



PERMANENT MISSION OF FINLAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
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United Nations General Assembly

Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment:  
A Commitment to Action

United Nations, New York

Statement by

H.E. Mr. Sauli Niinistö,  
President of the Republic of Finland

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(check against delivery)

Your Excellences,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me thank President of the People's Republic of China H.E. Mr. Xi Jinping, Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon and UN Women for convening this important meeting today. Your commitment to promoting gender equality deserves recognition as we continue this significant – even crucial – task to fight inequality.

We are all gathered here to build a bridge between the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the actions of tomorrow. Through our commitment to such activities, we can achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. In doing so, we will also contribute to more sustainable development.

Gender equality has been an inseparable ingredient of Finland's success in its rise from poverty to prosperity. This would not have been possible without equal opportunities. Finnish women were the first in the world to exercise the full right to vote and to stand as parliamentary candidates. But Finland too needs to perform continuous monitoring in order to identify areas in which improvements are needed. Much remains to be done.

The Finnish Government, as one of the largest donors of UN Women, has initiated the preparation of a new National Action Plan for Gender Equality, with gender mainstreaming at its core. Gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and the full realisation of their rights are key priorities in our foreign and development policy.

Violence against women and girls is one of the most prevalent human rights violations in the world. We have the national goal of decreasing substantially the number of cases of violence against women and girls perpetrated by young men. For example we have started educating all conscripts.

Finland also continues to strongly support and actively engage in implementing the Women, Peace and Security agenda. We emphasise increasing the number of women mediators, ensuring the gender training of all peace operation personnel, and succeeding in the fight against impunity.

The participation of women and girls is also vital in the area of climate change. Since the Bali Climate Change Conference in 2007, Finland has supported several countries in increasing the number and training of female delegates, in cooperation with the Global Gender and Climate Alliance. Our goal this year is to have the gender aspect included in the new climate agreement in Paris.

I encourage all to respond to UN Women's call to "Step it up" as we aim for full gender equality by 2030. As a HeforShe Impact Champion, I particularly call on all men and boys – together with women and girls – to build equal and sustainable societies.

Thank you!