

Global Leaders Meet on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
27th September
United Nations, New York

Statement
Bandana Rana, Nepal
Civil Society Representative

Check against delivery.

Excellences
Distinguished Leaders
Ladies and Gentlemen

Today, is a historic moment indeed for all those who have devoted their lives to the promotion of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. And I thank all the heads of government who have gathered here today because their collective power can usher in a new era of equality, development and peace if they implement the commitments, of the Beijing Platform for Action, adopted 20 years ago, in Beijing, China.

We know that despite government obligations to international gender equality agreements in the last 15 years no country has achieved the equality conditions necessary for women and girls to live their lives fully, freely and securely. For the Post 2015 development agenda to be truly transformative it must transform the lives of women and girls. It must position gender equality at the core of development priorities. This includes, but is not limited to women's economic rights, women's and girl's participation in decision making, including in peace building, and the elimination of violence against all women and girls, including sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices which are elementary for the transformational change that this agenda sets out to achieve.

The links between gender-based violence and impunity, militarization, military spending, forced migration, displacement, and the prevalence of small arms must be addressed if meaningful gains are to be made. Furthermore, a genuine new global partnership must have those most marginalized, at the center, and ensure truly democratic processes, transparent decision-making and accountability at national, regional and global levels.

Today more than ever the civil society emerges as a fundamental agent of change to advance Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. The contribution of civil society and women's organizations at the grassroots level will be key to the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda. It is the civil society and NGOs who have been the backbone of significant development activities in most developing countries. Their work should be recognized and an enabling environment created for them to be able to contribute even more meaningfully to ensure that the transformative normative commitments of the SDGs are implementable on the ground. Your political will must address the funding gap with increased, sustainable and secure funding to make gender equality a reality.

As we move ahead to transform the world with the 2030 development agenda let us commit to a world

- Where every family rejoices at the birth of a girl
- Where women and girls no longer face any form of discrimination
- Where women and girls do not have to live in fear of being sexually and physically abused in homes or on the streets
- Where care responsibilities are shared equitably and women's work and contribution is valued and recognized
- Where women are equally represented in leadership positions, and have their voice heard and acted on by decision-makers
- Where violence of any form is unacceptable

You the leaders present here today can make that possible with your collective courage and commitment. We hope that the future leaders that will gather here in 2030 will celebrate the accomplishment and follow the legacy that you have so historically charted. May the commitments expressed by you leaders today light the way to make the promise of the SDGs a reality for women and girls the world over to build sustainable change

In conclusion may I thank the Government of China and UN Women for convening this historic event. The civil society of the world looks forward to your continued and significant leadership in transforming our world - a world that is equal and non violent.

Thank you.