

ANNUAL REPORT 2011-2012



United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

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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FOREWORD

By UN Women's first anniversary at the start of 2012, we could look back on a year of accomplishment.

It was a year of rapid progress but also challenges, both those inherent in the creation of a new organization, and those taking place in the outside world. UN Women rose to these demands, leveraging results in line with our Strategic Plan. As detailed in this Annual Report, we expanded country programmes, backed the evolution of international gender equality standards, and championed women's empowerment across the UN system.

Two events dominated global debates in 2011—the movement for democracy that swept across the Arab world, and persistent economic and financial crises. During the Arab Spring, women called for democracy and justice, only to confront the threatened erosion of their rights. Economic instability continued to undercut women's employment prospects, but recognition grew that women's labour market participation reignites economic growth and is essential to faster and more equitable recovery.

A Time of Transformation

The political, social and economic transformations of the past year have underscored the need for women's participation and gender equality.

In 2011, our support helped bring record numbers of women to the polls in Egypt, to extend women's presence in politics, and to strengthen women's voices in municipal affairs. Globally, the UN General Assembly agreed that countries should take and report on concrete steps to increase women's political participation.

More than 1,000 women in one region of Pakistan gained decent jobs through a UN Women-backed programme, and businesses started to see their value as employees. In Central America, over 130 microfinancing institutions began tailoring services to indigenous and rural women.

Through 2012 and beyond, UN Women's top priorities will be a push for rapid progress in women's political participation and economic empowerment, bolstered by our thematic focus on ending violence against women, broadening women's role in peace and security, and making gender equality central to public plans and budgets. Overall, we aim to protect and advance hard-won gains for gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Partners Speed Progress

No single entity will achieve gender equality; real progress requires mobilization, with women and men, governments and businesses, civil society and the United Nations working together. In its first year, UN Women focused on establishing and strengthening strategic partnerships to achieve results. In Egypt, joint efforts involved the UN Development Programme, the Egyptian High Judicial Elections Committee, and the Egyptian Centre for Women's Rights. In Pakistan, UN Women collaborated with the International Labour Organization and leading private sector companies.

During 2011, UN Women participated in 106 joint UN country programmes around the world, and signed 30 global partnership agreements with other UN agencies. UN Women, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the World Food Programme embarked on a joint initiative of economic empowerment for rural women and girls. 2012 saw the debut of the UN's system-wide action plan on gender equality, spearheaded by UN Women.

New global partnerships include the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality, or EDGE initiative, where UN Women and the UN Statistics Division are collaborating with the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development to fill gaps in gender statistics. Starting in 2012, UN Women and the European Union will focus on increasing women's participation in decision-making in economics, politics and justice, and on combatting sexual and gender-based violence.

A Foundation for Action

In its first full year of operation, UN Women put in place a new management structure, unifying four UN entities. An assessment of field capacity guided the strengthening of 33 country offices. Our base of donors broadened, with 116 governments contributing in 2011 and an increase of funding to US\$227 million. This generous support in economically difficult times is much appreciated, yet we are looking forward to expanding our funding base to meet the demand for our services worldwide.

We can celebrate what has been achieved. But we cannot rest. Our collective global future rests on development that is equitable and sustainable. Towards that end, now is the time to open doors for women.

Progress of the World's Women 2011-2012: In Pursuit of Justice



Justice remains out of reach for millions of the world's women—that was the conclusion of UN Women's landmark global report in 2011, Progress of the World's Women: In Pursuit of Justice. It inspired discussions on women's rights in the Egyp-

tian Constitution, the provision of services for survivors of gender-based violence in the occupied Palestinian territories and actions to protect indigenous women's rights in Ecuador, and garnered extensive media coverage worldwide.

The report highlighted signs of positive progress for women in legal systems, such as the constitutions in 139 countries and territories that now guarantee gender equality. It also presented detailed evidence on how women are shut out of

justice, showing that 603 million women still live in countries where domestic violence is not a crime, and 2.6 billion have no criminal legal protection from marital rape. More than half of working women are in vulnerable, poorly paid jobs, often ungoverned by labour laws. In the vast majority of countries, women still comprise far less than 30 percent of parliamentary lawmakers.

While advocacy and landmark legal cases have sped the pace of legal reform, the report chronicled the fact that even good laws are not always adequately enforced. Social stigmas and cost are other barriers to justice. The report offered a series of practical solutions, such as by creating special courts, adding more women police and providing legal aid services.



