



8 March 2015 – Twenty years ago, at the Fourth [World Conference on Women in Beijing](#) , 189 countries and 4,000 civil society organizations committed to a future where women and men are equal. Over the past decades, slow progress has been made, yet not one single country has achieved equality. On this [International Women's Day](#) , the United Nations call on all countries to "step it up" for gender equality, with substantive progress by 2020, so we can reach 'Planet 50:50' before 2030.

"Since the adoption of its Declaration and Platform for Action, more girls have attained more access to more education than ever before. The number of women dying in childbirth has been almost halved. More women are leading businesses, governments and global organizations", stated [UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in his official message for #IWD2015](#) .

"At the same time, on this [International Women's Day](#) , we must acknowledge that the gains have been too slow and uneven, and that we must do far more to accelerate progress everywhere."

In addition, [UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka](#) stressed that "implementation of good policies has been patchy", and "for too many women, especially in the least-developed countries, not enough has changed".

"Violence against women continues to blight lives in all countries of the world. And no country has achieved gender equality."

Empower women, empower humanity

Today, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon calls on the international community to not only take a global stance against the total assault on women's human rights, but also to "translate its outrage into meaningful action".

"Discrimination remains a thick barrier that must be shattered. We need to expand opportunities in politics, business and beyond", Mr Ban continued.

"We need to change mind-sets, especially among men, and engage men in becoming active change-agents themselves. And we must back up our resolve with resources based on the sure understanding that investments in gender equality generate economic progress, social and political inclusion and other benefits that, in turn, foster stability and human dignity."

"To be truly transformative, the post-2015 development agenda must prioritize gender equality and women's empowerment. The world will never realize 100 per cent of its goals if 50 per cent of its people cannot realize their full potential. When we unleash the power of women, we can secure the future for all."

Picture It!

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