

The Beijing Platform for Action Turns 20

Member State Commitments

Afghanistan: Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah

"Protecting the constitutional rights of all our citizens is a high priority for the Afghan Unity Government. As a result, we are conducting comprehensive reforms in our security, legal and judicial institutions. We are sparing no effort to implement Elimination of All forms of Violence against Women law, and our National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA). The same is true for our commitments under CEDAW. A lot has been achieved, thanks to the support of the international community. We continue to rely on support from partners. Thanks to the participation of women, Afghanistan has a vibrant civil society. ... Afghanistan will do its part to reach the goal for 2030." [Speech]

Albania: Prime Minister Edi Rama

"The Government that I lead has placed gender equality at the centre of its agenda ... I'll outline very briefly three aspects of this challenge facing Albanian society by promising at the same time an effective engagement of all institutions responsible for the implementation. First: economic empowerment of women through increasing and improving access to credits, as well as promotion and expansion of employment programmes for women and girls, narrowing the gap in employment and increasing the participation of women in labour markets. Second: prevention and reduction of violence against women and domestic violence, elimination of gender discrimination in education, health, media, strengthening the legal and institutional mechanisms, as well as improvement of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. And third: increased ... decision-making, as well as central and local representation of women in managerial and professional positions in all public administration ... including representation of women in police and armed forces."

Algeria commits to ongoing efforts to promote peace and tolerance and implement strategies to improve women's status

Outlining progress made over the past 20 years, in social, economic and political spheres, Algeria highlights recent gains such as the adoption of a Working Woman's Charter which aims to reconcile family and professional obligations and the participation of women in company management bodies as well as their representation in trade unions. ... The National Peace and Reconciliation Charter was adopted on 29 September 2005, as a result of a referendum. In this area, the efforts of the Government and the people are both ongoing and resolute. They are based on the policy of de-radicalization which consists essentially of promoting the civilizing values of peace, concord and tolerance. ... Just like in Beijing 20 years ago, my country joins in the commitment of the international community to continue to work for the promotion of women's rights and to implement strategies which aim to improve their status. [Commitment statement: en | ar | fr]

Angola commits to the empowerment of women and gender equality, the dignity of families and the advancement of women

The policy measures under the National Development Plan aim to promote the full realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms for men and women, promote all equal-opportunity aspects in employment policies, including reducing occupational segregation and helping reconcile work and family life, as well as counter the persistent under-representation of women in all decision-making spheres, promote equal access and full enjoyment of social rights for men and women, eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2017 and at other educational levels by 2025, promote equality in civic life and contribute to change gender roles and stereotypes. In compliance with its international commitments, namely CEDAW, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights regarding the Rights of Women in Africa, the SADC Gender and Development Protocol, the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, to which Angola is a party, the Angolan Executive Branch has adopted policies to support gender issues and the advancement of women, as well as to support victims of violence, to give due recognition to families, to develop communities and promote rural women. The country's Head of State also mandated a review of plans and policies related to the percentage of representation of women at all levels to increase it to at least 40 per cent, and has launched national campaigns to prevent violence and traditional practices that violate the rights of women and girls. [Commitment statement]

Argentina: President Cristina Fernandez

“In Argentina we have developed a strong process of social inclusion which has brought about more equal opportunities for women. We have active programmes and policies such as universal benefits for pregnancies, for children and education all the way up to university. This has made it possible together with gender equality laws to protect women. ... Even in more developed societies, there continues to be gender inequality with respect to access to political decision-making. ... We need to break cultural barriers which have considered women for centuries to be an inferior or less intelligent being. And that is why I think that policies must also be aimed at [transforming] culture, at empowering women not only as a matter of obligation under conventions or international treaties, but that there be a deep conviction in the hearts of men and of women... to bring down taboos and prejudices against us. ... In Argentina we have achieved a high degree of equality that should also be extended to youth and other sectors of society.”

Australia makes new commitments internationally and at home to empower women and girls

In this anniversary year [of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action] and to progress the 2030 Agenda, Australia is making new commitments both internationally and at home to empower women and girls.

