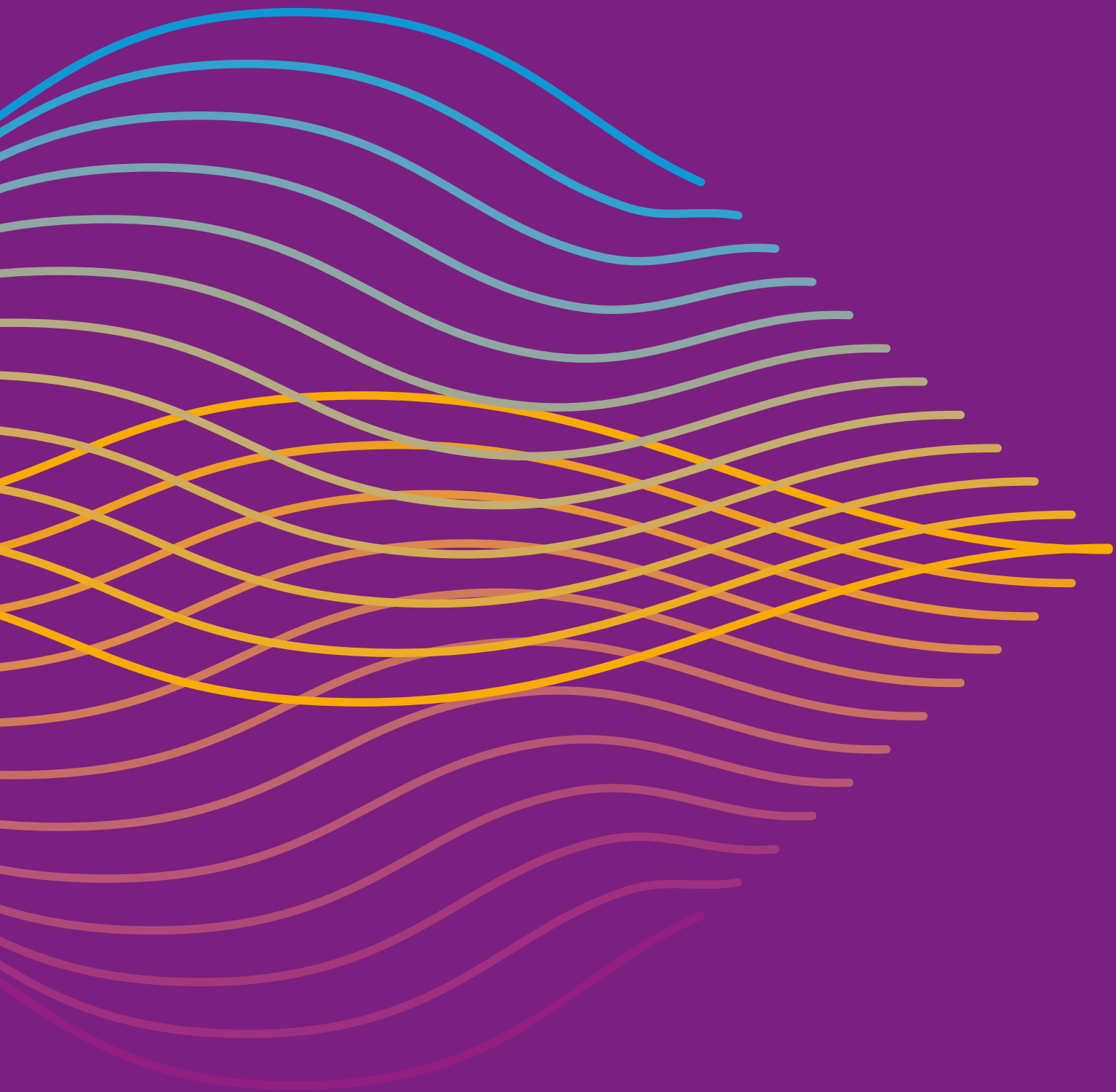


PROGRESS OF THE WORLD'S WOMEN 2015-2016



TRANSFORMING  
ECONOMIES,  
REALIZING RIGHTS



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# FOREWORD

BY BAN KI-MOON

SECRETARY-GENERAL  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS



A quality education, a decent job, access to healthcare and a life free from violence and discrimination are necessary foundations for women and girls to be equal partners with men and boys in every aspect of life.

*Progress of the World's Women: Transforming economies, realizing rights* is a timely reminder of the importance of women's economic and social rights to building strong and resilient economies and societies, today and for future generations. It shows where governments and the international community have fallen short on realizing the full inclusion of women and girls and it illustrates how and where immediate action can redress this critical imbalance.

It is fitting that *Progress of the World's Women 2015* is published when the world is poised to embark on a transformative post-2015 sustainable development agenda. The report's findings and recommendations underline the need to respect and promote the specific rights and needs of women and girls, and to integrate gender equality in all dimensions of sustainable development.

I commend *Progress of the World's Women* to a wide readership. The report's authoritative analysis, sharp insights and compelling stories make it essential reading for those committed to a more just and equal world.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ki Moon Ban". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first and last names being more prominent than the middle name.

Ban Ki-moon

# FOREWORD

BY PHUMZILE  
MLAMBO-NGCUKA

UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL  
AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
UN WOMEN



In 2014, an unprecedented number of countries provided reports on the extent to which they had been able to implement the Beijing Platform for Action, adopted 20 years ago in 1995 as a global blueprint for the achievement of gender equality. These 167 reports, and the associated regional and global reviews, gave us the clearest reading to date of the status of gender equality across the world.

*Progress of the World's Women: Transforming economies, realizing rights*, provides a timely, action-oriented counterpoint to the Beijing+20 findings. With a view to changing both economic and social institutions, it distils and confronts the most glaring gaps between the laws and policies that guarantee equal rights for women and girls, and the reality on the ground. The drive to achieve substantive equality – making rights real for women – is at the heart of this Progress report, and it provides the evidence and recommendations for public action to achieve it.

Our analysis shows that economic and social policies can contribute to fairer and more gender-equal societies, as well as stronger and more prosperous economies, if they are designed and implemented with women's rights at their centre. For example, to increase women's access to decent work, the

removal of formal legal barriers to their employment is important, but we also need measures that free up women's time, such as affordable childcare options and investments in basic infrastructure. We need to enable shifts both great and small in social norms, so that men can take on care work and engage in other areas that foster and demonstrate altered attitudes of responsibility.

As Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has said, ours is the first generation with the potential to end poverty. Equally important, and intrinsically linked to that goal, it is in this generation's reach to transform gender relations, to empower women and girls, and humanity as a whole.

We know what needs to be done to achieve equality and a 50:50 Planet by 2030. Together with the findings of the Beijing +20 review, let this report be a call to urgent and sustained action, frontloaded for the next five years, to start real, visible change, especially in the lives of the most marginalized. My hope is that everyone will be inspired to be part of a re-energized and growing movement for gender equality. With determined people from all walks of life, and with more determined leaders, gender equality can be a defining achievement of the first quarter of the 21st century.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka

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