A WORLD IN BALANCE REQUIRES GENDER EQUALITY

Women in all their diversity are a dynamic force. When they realize their full rights and opportunities on equal terms with men, they can shape better decisions and contribute to more just, equitable and sustainable development.

A world in balance requires gender equality.

In recent years, there has been a broad questioning of development that seems unsustainable and unbalanced, producing among other things a prolonged period of economic instability and uneven human progress. As protests in the Arab States and elsewhere drove home, too many people still lack opportunities to achieve well-being, such as decent and meaningful employment, fair access to economic assets, and social protection measures to reduce poverty.

Overall, global economic growth has been impressive in the last 20 years, increasing by 75 percent. But not everyone has benefitted. More than one in four people still lives in extreme poverty, many in middle-income countries. Two-thirds of natural resources vital to human survival are declining. By 2030, the world will need 50 percent more food, 45 percent more energy and 30 percent more water, even as millions of people cannot meet these needs today. Climate change poses an unprecedented threat.

Continuing in this direction will not deliver the future we want. It is likely to further deepen societal fragmentation and inequality.

Transformative changes are imperative, towards a new model of people-centered development. It would fully tap the enormous potential of half the world's population: women.

Unleashing Women's Potential

We all lose from gender discrimination. About a billion women fall short of their potential economic contribution due to barriers in decision-making, labour markets, financial services, education and training, among other areas.

By contrast, countries with greater equality are more competitive and grow faster. In 2012, the World Bank found that eliminating all forms of discrimination against women in employment could increase productivity per worker by up to 40 percent.

The Food and Agriculture Organization has estimated that giving women farmers the same access as men to fertilizers, seeds, tools and other types of support would raise agricultural outputs enough to feed 100-150 million hungry people. According to World Bank calculations, Europe can expect a shortfall of 24 million workers by 2040 if women's employment

participation remains what it is now; if the rate rises to that of men, the shortfall will be only 3 million.

Growing Consensus

Advocates and social movements have continuously called attention to the evidence for orienting economic policies around reducing gender discrimination, which further supports commitments to women's human rights. Some governments and the international community have started taking action.

Latin America, for example, has grown through the global economic crisis, while making considerable progress in reducing unemployment and poverty. For the first time in many decades, despite some challenges, development achievements have been much more evenly distributed, including among women. This is due in part to consistent investment in social protection programmes that have assisted 100 million of the region's poorest people for only about 0.25 percent of gross domestic product.

These programmes have been particularly successful because they often emphasize transferring funds to women. There is a wealth of accumulated evidence that relative to men, women are more likely to spend on the well-being of their families, driving down hunger, illiteracy and mortality rates, while contributing to economic growth.

Measures like these are increasingly part of the global discourse. In 2012, through the G-20 group, the world's most powerful economies committed to taking actions to overcome barriers to women's economic participation and expand opportunities for them. At the United Nations, the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Global Sustainability issued a report stating that our global future is not just about markets, but about the women and men who drive and are affected by them. We need to consider how growth is generated, where is goes, and what it does to women, men, families and the environment.

The Future We Want

A landmark event in 2012 was the 40,000 strong gathering of people from governments, businesses, civil society groups and others at Rio+20, the UN Conference on Sustainable Development. In an agreement called The Future We Want. governments endorsed an integrated framework of actions under the three pillars of sustainable development: economic growth, social equality and environmental sustainability. Gender equality was recognized as integral to all aspects. During the conference, public and private entities made more than US\$513 billion in commitments backing sustainable development measures.

Also agreed was the need to develop a set of sustainable development goals to guide international aspirations after the 2015 endpoint of the global Millennium Development Goals. Under a General Assembly agreement, work has already begun to define principles and priorities for a post-2015 agenda.

Since women's role will be fundamental, UN Women will continue championing women's empowerment and gender equality as central to all solutions and successes. As demonstrated by the achievements in this report, women can and do drive forward growth and social inclusion. With their leadership and full participation, sustainability and justice are within reach.



STANDARDS FOR ADVANCEMENT

Norms and standards on gender equality and women's empowerment forged through international consensus guide everything UN Women does. Among the most important achievements are the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action.

UN Women also has a leading role in supporting the continued evolution of agreed international parms. At UN forums and global conferences, it holps governments and

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