

ANNUAL REPORT 2012-2013



UN WOMEN IS THE UN ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN. A GLOBAL CHAMPION FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS, UN WOMEN WAS ESTABLISHED TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS ON MEETING THEIR NEEDS WORLDWIDE.

UN WOMEN SUPPORTS UN MEMBER STATES AS THEY SET GLOBAL STANDARDS FOR ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY, AND WORKS WITH GOVERNMENTS AND CIVIL SOCIETY TO DESIGN LAWS, POLICIES, PROGRAMMES AND SERVICES NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT THESE STANDARDS. IT STANDS BEHIND WOMEN'S EQUAL PARTICIPATION IN ALL ASPECTS OF LIFE, FOCUSING ON FIVE PRIORITY AREAS: INCREASING WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION; ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN; ENGAGING WOMEN IN ALL ASPECTS OF PEACE AND SECURITY PROCESSES; ENHANCING WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT; AND MAKING GENDER EQUALITY CENTRAL TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND BUDGETING. UN WOMEN ALSO COORDINATES AND PROMOTES THE UN SYSTEM'S WORK IN ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY.

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Ending gender inequality should be foremost among global and national goals.

*Photo: João Pádua/AFP-Getty Images*

# A GOAL FOR EMPOWERMENT AND EQUALITY

Gender inequality, despite much progress, remains among the greatest challenges of our times. Fed by deeply embedded discrimination against women and girls, it is wrong and costly, whether it interrupts economic progress, undercuts peace or restricts the quality of leadership. Ending it should be foremost among global and national goals.

UN Women, as the world's champion of gender equality and women's empowerment, works to stop the causes and reduce the consequences of gender inequality. Our unique mandate means that we help in establishing international norms and standards, and then assist countries to take actions making these real in women's lives. We cannot do this alone. Through coordination with our UN partners and our close relationships with governments, civil society and others, we leverage knowledge, resources and influence, so that gender equality has its rightful role at the centre of all efforts to advance human progress.

As this report highlights, our programmes have increased women's leadership, enlarged economic opportunities, stopped gender-based violence, brought women into peace and security processes, and increased funding for gender equality in national budgets.

In 2012, with UN Women's assistance, women gained seats in seven national elections. Twenty-six countries reformed laws and policies increasing women's access to economic assets and social protection, while 30 improved services for survivors of gender-based violence. Fifteen nations incorporated gender equality priorities in national plans and budgets. These achievements come against a global backdrop of continued improvements—such as historic numbers of women in political leadership and a record 125 countries having adopted laws against domestic violence.

There is no room for complacency, however. Over 600 million women still live in countries where domestic violence is not a crime. Gender gaps in employment have grown in many regions since the 2008 financial crisis. Inequality, discrimination, violence, deprivations of rights—these are daily realities for far too many women and girls.

## LOOKING AHEAD

Right now, countries and the international community are within the last 1,000 days of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which include a goal and a limited number of targets on gender equality. All efforts need to be made to reach these by the 2015 endpoint.

It is also a moment to look ahead to what will follow, to think about how to build on the MDGs, avoid their shortcomings in a post-2015 agenda and develop

a framework for transformation. Women must be at its heart, moving from the sidelines to the centre.

Everyone agrees that the MDGs have galvanized global attention and action. The goal on gender equality and women's empowerment has tracked progress on education, employment and participation in parliament. It has helped hold governments accountable, mobilize new resources, and stimulate better laws, policies, programmes and data.

But the goals overall did little to cut the roots of discrimination and violence against women and girls—as evidenced by the fact that the slowest progress on any of the MDGs was in reducing maternal mortality. Glaring omissions include the lack of a reference to ending violence against women and girls. Also missing are issues fundamental for women's economic empowerment, such as equal property rights and a fair division of household and care responsibilities.

In the future, a stand-alone goal to achieve gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment could fuel faster, broader progress. It should be grounded in human rights and aimed at tackling unequal power relations.

Three areas require focus. First, any new set of international goals should commit to ending violence against women and girls. Second, they should be geared towards providing men and women with equal opportunities, resources and responsibilities. Third, women must be able to participate equally, everywhere, from homes to businesses to parliaments.

A global conversation around the post-2015 development agenda offers the chance for all of us to push our societies past a tipping point, where violence and discrimination against women and girls is rejected without question, and where we all reap the benefits of unleashing the potential of half the population. A future world free of gender inequality and discrimination is possible. UN Women stands by all women and men in making it happen, starting now.



The 2013 Commission on the Status of Women broke an impasse on violence against women. UN Women Deputy Executive Director Lakshmi Puri (left), CSW Chair Ambassador Marjon V. Kamara (Liberia, centre), Ambassador Libran N. Cabactulan (Philippines, back right) and CSW Facilitator Ana Marie Hernando (Philippines, front right) at the negotiations.

Photo: Catianne Tijerina/UN Women

# SUPPORTING GENDER EQUALITY STANDARDS

## UN COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

The 2013 session of the Commission on the Status of Women was historic in pushing forward international agreement on actions to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls, the theme of its deliberations. A record 146 UN Member and Observer States and 11 groups of States addressed the meeting. Nearly 3,000 representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) attended; media coverage in more than 50 countries was unprecedented, including a prominent editorial in *The New York Times*. The session galvanized global consensus that discrimination and violence against women and girls have no place in the 21st century. It broke an impasse from 2003, when States were unable to reach common ground on ending violence.