Australia’s Minister for Foreign Affairs has launched a new Gender Equality Fund. This Fund will accelerate support for gender equality in our overseas development program with a focus on women’s economic and leadership participation and addressing violence against women. Australia will confront record levels of homicide of women, and domestic and family violence, committing new funds for frontline services, support for women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who are experiencing violence, and primary prevention initiatives to change the attitudes of young people towards violence against women and their children. To increase women’s workforce participation, responding to G20 commitments of 2014, Australia is providing new financial literacy projects for women, improved assistance for child care and small business reforms that will deliver new opportunities for women in the workforce. [Commitment statement]

Austria: President Heinz Fischer

"Austria commits to further tackling gender stereotypes...Gender-sensitive vocational orientation and educational guidance will be expanded, and gender-theory-based competence of teachers and educators will be strengthened. Austria also commits to the continuation of its National Action Plan on Gender Equality in the Labour Market and will also continue to tackle the high gender-pay-gap and to strengthen income transparency. We will continue comprehensive action to reconcile family work, both for women and men. Extending the provision of childcare facilities and including men in childcare and care responsibilities remains a focus of our efforts. We shall continue to intensify mentoring and training programmes to encourage women to stand for elections on all political levels...as well as awareness-raising and trainings in gender competence for university bodies and decision-makers. Promoting women’s share in management and board positions in our companies remains a priority. Creating efficient measures to prevent and to protect women and girls from all forms of violence in domestic and social contexts will remain a central concern. Austria is committed to the work of UN Women and will continue on a voluntary basis to support activities in the fields of women, peace and security, violence against women and access to justice. Our development cooperation will continue its efforts to promote gender equality by supporting our partners to ensure equal access to economic opportunities, social and financial services, and to overcome gender-related barriers in society and legal systems." [Speech]

Azerbaijan steps it up: Gender mainstreaming in all State programmes and legislation to help working women

The Government of Azerbaijan actively undertakes measures to distribute opportunities equitably and to support the equal and balanced participation of women and men in public and social life. Specific budgetary allocations have been made to ensure a steady increase in the gender mainstreaming process and all State programmes and services committed to ensure gender equality at all levels and all spheres. The country is working to ensure more girls pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. It pledges to introduce new legislation to help working women – including flexible working and accessible childcare. The country will actively support the development and implementation of specific programmes, projects and activities aimed at improving the enjoyment by women and girls of their fundamental human rights.

Azerbaijan is prioritizing re-integration of refugee women into society, promoting their participation in political, economic and public life and addressing the causes of, and impunity for, sexual violence in conflict as a central element of all discussions on the peace and security agenda. Calling for the implementation and reinforcement of international initiatives and conventions on women rights, Azerbaijan also commits to do everything it can to ensure a safe future for women. [Commitment statement]

Bangladesh: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

"The sustainable development [agenda can bring] positive change in the lives of our women and girls. We should seize this opportunity. In this context, it is our commitment to continue to work towards the social, economic, and political empowerment of our women, and give our girls higher education. We shall create more opportunities and access for our women to participate in politics, business and government. We shall continue to work for ending all forms of discrimination and violence against women. We shall create a safer environment for our women and girls to thrive as agents of change. My government has plans to eliminate child marriage by 2041. We shall continue to give attention to maternal health and nutrition." [Speech]

Belgium: Prime Minister Charles Michel

"We commit to take into account the multiple forms of discrimination against women, notably by developing action plans and campaigns." Belgium steps it up for gender equality and women's empowerment with 25 commitments to act, covering both its external and internal policies. While continuing its strategic partnership with UN Women, Belgium will adopt a new gender strategy for its development cooperation. Domestically, all government levels will adopt, implement and evaluate gender mainstreaming legislation or methods.

Furthermore, a sixth national action plan on the fight against gender-based violence is being developed in line with the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. This Convention will be ratified by Belgium as soon as possible and without formulating any reservations. Finally, the legislation on gender discrimination will be evaluated and adapted and awareness-raising campaigns on gender discrimination and stereotypes and their consequences will be launched."

[Speech (in French) | commitment]

Benin: President Thomas Boni Yayi

"I have come to express our commitment again, not only to the women of my country, but of Africa and the entire world. ... We must absolutely base our action on women... This is necessary at the highest level of the State. And second, we need transformative leadership, which needs to be accompanied by very effective policies and legislative measures for gender equality and the empowerment of women. ... We hope that we will make more progress in these areas. Also, women must be involved in productive work and decision-making in order to be effective. And therefore programmes have been put into place so women can play an influential leadership role in political parties and the private sector, among others."

