



7 March 2014 – Luckily we've come a long way since the picture in the ad. The new millennium has witnessed a significant change and attitudinal shift in both women's and society's thoughts about women's equality and emancipation. However, the battle isn't over.

The central moral challenge of our time is reaching a tipping point. Just as slavery was the defining struggle of the 19th century and totalitarianism of the 20th, the fight to end the oppression of women and girls worldwide defines our current century.

Tomorrow, as we mark [International Women's Day](#) , we highlight the on-going battle for [gender equality](#)

“Countries with more gender equality have better [economic growth](#) . Companies with more women leaders perform better. Peace agreements that include women are more durable”, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon says in his [message](#)

for the International Day. “ Parliaments with more women enact more legislation on key social

issues such as health, education, anti-discrimination and child support”

Women are still not present in equal numbers in business or politics, and women in Europe still work 59 days ' [for free](#) '.

This year's theme, “equality for women means progress for all”, emphasizes how [gender equality](#), empowerment of women, women's full enjoyment of [human rights](#) and the eradication of [poverty](#) are essential to economic and social development. It also stresses the vital role of women as agents of development.

“I have a message for every girl born today, and to every woman and girl on the planet: Realizing human rights and equality is not a dream, it is a duty of governments, the United Nations and every human being”, says Ban. “I also have a message for my fellow men and boys: play your part. All of us benefit when women and girls – your mothers, sisters, friends and colleagues -- can reach their full potential. Together, let us work for women's rights, empowerment and gender equality as we strive to eliminate poverty and promote sustainable development. Equality for women is progress for all!”

Join the celebrations!

The UN Commemoration event in New York will be webcasted at <http://webtv.un.org/>.

Follow other events worldwide on twitter using hashtag #IWD2014.

You can also visit our official global hub at <http://www.internationalwomensday.com/> to follow up on IWD events, news, press releases, etc.