

Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's

Empowerment:

A Commitment to Action

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Statement by H.E. Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves

President of the Republic of Estonia

Excellencies,
distinguished members of delegations,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Two decades after the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action no country has fully achieved gender equality. We must upgrade our cooperation to achieve the goals.

I would like to thank the People's Republic of China and the UN-Women for organizing this event here today, to underline the importance of the issue.

Gender equality is one of the common goals agreed on Friday at the UN Sustainable Development Summit meeting. Adoption of the 2030 agenda gives us a unique opportunity to make more decisive steps towards achieving gender equality. **It is first and foremost the task of each member state itself to transform the words of commitment**

into action.

Human rights for all, including women and girls, are the **basis for peace and sustainable development** in the 21st century and must be an integral part of all policy making.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Estonia is committed to promoting women's rights and gender equality on a national as well as on a global level. As one of the founders, Estonia has supported the UN-Women financially since its creation and we are committed to continue to do so.

In order to contribute to the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration Estonia commits to work actively towards:

- Reducing the gender pay gap In Estonia;
- preventing and reducing violence against women in the world;
- and continuing to promote women's rights and gender equality at global level;
- opening opportunities for women in ICT, where we already stand out.

More specifically: Estonia is preparing its first action plan for gender equality policies with the aim to promote equal economic independence, balanced participation at all levels of decision-making and management,

and to tackle the negative impact of gender stereotypes. The action plan will contribute to reducing the gender pay gap, to make necessary resources available for gender mainstreaming, to guarantee efficient legal protection against gender-based discrimination, and to support institutional capacity to reduce gender inequality.

Estonia will put even more effort into improving services for victims of violence, including gender based violence. A new comprehensive strategy in this field aims for bringing together officials and experts, both from governmental and non-governmental sector, enabling a coordinated approach to violence prevention and victim support.

Estonia has taken upon itself to concentrate on women's human rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women also in its development cooperation.

Let us live up to the agreements we have signed and keep the promises we have made.

Thank you.