Bhutan: Prime Minister Lyonchhen Tshering Tobgay

"I pledge my Government's full commitment to the accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and to the realization of the gender equality goals of empowerment in the 2030 Agenda. More specifically, I recommit to support ongoing initiatives to increase representation of women in governance and decision-making at all levels. For this, we have commenced extensive nation-wide consultations to explore measures to encourage women's participation in politics. We commit to strengthen targeted programmes for economic empowerment of women. This is critical to address the persistent burden of poverty on women and effectively remove inequality in economic structures and policies. We commit to enhance investment in programmes that ensure equal access to the critical areas of education and training and healthcare for women. We commit to render full support to agencies and civil society organizations that combat violence against women and girls and we commit to promote programmes and policies that strengthen the role of women in the management of natural resources and in the safeguarding of our environment."

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Chairman of the Presidency Dragan Čović

"For Bosnia and Herzegovina, gender equality and empowerment of women remain priorities, on both [the] national and international level. We are making efforts to reconcile our unfortunate past with the demands of the future...Focus on women is a way of healing. [This is] our obligation... We have created a solid legal and institutional framework for the advancement of gender equality, requiring affirmative measures aimed at achieving gender equality from the State. Furthermore, both [the] Gender Action Plan 2013-2017 and 1325 Action Plan 2014-2017 define priority measures for improvements and advancement in line with the Beijing Action Plan. In line with that, today I pledge to...[implement] the Istanbul Convention and address three areas of concern: greater inclusion of women and reduction of labour market segregation; prevention of ...domestic violence; and finally, support for the women victims of sexual violence in conflict. " [Speech]

Botswana: Vice President Mokgweetsi E.K. Masisi

"Botswana...remains committed to the principle of elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. To this end, Botswana adopted, recently, the National Policy on Gender and Development

on 7 August 2015. The policy serves as a springboard for implementation of Goal 5 of the [Sustainable Development Goals] of achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls, and all other goals that intend to improve the dignity and the status of women...Botswana embraces the Secretary General's UNiTE campaign to end violence against women and has developed the National Gender-Based Violence Strategy 2015-2020. The strategy provides a multi-pronged and multisectoral approach for the prevention and elimination of gender-based violence. We recognize men as critical partners in the promotion of gender equality and, as such, have established a men's sector under the Ministry responsible for gender...In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm Botswana's unwavering commitment to the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment."

Brazil: President Dilma Rousseff

"On behalf of the Brazilian Government I bring you a message of unwavering and firm commitment to implementing the Beijing Platform for Action. A commitment to gender equality, to empowerment of women and to implementation and materialization of women's rights on all fronts – that is our commitment. ... [We commit] to ensuring coverage of all women in situations of violence, ...further [engaging] in actions [for] women in policies, further [ensuring] women's development at all educational levels..., strengthening maternal health care...and assistance to girls." [Previous commitment]

Brunei Darussalam: Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan Haji Hassandal Bolkiah

"In Brunei, our experience on this issue is based upon our long-standing policy to provide universal access to education. In the 1950s ... education was made free to all children irrespective of gender. ... Our girls and women have equal opportunities to upgrade their knowledge and skills particularly in evolving areas like ICT. ... Our women have attained employment in various professional fields like medicine, law, business and engineering. ... They have equal access to healthcare facilities, free for all citizens. Over the past two decades, our women's life expectancy has improved to about 80 years. They're increasingly active in business ventures through various credit financing schemes. ... We are also making efforts to protect women's rights through legislation and plans of action, which we will continue to review when necessary. Regionally, we're part of the commission on promoting and protecting the rights of women and children. ... Our continued effort to fulfill our international responsibilities are shown by our commitment to the [Millennium Development Goals] and [Sustainable Development Goals] as well as Convention on Eliminating all Forms of Discrimination against Women. ... I'm pleased to reaffirm our commitment towards implementing the objectives of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action."

