

To mark International Women's Day, the United Nations presents:

The Poetess

This screening will be followed by a panel discussion featuring:



Tiina Astola

Ms Astola is Director-General for Justice and Consumers at the European Commission, including fundamental rights, free movement contract and company law, criminal justice. As the former Permanent Secretary of the Finnish Ministry of Justice – responsible for both international and domestic law – Ms Astola has a background in civil law, European law and has also worked for the Finnish Ministry of Finance and Finnish Foreign Trade Association. Ms Astola was also been awarded an Honourary Doctorate by the Faculty of Law of the University of Helsinki in May 2017.



Dr Malika Hamidi

Malika Hamidi is an activist and a scholar, with a PhD in sociology from the School of Higher Studies in Social Sciences (EHESS) in Paris. For over ten years, she has been researching Islamic feminism—and the emergence of European Muslim feminists movements. In 2017, she published her work in a book: "A Muslim feminism, why not?"; she is also co-author of the collective work "Islamic feminisms" (2012). She is a widely known expert on topics such as radicalization, islamophobia and Muslim feminism.



Sietske Steneker

Sietske Steneker is the Director of the Brussels Office of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). A national of the Netherlands, she has previously worked as UNFPA Representative in the Russian Federation, Honduras and El Salvador. She holds a Masters Degree in International Law and Public Health in Developing Countries. UNFPA delivers a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe, and every young person's potential is fulfilled.



Dagmar Schumacher

Ms. Dagmar Schumacher is the Director of the Brussels office of the UN Entity for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (UN Women). Ms. Schumacher previously worked at Headquarters of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme, Bonn, as Chief of the Partnerships Section. From 1998 – 2002 she worked with UNDP in Hanoi, heading the Poverty and Social Development Unit; before which she worked with the UN in Latin America and New York. She holds a Master Degree from Kiel University.



Deborah Seward

Deborah is Director of the United Nations Regional Information Centre (UNRIC) in Brussels. Prior to arriving in Brussels, she served as Director of the Department of Public Information's Strategic Communications Division at UN Headquarters New York. Before joining the United Nations in 2011, Ms. Seward was an international journalist for nearly 25 years, with postings in Berlin, Bonn, Moscow, New York, Paris, Prague and Warsaw. She holds an honours degree in history from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

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TIME IS NOW: RURAL AND URBAN ACTIVISTS TRANSFORMING WOMEN'S LIVES

#IWD2018
#TIMEISNOW

"On International Women's Day, let us all pledge to do everything we can to overcome entrenched prejudice, support engagement and activism, and promote gender equality and women's empowerment."

— UN Secretary-General, António Guterres

"This year's theme captures the vibrant life of the women activists whose passion and commitment have won women's rights over the generations, and successfully brought change. We celebrate an unprecedented global movement for women's rights, equality, safety and justice, recognizing the tireless work of activists who have been central to this global push for gender equality."

— Phumzile Mlambo-Ngucka, UN Women Executive Director, IWD 2018 Statement

"UNFPA will continue to work on achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, when girls and boys can equally dream attainable dreams, when all women and girls can go to a school or workplace with no fear, and when parents do not have to sell off their girls to a married life of torture and untold suffering because they have no other choice."

— Dr. Natalia Kanem, UNFPA Executive Director, IWD 2018 Statement

This year, International Women's Day comes on the heels of unprecedented global movement for women's rights, equality and justice. This has taken the form of global marches and campaigns, including #MeToo and #TimesUp in the United States of America and their counterparts in other countries, on issues ranging from sexual harassment and femicide to equal pay and women's political representation.

Echoing the priority theme of the upcoming 62nd session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, International Women's Day will also draw attention to the rights and activism of rural women, who make up over a quarter of the world population, and are being left behind in every measure of development. (Source: [IWD 2018- UN Women Message](#))

Since 2011, from the Arabian Peninsula to the capitals of North Africa, streams of women are vigorously protesting for their rights as part of a broader uprising: the pan-Arab movement. The outcry thrust women into the global limelight, challenging perceptions of them as passive. This determination is not new though: In Morocco, tribal Soulliyate women continue to fight for land rights; in Tunisia, activism propels gender equality being enshrined in the nation's constitution; and in Lebanon, campaigning leads to a controversial rape law being scrapped. (Source: [Timeline, Women of the world, unite! UN Women](#))

Women activists around the world are changing narratives, laws and more importantly lives.



United Nations
Regional Information Centre
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