



ANNUAL REPORT 2010-2011



“Think of how much more we can do, when women are fully empowered as agents of change and progress in their societies.”

—UN WOMEN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MICHELLE BACHELET

Annual Report 2010-2011

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“When we empower women, we empower communities, nations and the entire human family.”

—UN SECRETARY-GENERAL BAN KI-MOON



Consensus on Equality

Foreword by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

As we mark the inaugural year of UN Women, we also celebrate all who made possible this landmark commitment to gender equality and women’s empowerment. Governments showed vision. Civil society partners engaged in relentless advocacy. UN staff acted with dedication. Creating UN Women was hard work, but, together, we prevailed because we knew we needed a strong global champion for women.

UN Women is an essential part of a larger international drive to advance women’s rights. We have seen progress on many fronts, from new prosecutions for war crimes of gender-based violence, to the \$40 billion pledged for the Global Strategy for Women’s and Children’s Health. More women than ever serve in leadership positions.

This year also marks the 100th anniversary of International Women’s Day. We have come a long way in a century, but we still have far to go. Despite progress, women around the world still live under the burden of discrimination. They are paid less than men for the same work. They are rarely afforded an equal role in boardrooms, parliaments or peace talks. Millions of women and girls face abuse in what should be the sanctuary of their own homes.

UN Women is guided by the fundamental conviction that investing in women is not just the right thing but the sensible thing to do. Women are the breadwinners who can help their families, communities and countries out of poverty. They are the mothers who can feed their children, and the leaders who will educate the next generation. Women are the police and the peacemakers who can help forge peace and stability.

No one needs the support of UN Women more than those women who are most marginalized by lack of economic and other opportunities. That is why we are dedicated to working with Member States and other partners in the places where the need is greatest and the benefits of prosperity and education have not yet been broadly shared.

I firmly believe in a future where women are free to lead and contribute to their societies, and where girls can grow up safe, healthy, educated and strong, and I will support UN Women in every way possible. Through the creation of UN Women, we have come closer to our goal of a world that ends discrimination, and that fully values and protects women and girls. Together, let us realize that vision.

Photo credit: Eskinder Debebe—UN Photo

“I imagine a future where gender equality is understood by everyone as part of the foundation of justice, development and democracy.”

—UN WOMEN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MICHELLE BACHELET



A Turning Point for Women

Foreword by UN Women Executive Director Michelle Bachelet

It is a privilege to be the first leader of UN Women. I am determined that UN Women will lead and inspire global action on gender equality, bringing together new energies and talents, and encouraging men and women from different backgrounds to join in this shared endeavour.

Achieving gender equality and women's rights is a global agenda that poses challenges for every country, rich and poor, north and south. In 2010, when UN Member States took the historic step of creating UN Women, they affirmed that we all must rise to these challenges, and that UN Women should help lead and champion this process for women and girls in every corner of the world.

Without doubt, the last century has witnessed an unprecedented expansion of women's rights, in one of the most profound social revolutions the world has ever seen. One hundred years ago, only two countries allowed women to vote. Today, that right is virtually universal. Millions of men and women around the world today advocate to end violence against women, and a record two-thirds of countries have passed laws against it.

Yet we must also be concerned with the pace of change. It is not acceptable for young girls to be taken out of school, or for women to die from childbirth complications that could be prevented, but these things continue to happen every day. Girls still are less likely to be in school than boys. Two out of three illiterate adults are women. Every 90 seconds of every day, a woman dies in pregnancy or childbirth. Women have unequal access to essential economic assets such as land and credit.

Women pay an unjustifiable price for discrimination, but they do not do so alone. The quality of our democracy, the strength of our economies, the health of our societies and the sustainability of peace — all are undermined when we fail to fully tap half the world's talent and potential. Where women have access to secondary education, good jobs, land and other assets, national growth and stability are enhanced, and we see lower maternal mortality, improved child nutrition, greater food security, and less risk of HIV and AIDS. UN Women's mandate to support faster progress towards gender equality is thus both morally right, and makes political and economic sense.

We have much to do, but also great strengths to draw on. UN Women is already active in areas strategically important to accelerate progress for women. In 2010 and 2011, UN Women programmes in all regions of the world report results in increasing women's leadership, expanding women's economic options, making women central to plans and budgets, and bringing women to peace tables.