Bulgaria: President Rossen Plevneliev

"We will make every effort to achieve full gender equality in the next 15 years. [We] will adopt a new specialized law on gender equality [and] will ensure that [a] gender perspective is mainstreamed into all policies. The Government has committed to further develop and update the national strategy on gender equality. [We are] determined to abolish the gender wage gap, [and are] committed to combatting all forms of violence against women." [Speech]

Cabo Verde steps it up: Boosts efforts to implement national plan, gender-based violence law and public funding for gender equality

The Government of Cabo Verde joins Step It Up for Gender Equality with a pledge to implement the National Plan for Gender Equality as the main national instrument for mainstreaming gender in order to promote equal rights and empowerment of women. Furthermore, Cabo Verde will implement the National Plan to combat gender-based violence and boost efforts to fully implement the Gender-Based Violence Law. Cabo Verde commits to have in place effective gender-responsive budgeting and allocate public funding for the promotion of gender equality in the country. [Commitment]

Cambodia: Prime Minister Sen Hun

"Cambodia has achieved remarkable progress in major areas, [such as]: Adopting laws and regulatory frameworks to protect, eliminate discrimination, and reduce violence against women and girls; promoting gender equality in education through increasing [the] enrolment rate of girls in both primary and secondary levels; promoting women's involvement in [the] economy and enhancing their access to financial services, so as to strengthen their financial autonomy; improving the health status of women and children, particularly through achieving the MDG target on maternal mortality; and promoting the engagement of women in political affairs and decision-making at all national institutions and levels, including legislative and executive branches,

and all the institutions in both national and sub-national levels." "We should give priority to the following works: Increasing investment in gender equality, especially by reviewing fiscal policies to generate and increase public spending on gender equality, including monitoring and analyzing the impacts of such public spending on gender inequality through gender-responsive budgeting. Two: Ensuring the protection of women's rights, as well as full and equal participation of women in decision-making at all levels. Three: Strengthening accountability mechanisms for gender equality by strengthening government institutions with effective means of monitoring progress and ensuring sufficient provision of resources for gender works. And continuing to promote women's involvement in the economy and their financial inclusion." [Speech]

Central African Republic: President Catherine Samba- Panza

"I continue to promote and encourage the nomination and candidature of women for the next presidential and legislative elections that I am responsible for organizing by the end of 2015. The CAR woman is an integral part of the community of women of the world. While reaffirming the commitment of my country [to] gender equality and women's empowerment, I would like to use this opportunity ... to reiterate my appeal to the international community to mobilize their forces for the peace and security of the people of the CAR ... to make sure that we have lasting efforts towards transition [and] women's empowerment. And now, in the name of all the sisters of all those living the Central African Republic, I would like to express the wish that today's meeting should be a launching pad of new policy which will be bolder in order to improve the living conditions of women everywhere in the world." [Speech]

Chile: President Michelle Bachelet

"The Chilean Government ... is implementing a Labour Training Programme. We hope to train 300,000 women for highly skilled jobs, together with our programmes to empower women entrepreneurs. When it comes to collective negotiation, we want to improve the ability of women to negotiate as workers, including organizations representing the labour force in such a way that the gender focus can reduce the wage gap between men and women. ... We implemented a national action plan against violence against women and we have more centres to welcome women who are the victims of abuse. We've also started programmes to train community leaders and government officials to prevent and halt violence against women. We also have a bill [to decriminalize] abortion when the mother's life is in danger, or the fetus might be seriously compromised after birth, [or for] pregnancy as a result of rape. ... But for gender equality to be effective, we also have to look at the decision-making area, in social and political spheres. The new Chilean electoral system, which we approved in January this year, for the first time has a quota system whereby at least 40 per cent of the candidates standing for Parliament must be women. We have problems with people complying, so we have put forward two incentives: firstly any party which does not have 40 per cent of women standing cannot register any candidate; secondly, parties [presenting] women [candidates] will receive economic incentives ... to comply with the law. ... My Government has also taken steps so that by 2018 we will have 40 per cent of women directing public enterprises. We're also looking [to ensure there] is equality, empowerment and solidarity between spouses."

China: President Xi Jinping

"China will do more to enhance gender equality as its basic State policy, give play to women's important role as 'half of the sky' and support them in realizing their own dreams and aspirations in both career and life. ... Let us reaffirm the support of the Beijing Conference with renewed commitment and pledge greater efforts to promote gender equality and women's all-around development. ... To support women's development worldwide and the work of the UN Women, China will donate USD 10 million to UN Women for the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the realization of the related goals in the post-2015 development agenda. In the coming five years, China will help other developing countries build 100 'health projects for women and children,' send teams of medical experts to provide services and implement 100 'happy campus projects' to finance the schooling of poor girls and raise girls' school enrolment rate. We will also host 30,000 women from developing countries for training programmes in China and provide 100,000 skills training opportunities in local communities of other developing countries. Under the related fund co-sponsored by China and the UN, there will be special capacity-building programmes for women from developing countries." [Speech]