The Commission's 2013 'agreed conclusions' constitute a comprehensive blueprint of 69 concrete actions that governments and other stakeholders are expected to take. It stresses the need for preventive measures rooted in gender equality and women's empowerment in economic, political and all other spheres. There are important steps to improve laws and policies, commit adequate resources, and engage men and boys. Member States agreed to essential responses to violence, especially integrated services offering health care, psychological counseling, social support and other forms of assistance to survivors. To end impunity, States are expected to punish perpetrators. Clear actions are also set out to improve evidence and data to capture the pervasiveness of violence, and shape efforts to end it. For the first time, the phenomena of gender-related killings, or femicide, and cyber-stalking are highlighted, along with the importance of special provisions to address them.

For months before the Commission began, UN Women mobilized intensive preparations around the world. Recognizing the high stakes, with a chance to gain ground in improving the lives of millions of women and girls, we successfully sought to strengthen consensus on what needs to be done to prevent and respond to violence against women. A Stakeholders' Forum in New York built alliances among Member States, civil society groups and UN entities. Regional meetings with ministers took place in Africa and Latin America, and with experts and civil society groups in the Arab States and Asia-Pacific. Regional NGO action committees formed.

Further mobilization came through UN Women launching its global COMMIT initiative, which calls on governments to define concrete national commitments to ending violence. By the time the Commission started, 54 governments and the European Union had signaled specific actions, such as to more vigorously implement national laws, combat trafficking and make justice more accessible.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development or Rio+20 affirmed that women have central, transformative roles in sustainable development, and that gender equality must be a priority for action in areas including economic, social and political

participation and leadership. A Women Leaders' Summit sponsored by UN Women during the conference mobilized high-level political commitment through a Call to Action endorsed by women heads of state and government. UN Women also made sure grass-roots voices were heard. We sponsored a day-long civil society forum to complement the summit and presented findings from an extensive global survey that asked civil society groups for their perspectives on sustainable development.

## ENDING FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATIONS

UN Women provided evidence and analysis that helped the UN General Assembly in 2012 to agree on a landmark resolution to eliminate female genital mutilations (FGM). Unanimously adopted, the resolution gives impetus to efforts to abandon and end these harmful practices. Up to 140 million women and girls worldwide face related violations of their rights; mutilations can have severe health, psychological and social consequences. The resolution calls on 193 UN Member States to increase advocacy, information and awareness; allocate resources to prevent the practice; and enforce legislation to protect women and girls. Special attention should go to assisting those who have undergone FGM.

## OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2012, the signatories of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change adopted a decision to promote gender balance in all bodies established under the Convention and the associated Kyoto Protocol. Reporting on implementation will be discussed as a regular agenda item in all future sessions. UN Women provided expert advice to inform the decision, and advocated for support through side events showcasing women's leadership in responding to climate change.

The 2013 Arms Trade Treaty includes a specific reference to gender-based violence. This achievement followed years of advocacy by UN Women and gender equality supporters to advance Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. It underlined recognition by treaty negotiators that the risks of arms include their use in perpetrating violence against women and girls.

# LEADING THE WAY FORWARD

## ELECTIONS

Amina Abdalla was jubilant as Kenya's election results rolled in. "This is an historic high for Kenyan women," she exulted. For 10 years, she spoke out for gender equality as one of only 22 women legislators, 10 percent of the total. In the 2013 elections, the number doubled to more than 20 percent. By 2015, other women will be appointed to fulfill a new constitutional provision—no sex can hold more than two-thirds of seats.

UN Women helped Kenyan women advocate for sweeping new political and economic rights in the 2010 Constitution. As election preparations geared up in 2012, we worked with officials and parties to ensure nomination lists included women, and trained nearly 900 female candidates in all 47 counties. We kicked off the Campaign for Women in Leadership to encourage voters to cast their ballots for women. Detailed profiles of women candidates ran in all major newspapers, while radio and television jingles in six languages sent the message that capable women leaders are at the heart of change and transformation.

Given Kenya's recent history of electoral violence, UN Women also supported use of an innovation successful in Liberia, Senegal and Sierra Leone—the Women's Situation Room. Through it, a 24-hour team of volunteers and election experts in Nairobi fielded

A 2012 poll in Senegal also doubled the number of women legislators, who now comprise over 43 percent of the total in the National Assembly. Earlier, UN Women backed a coalition of women legislators to push forward a law guaranteeing women's equal political participation. Preparations for voting were monitored by a National Observatory for Parity, established by a presidential decree.

UN Women's longstanding support to Timor-Leste has cracked open doors for women leaders there—after the 2012 elections, Timor-Leste had the highest portion of women legislators in Asia. At 38 percent, it exceeded the one-third quota mandated by law. UN Women in partnership with UNDP has been instrumental in supporting an active women's parliamentary caucus, civil society groups and the national gender unit to promote women candidates. A parliamentary gender resource centre disseminates information among all members.

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