

United Nations General Assembly High-level Meeting to Celebrate 25th Anniversary of
Beijing Women's Conference
New York, October 2, 2020

In the opening segment of the High-Level meeting, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for a strong push to meet the unfulfilled promise of the Beijing Platform for Action. "It starts with the equal representation of women in leadership positions, in governments, boardrooms, in climate negotiations and at the peace table- everywhere decisions are taken that affect peoples' lives."

He added "Achieving this will require targeted measures including affirmative action and quotas. This is a human rights issue and a social and economic imperative."

Building on the foundation laid by the government representatives and more than 30 000 civil society representatives who attended the 4th World Conference on Women and its NGO Forum in Huairou, China, is imperative to build back better after the pandemic. This means bringing women to the center of the decision-making, and putting in place the structural changes that intentionally enable this.

UN Women called for actions to change the course of history for women and girls, through bold leadership, unwavering political will and urgent investments, especially in women's organizations, women's ministries and agencies and with young feminists leading change. "This is the time for disrupters, young and old" said UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka. "Women are calling for a leapfrog to 50% representation, or parity in all spheres, including cabinets, corporate boards and throughout the economy, including women as beneficiaries of COVID-19 fiscal stimulus packages, engagement in all peace processes, and closing the digital divide" she said. "We need big bold steps not incremental ones. The women of the world believe in the UN and the solidarity of nations. And that "we the peoples' all together, can change the future".

Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China, host country of the Beijing Conference, called for protections of women's rights and interests to become a national commitment and announced a 10 million USD contribution to UN Women in the next five years.

The **UN Decade for Action** to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals is the world's chance to transform the lives of current and future generations of women and girls. In support of the UN Decade of Action, UN Women has launched **6 Action Coalitions**, which are global, innovative, multi-stakeholder partnerships to mobilize governments, civil society, youth-led organizations, UN agencies and the private sector to catalyse collective action and drive concrete, game-changing results to advance gender equality. **The Action Coalitions will be presented at the Generation Equality Forum, a civil society-centered, global gathering for gender equality, convened by UN Women and co-hosted by the Governments of Mexico and France**, in partnership with civil society. In his remarks, Emmanuel Macron, President of France, announced the new timeline for the Forum to take place **in June 2021 in Paris, France**. The Forum will present a vital moment for activism, feminist solidarity, and youth leadership to achieve transformative change.

More than 100 countries committed to concrete actions that would advance gender equality for women and girls everywhere, under the theme "**Accelerating the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls** "

In a **Political Declaration adopted during the 64th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women in March 2020**, Members recognized that new challenges have emerged and identified

specific means for tackling these gaps and challenges. Some of these include eliminating discriminatory laws; breaking down structural barriers, discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes, including in the media; matching commitments to gender equality with adequate financing; strengthening institutions to promote gender equality; harnessing the potential of technology and innovation to improve women's and girls' lives; regularly collecting, analyzing and using gender statistics; and strengthening international cooperation to implement commitment to gender equality.

Martine Gayon

UN Representative, New York