Colombia commits to strengthen gender equality policies, eliminate gender disparities in education, reduce female unemployment, implement a plan on ending gender-based violence

Colombia commits to: strengthen the institutions and gender equality policies for the promotion, respect, protection and guarantee of the rights of all women with special attention to the most vulnerable, including the victims of conflict and women living in rural areas; to continue working to eliminate gender disparities in education and to guarantee equal access for women to all levels of schooling and training; to undertake all necessary efforts so that all boys and girls have access to quality early childhood care and development services and pre-school education; to continue to strengthen and promote the economic empowerment and autonomy of women and increase efforts to reduce the female unemployment rate from 11.9 per cent to 10.5 per cent; to continue working to transform work structures in companies, seeking to ensure that they not only generate employment and wealth for society at large but also serve as an equal work environment and contribute to creating a fairer society; to strengthen democratic representation and electoral participation and increase the full and effective participation of women and equal leadership opportunities at all levels of decision-making; to adopt additional measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls in private and public spheres... In 2015, the country approved a law against femicide. ... Colombia pledges to create a national mechanism of coordination across sectors and institutions to create a global approach to gender violence, including prevention, care, protection, sanction and eradication; to establish and strengthen the necessary mechanisms and measures for the promotion, protection, full exercise and guarantee of sexual and reproductive rights; to strengthen women's capacity to make decisions as to their bodies, sexuality and reproduction; to work towards the construction of new masculinities; and to strengthen the processes of planning, monitoring, assessing and creating proposals which are gender-sensitive.

[Commitment statement]

Comoros: President Ikililou Dhoinine

"The Union of the Comoros has always displayed an undeniable drive towards creating a social fabric where women can take their rightful place. The Constitution of the Union of the Comoros enshrines... equality for all in rights and in duties without any distinction on the grounds of sex or gender... Women are [full-fledged actors] leveraging their capabilities to deliver development. Therefore, their empowerment needs to be strongly promoted. The Government of the Comoros would like to reiterate here before you all through my good offices its commitment to the swift implementation of the Beijing [Platform for] Action. The Government of the Comoros is committed to building on its 2011 policy on preschool attendance in public schools. Since introducing the programme in 2011, in just two years we have seen the enrolment of some 6,000 children in preschool, so we hope to continue building on these numbers. We've also pledged to step up measures taken to ensure that appropriate services are made available to women during their pregnancy, delivery and on a post-natal basis. We have also given priority to reproductive health in our new health strategy, which has enabled us to step up the reduction of maternal mortality rates from 381 to 170 deaths per 100,000 live births between 2007 and 2012. The Union of the Comoros is also committed to [beefing] up its multisectoral strategy on HIV... [and] to continuing efforts to ensure that more women will be in key decision-making posts in our national institutions. [We are] working to enhance access by women to microcredit which will allow them to continue to play a key role in our national economy." [Speech]

Costa Rica: President Luis Guillermo Solis Rivera

"[We commit ourselves] to place at the centre of public policy the shared responsibility for caregiving as an engine for cultural change, expanding and diversifying its alternatives; to promote instruments that generate scientific evidence on gaps in gender data that result in barriers to [using] women's talent; [to] create jobs through affirmative action for women through public/private partnerships; [to] establish job creation programmes with affirmative action...to benefit youth, women and persons with disabilities; [to] create and implement a seal of quality to check and certify gender equality in businesses and institutions; [to] guarantee the effective implementation of inspections in places of work; [to] work within the framework of the UN tirelessly together with our partners and elders and other groups that will facilitate this process; and [to] achieve the objective [that] would give content to the promises and commitments made here, which would be the election of a woman as the next Secretary-General of the UN." [Speech]

Côte d'Ivoire steps it up: The country launches the National Council for Women to guide efforts on women's rights

Côte d'Ivoire is stepping it up with the launch of its National Council for Women on 2 March in line with the country's commitment to international norms, such as the Beijing Platform for Action, and its Constitution's tenet to promote gender equality. Côte d'Ivoire's President, Alassane Ouattara, will chair the National Council.

In conjunction with the Observatory for Equity and Gender established in 2014, the National Council will guide and advise the government in decisions related to women's rights. President Ouattara is also urging Ivorians to double efforts to change attitudes and to promote equitable roles in decision-making for women and men.

