



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
SIERRA LEONE TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

336 East 45th Street, New York NY 10017

Statement

by

H.E. MS. VICTORIA M. SULIMANI

Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative
of the Republic of Sierra Leone to the United Nations,
Africa's Representative in the Bureau of the Executive Board of UN-Women

on

"Tenth Anniversary of the Women"

during the Second Regular Session of the Executive Board of the UN-Women

New York, 15th September, 2020

check against delivery

- 1. Mr. President, it is my pleasure to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group.**
2. Africa recognizes UN Women as a global champion for women and girl's empowerment, including their social and economic dimensions. We warmly congratulate the Executive Director, Madam Plumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka and all members of staff of UN Women for sustained dedication to the work for equality between men and women and the empowerment of women and girls globally.
3. Africa recalls UNGA resolution 64/289, which reaffirmed our collective commitment to improve the lives of women and girls worldwide by replacing the then four entities with the present one - UN Women. We vividly recall the words of the then UN Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon; **“Where women are educated and empowered, economies are more productive and stronger. Where women are fully represented, societies are more peaceful and stable.”** Building on that promise, UN Women continues to coordinate and promote the UN system's work in advancing gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. The entity has assiduously positioned gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls as fundamental to the attainment of the SDGs. We thank UN Women for the commendable work they do for women particularly their efforts and enthusiasm to uphold the empowerment and protection of our women and girls in Africa.
4. **Mr. President**, the AU declared the decade, 2010-2020, as the “African Women's Decade, the same year the UNW was established. This regional initiative added more value to UNW's perspective on improving the status of all women and girls on the continent. The African Women's Decade, the AU's implementation framework, set up to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and to accelerate the implementation of global and regional decisions on gender equality and women's empowerment. We recall the words of the former President of Malawi **Dr, Joyce Banda**; and I quote **“The potential of the African continent is intrinsically linked**

with the potential of its women and we must work together to ensure that this potential is realized.” End of quote.

5. Africa has so much potential. Our continent is home to some of the world’s fastest-growing economies and offers an exciting frontier for businesses looking for growth and new markets. The continent has a young, rapidly expanding population. Women should be more involved in this journey towards Africa’s prosperity. The time has come, **Mr. President**, to step up efforts to bring more women into Africa’s promising future. UN-women can play a key role in this direction.
6. We are encouraged by the significant progress UNW has achieved so far through sustained collaboration and cooperation with the African Group Members States. Through close partnerships with UN Women, we have witnessed greater integration of gender mainstreaming into national policies, plans and programs in Africa. This contagious enthusiasm of UN Women continues to influence governments and other partners globally to take additional actions to bridge the gender data gap and to draw a more realistic picture of gender dimensions in their responses to make them more effective for women and girls.
7. Africa also recognizes UN women`s commitments to helping us realize a more viable trajectory for our women and girls. We underscore with great satisfaction, UNW`s strides to ending all forms of violence against women and girls, advancing their economic empowerment, promoting their increased political participation in leadership as well as enhancing the African Group Member States’ capacity to deliver on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda.
8. Through collaboration and partnerships with Africa, UNW, together with other UN agencies and the AU Commission are working commendably to end child marriage in Africa. We recognize that more girls are now being enrolled in our schools. We congratulate our AU regional goodwill ambassador for Africa on Child Marriage, Jaha Dukureh for a job well done. We

reiterate our support for the African Women`s Leaders Network, a brainchild of the UNW and AU, focusing women leadership on issues of peace and security. We take note of the work UNW has continued to do including its several briefs on gender and the impact of COVID 19 on the lives and livelihoods of women and girls. We take note too, of its innovative partnerships, including with the private sector and the international financial institutions (IFIs).

9. It will be a remiss, **Mr. President**, if we fail to acknowledge the work of Her Excellency Ms. Michelle Bachelet, the first Executive Director of the entity for setting the stage to improve system-wide coherence on women`s issues, especially the promotion and protection of human rights, as well as the empowerment and advancement of all women and girls globally.
10. Mr. President, because of UN Women`s dedication to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women, greater responsibility is being placed on our world leaders to take action and demonstrate greater political and financial commitments to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women in all spheres of lives.
11. Permit me also, Mr. President, to extend our gratitude to the current Executive Director of UNW, a woman of dedication and integrity, who during the International Women`s day in March 2020 reaffirmed that and I quote, **“we`re mobilizing to realize women`s rights, and to mark 25 years of implementing the Beijing Platform for Action...”**. Thank you, **Madam Executive Director**, your dedication is inspiring!
12. **Mr. President**, Africa has, no doubt, made significant progress in advancing gender equality in both work and society.
13. Although there has been an existence of strong, progressive, and articulated global and continental policies, strategies, and action plans on gender equality for women and girls, there remain standing barriers to achieving gender equality in Africa.

14. As we start a new decade, Mr. President, we request the UN Women to strengthen its global partnerships particularly with Africa for the effective implementation of the goals set for the Entity since its inception in 2010. There is a need for collective and quicker actions to accelerate the empowerment of women and girls not only in the continent but globally. There is also a need to influence the fiscal stimulus packages in our countries to ensure they have a gender lens. Therefore, we are happy that UNW is developing new partnerships with IFIs and others on financing gender equality to push this agenda forward. We look forward to hearing more on this in the next Strategic Plan.

15. To conclude, we wish to remind everyone that this pandemic has exponentially increased the already **existing** hardships on women`s lives and livelihoods, especially those in Africa. We call for prompt actions to respond to the needs of the world`s women and girls. We say **CONGRATULATIONS** UN Women on your decade of commitment and for the significant milestones you have achieved in making the difference in the lives of women and girls globally despite all the challenges, namely with the COVID- 19 pandemic and the difficulties on the ground.

I thank you all for listening!