As we look towards the future, we know that UN Women alone cannot do all that needs to be done. We will not replace the good work done by others; rather, we will help orchestrate many valuable actions and contributions, so that they all add up to greater impacts and faster progress. We will reach out to partners in the UN system, women's groups and the private sector, and engage with a full spectrum of political actors, including ministers of finance and trade as well as health and education. We will assist countries at their request in setting gender equality standards, and support the implementation of policies, programmes and budgets to achieve them. I hope that one day we will look back and see 2011 as the beginning of a new era of gender equality and a better world for all.

Photo credit: Marco Castro—UN Photo



UN Women will champion gender equality in every corner of the world. Executive Director Bachelet visits the Ifo refugee camp in northern Kenya to assess the security situation of Somali refugee women and girls.

SEIZING OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN

On 2 July 2010, the UN General Assembly made a bold and ambitious move that stirred worldwide excitement and good will. Through a unanimous resolution, it created the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, UN Women. The decision signaled an unprecedented commitment by all UN Member States to scale up support for gender equality and the empowerment of women. And it marked the successful culmination of many years of advocacy by civil society organizations to create a stronger UN organization dedicated to promoting and advancing the needs of women and girls worldwide.

“It is about having half of humanity participate. The progress of women means ... the progress of the world.”

—U. JOY OGWU, AMBASSADOR OF NIGERIA TO THE UN, PRESIDENT, UN WOMEN EXECUTIVE BOARD 2011

With a universal mandate covering all countries, UN Women has three main functions: It supports UN Member States' deliberations at the global level, in intergovernmental bodies such as the Commission on the Status of Women, where international policies, standards and norms are negotiated and agreed upon; it leads and coordinates efforts across the UN system to achieve gender equality; and it helps countries in translating international standards into practice, to achieve real changes in women's lives. UN Women's assistance focuses on supporting women's leadership; strengthening women's economic empowerment; ending violence against women; promoting women's participation in peace and security processes; and ensuring that public planning and budgeting responds to the needs and rights of women.

UN Women became operational on 1 January 2011. It builds on a strong foundation by merging four UN entities dedicated to women's equality — the Division for the Advancement of Women, the International Training and Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, the Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, and the UN Development Fund for Women. The creation of UN Women recognized that combined resources, mandates and expertise would fuel faster momentum towards women's empowerment. UN Women now stands poised to serve as a powerful global champion for women and girls.

Its vision, as articulated in its first Strategic Plan for 2011–2013, is a world where societies are free of gender-based discrimination, where women and men have equal opportunities, where the comprehensive development of women and girls is ensured so that they can be active agents of change, and where women's rights are upheld in all efforts to further development, human rights, peace and security.

In September 2010, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced the appointment of Michelle Bachelet, globally respected for her tenure as former President of Chile, to be the first Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director to head UN Women. In January 2011, when UN Women's newly established Executive Board convened for the first time, she began charting the organization's course through

a 100-Day Action Plan. It has set in motion an array of new partnerships with UN agencies, women's advocates, the private sector and universities, among others, along with new initiatives such as the preparation of a minimum package of emergency services for women and girls who survive gender-based violence.

UN Women's first Strategic Plan elaborates on the action plan, bolstered by consultations with 5,000 partners from governments, civil society, the UN system and academia in 71 countries and all five regions of the world. It also outlines UN Women's priority areas for intervention, described in more detail in this report.

Under the shine of a global media spotlight, UN Women celebrated its launch in February 2011 in the UN General Assembly Hall. More than 2,000 guests at UN headquarters were joined by spectators in 184 countries through a webcast, as luminaries from politics, entertainment, business, the media and the film industry welcomed the birth of UN Women as a moment of historic opportunity for women.

On 8 March, Ms. Bachelet travelled to Liberia to celebrate the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day, recalling that the first commemoration of the day had been a step into history. Much has been achieved since then, but gender equality remains an unfinished agenda. Reminding people globally that the world cannot wait another century to fully tap into the enormous resource that women represent, she pledged to employ UN Women's knowledge and expertise towards real progress on gender equality and to galvanize partners worldwide in support of this goal.



Albania is among the countries UN Women supports in complying with gender equality standards that are part of accession to the European Union.

ADVANCING NORMS AND STANDARDS

International commitments, norms and standards on gender equality are set by intergovernmental agreement. They inspire wide-ranging actions within countries, as states, often working with women's advocates, adopt new laws, programmes

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