Croatia: President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic

"The Beijing Platform for Action remains as relevant today as it was on the historic day of its adoption. We still have a long way to go to full implementation as no country has achieved full gender equality yet... The overarching theme of the Beijing conference – [that] women's rights are human rights, and human rights are women's rights – should be a driving force and inexhaustible inspiration in implementing our national policies for gender equality and equal opportunities... The notion that women's progress represents human progress lies at the core of our national policy for gender equality. ... We will continue to further support women's empowerment both domestically and internationally. This is and will remain one of our major foreign policy priorities, with a focus on conflict and post-conflict societies. Activities to eliminate all forms of violence against women will remain a priority... Further work is needed in Croatia and globally to combat gender stereotypes more vigorously and to raise the level of public knowledge and awareness on gender equality. It is essential to enable women to balance private and professional obligations, including [through] increasing the provision of child care services. Croatia will...continue to work closely with other members of the Equal Futures Partnership and take an active role as a member of UN Women's Executive Board."

Cuba: President Raúl Castro

"Today Cuban women's life expectancy at birth is 80.45 years of age. The direct maternal mortality rate is...one of the lowest in the world. ... They make up 66.8 per cent of the labour force. ... Nevertheless, we still have much to do. We need to continue to work to change cultural patterns as to have men and women share the care of their family. We must continue increasing the number of women in decision-making positions in the government." [Speech]

Cyprus: President Nicos Anastasiades

"Cyprus ... has come a long way in the promotion of gender equality, the empowerment and the realization of the human rights for women and child[ren] and girls through a number of concrete measures and policies. However, a lot remains to be done and we reaffirm our commitment to this end. My Government adopted the new national action plan on equality between women and men for 2014-2017 which is the [flagship] of our national policies for gender equality. We also reaffirm our commitment to the relevant legal action plans and directives, and all relevant international instruments combatting all forms of violence against women. Promoting economic empowerment and eliminating deeply rooted stereotypes among gender roles are among our priorities. Another area of concern in my Government is combatting trafficking in human beings, with the core of our policies being the protection of victims, mostly women and children. I would like also to announce that we are ready to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and combatting violence against women and domestic violence. The role of women in the promotion of reconciliation and peace is invaluable. ...A technical committee on gender equality has [already been established]. Concluding, I wish to express the strong willingness of my country to contribute to the full implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development." [Commitment: en | es | fr]

See previous commitment

Denmark: Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen

"The 2030 agenda for sustainable development sets out new goals for our continued struggle, and I warmly welcome these new and ambitious goals. Denmark will continue its longstanding acts of support for gender equality. We remain committed to intensifying our efforts to ensure that all women and girls have equal opportunities to pursue the education and career they want and have free and equal access to the labour market. The Danish Government is further determined to combat domestic violence. We are proud to organize the next Women Deliver conference in May 2016 in Copenhagen."

Dominican Republic: President Danilo Medina Sanchez

"We have achieved some important targets, for example...in education. We are also developing a plan for early childhood. This is helping hundreds of free community centres and other centres [that are] helping women every day. We are also promoting funding [for]...women. Seventy per cent of loans granted by the solidarity bank go to women...to set up microenterprises [and] women's cooperatives [to] increase their income by working together. ...We want to work to prevent women from...not achieving empowerment

because of economic factors...[and] we want to eradicate violence against women. We have a political resolve to continue [to achieve] the well-being of our people...and a more just society.”

Estonia: President Toomas Hendrik Ilves

“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 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 the global level...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 continue to reduce 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 improve] services for victims of violence, including gender-based violence... Estonia has taken upon itself to concentrate on women’s human rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women also in development cooperation.” [Speech]

Fiji: Prime Minister Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama

"In the Pacific region, Fiji boasts a gender-responsive and socially inclusive Constitution. For the first time, Fiji has a female speaker of Parliament and...four women possess significant ministerial portfolios. Over the last seven years, the Government has increased funding to the national women’s machinery by some 320 per cent. [We] will continue... with adequate funding and human resources, to strengthen...[gender-disaggregated data] to better influence policies.... We have amended our criminal laws to make [them] modern and gender inclusive. Our family laws have also been amended [to] recognize the rights of women in de facto relationships, and to provide legal protection in terms of spousal maintenance and property rights. My government also introduced ...[a] domestic violence law [that] allows any person to apply for [a] domestic violence restraining order. The police are legally obligated to enforce measures to promote the safety and well-being of victims of domestic violence, particularly women and children."

