



11 March 2015 – Around 2,000 people from the UN, civil society, private sector, and New Yorkers gathered in New York City to participate in the electrifying ‘ [Planet 50-50 by 2030: Step It Up for Gender Equality](#)

’ event, a

[UN Women](#)

-hosted celebration for the 20th anniversary of the ground-breaking Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. High-powered speakers – including UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, Former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and Academy Award-winner Patricia Arquette - called for bolder actions from governments and louder mobilization from citizens to move forward the agenda on women’s rights and gender equality.

"Too often, leaders have used women to advance power. I believe we must use power to advance women", said [UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon](#) .

Emphasizing the leitmotif of the evening, [UN Women Executive Director Phumzile](#)

[Mlambo-Ngcuka](#)

underlined the benefits of a gender-equal society, and the need for immediate concerted action.

"This evening celebrates women's achievements since Beijing; it's also a moment to gather up and focus our combined energy on the task ahead. Tonight, I am putting out an SOS to the world: [let's STEP IT UP](#) . We can no longer leave behind half the world's population. Women and girls are essential equal partners for real progress, for peace, for development and for a world in balance."

The Great Unfinished Business of the 21st Century

Her message was echoed by Former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who sees "a future where we unlock the [vast potential for women](#) . To realize this vision we'll have to step it up – step up our commitment to finishing this, the great unfinished business of the 21st century."

"We need action to see change. Who is responsible for this change? You are. I am." said Academy Award-winner Patricia Arquette, who issued a strong call to close the gender pay gap.

"We are voters. We make 87 per cent of the purchasing decisions. We have the power of our purse to make sure the companies we buy from treat their employees fairly."

"Think of it this way. In a pride, the lioness does all the work. So I challenge you to find your inner "roar" and Run like a Girl", concluded said Cheryl Saban, Founder of the [Cheryl Saban Self-Worth Foundation for Women and Girls](#) , which supported the event.