Finland: President Sauli Niinistö

"The Finnish Government, as one of the largest donors to 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 realization 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 start educating, teaching all conscripts in this matter. ...We emphasize increasing the number of women mediators, ensuring the gender training of all peace operations personnel, and succeeding in the fight against impunity. ... I particularly call all men and boys together with women and girls to build equal and sustainable societies. Our goal this year is to have the gender aspect included in the new climate agreement reached in Paris." [Speech]

France: President François Hollande

“The first [goal] is to promote women's [position]. ...The goal is to enable all girls in the world to freely go to school, to have access to work, to also be able to found their own businesses, and to be able to be autonomous and independent in their lives... The second goal is to promote the place of women for peace... We must mobilize and that's what we're going to do during this General Assembly, to strengthen the means of the High Commission for Refugees, to find a solution to what is happening in Syria, ... combat terrorism, because stopping the war is bringing an end to the suffering of women... In Paris, we will be holding the Climate Conference, and we have been able to note that climate injustices strengthen even further inequalities. ... We've also been able to note that it is the women who can be the most capable of playing a role in finding solutions to global warming and preserving the environment. It's for this reason I would ask that ...in the Paris Conference, financing for women will be a priority. The final objective is to promote the [position] of women because this is to act for dignity. I therefore call for the universal ratification of the Convention on all Forms of Discrimination against Women. ... If we want these goals to become truly the global order, if we want these to be achieved, there's only one way to do it: To give many more women responsibility in countries that make up

the international community, to ensure equality at all levels of the administration and politics. If I can give an example, in France, the Government that I chose and created has more women than men.”

Georgia: Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili

"2015 is the year of women in Georgia. ...[We are] committed to fully improve our gender equality and women's empowerment policy framework. On November 9 and 10 we will host the international high-level conference on achieving gender equality in the European neighbourhood region. Today I am here to make concrete commitments. First, Georgia will continue to update, enhance and develop next phases of gender equality, domestic violence, and women, peace and security national action plans... [We] will enhance our institutional mechanisms on gender by setting up and resourcing an interministerial commission on gender under my leadership. Thirdly, we will continue to update and reform our legal system. [We plan] to amend the labour code [with] protection of women's employment rights, and we will revise the gender equality law to ...address cases of gender discrimination with the newly adopted non-discrimination law. And we will also ratify and implement the Istanbul Convention. Fourthly, we will work with development partners, the UN family and civil society to jointly address the practice of early marriages. An intersectoral taskforce with this purpose will be established in my office. ... Dedicated awareness raising-campaigns [will take place] on combating violence against women and girls, and prevention of early marriages. The final commitment I can make is that my country, Georgia, will continue to adhere to human rights standards and implement Georgia's international commitments to women's rights, such as CEDAW and [the] Beijing Platform for Action."

[Speech]

Germany: Chancellor Angela Merkel

"Women have to play a more prominent role in politics, in the economy, and in society. [We commit] ourselves to...launching an initiative to improve [women's] professional qualifications in developing countries and...promote the entrepreneurial empowerment of women. In Germany too there is still room for improvement. ... We've greatly enhanced the possibilities for child care and we finally have a law on women in leadership positions. We all committed ourselves in 1995 to implement the Beijing Platform for Action. Now we are making a new commitment with Sustainable Development Goal 5. Commitments are good. Action is better. Let us take action!" [Previous commitment]

Guyana: President David Granger

"Guyana has long implemented legislative measures to ensure equitable access of women to the highest offices and to ensure that, at the level of the working class, women can enjoy equal wages for equal work. We seek to build a country in which women and girls can expect to live in safety, to be protected from abuse, such as trafficking in persons, domestic violence and workplace hazards. Guyana continues to make great strides towards achievement of the internationally agreed development goals and objectives relative to gender equality and empowerment of women, particularly in the areas of mainstreaming a gender perspective in policy development and programmes enhancing education and training opportunities for women and girls, [as well as] increasing the participation of women in leadership positions and decision-making circles. We wish to assert our full support for Goal number 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals."

Honduras: President Juan Orlando Hernandez

"Honduras has made significant inroads in the promotion of gender equality...we are improving living conditions and housing. ...Proactive state employment programs...have always been conducted in accordance with strict criteria for gender equality. We have announced a firm strategy to counter [increases in family violence and femicide], which we believe [is] having a great impact.... Honduras has implemented policies to combat crime and violence in general...we've seen therefore effects on the death rate among women.... I personally am interested in...implementing a policy for gender mainstreaming.... We have made [reducing maternal mortality] one of the main planks in the reform of our health system. And we're also looking at... [ensuring] gender mainstreaming in planning and effective operations...." [Speech]

Iceland

"Iceland is committed to closing the gender pay gap by 2022.... Iceland has a proven track record on advancing gender equality and this has been instrumental in the progressive development of our society. It therefore gives me great pleasure that our new session of Parliament...has the highest number of women parliamentarians yet, with about 45 per cent of parliamentarians being women.... I am proud to stand before you here as one of the 10 heads of government or state that are HeforShe champions in the impact 10-10-10 initiative of UN Women. I am joined by close to 6 per cent of Icelandic men who have taken the pledge. We

are determined to get more of our fellow countrymen to sign up, and will also encourage males around the world to sign up...and engage...in achieving gender equality.... Parliament has confirmed a huge increase for funding issues of equality. To celebrate the 100th anniversary of women's rights to vote and stand in parliamentary elections, we have set up a...five-year equality fund. Over half of the grants will be awarded to international equality efforts.”

Indonesia: Vice President Jusuf Kalla

"We are more than eager to improve the quality of life of women. We must ensure that women have equal and inclusive access to greater participation in as well as better control of and benefit from all sectors. Toward this goal, Indonesia is focusing on three key areas. First, increasing the participation and representation of women in decision-making processes...by promoting women in senior leadership positions. Second, reducing maternal mortality rates by expanding access to reproductive health services. And third, eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls by informing all stakeholders in the family and community including the men [about combatting] this heinous crime.... We believe a stronger commitment, improved means of implementation and better cooperation are key to overcome current and future challenges. Indonesia for its part is pleased to join in partnerships and pledges...to realize our national priorities and common [goals] for gender equality and women's empowerment." [Speech]

Ireland: President Michael Higgins

“Ireland has made gender equality a priority area of our foreign policy. Our strategies at home and abroad will be more robust because of our new universal commitment. Since its election to the UNHRC in 2013, Ireland has taken every opportunity to highlight the right of all girls in every country to quality education, we've emphasized the centrality of promoting women's participation in decision-making at all levels, and the importance of eradicating harmful practices, especially female genital mutilation. Ireland is firmly dedicated to the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325 recognizing as it does the negative impact of conflict on women and girls and the particular contribution of women to peacebuilding. And we've recently published the second national action plan on Women, Peace and Security; our particular priority is attached to the prevention of and response to gender-based violence including institutional violence, which undermines the health, well-being and livelihoods of millions of women around the world. We should not have to wait 15 years to end violence against women and girls; any paradigm of gender equality is not the gift of men, either generously or reluctantly given. Gender equality is a right achieved, not a gift; and during visits to Africa [one] could see that gender equality cuts across all areas and arrangements... Impact the achievement of gender equality in a positive direction; they must assist its achievement [and] never obstruct it; let us be clear we cannot achieve the new SDGs if we do not achieve gender equality; if we do not enable the true empowerment of women and girls worldwide our declarations will be shown to be empty rhetoric. We must... gather momentum in our change so this does not happen.”

Italy: Prime Minister Matteo Renzi

"When we adopt the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we pledge to leave no one behind. Despite progress, much remains to be done. The Beijing Platform for Action remains our blueprint for advancing women's rights and a more sustainable future for everyone. Italy is here to confirm we remain fully committed to implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action. We support fully the commitment taken collectively at the European level. In addition..., I'm very pleased to announce...that Italy will continue to support multilateral initiatives to eliminate harmful practices, especially female genital mutilation, and child, early and forced marriage. We're going to devote new resources of up to 50 million Euros in the next two years for maintaining gender equality and full enjoyment of human rights by women and girls.... In particular we continue to strongly support UN Women and UNFPA by maintaining high levels of national contributions to resources and programmes."

Japan: Prime Minister Shinzō Abe

“Since I became Prime Minister of Japan, the fundamental pillar of my policy has been the realization of a society where women shine. As a result in the past three years more than 90,000 women have entered the Japanese labour market. We have set a goal that about 30 per cent of leadership positions...be occupied by women by 2020...already, the percentage of women among newly hired national public servants in Japan has exceeded 30 per cent. ...Last month, Japan enacted a new law to promote the active engagement of women in society [so that it will become] commonplace for both men and women to share responsibility for work, household chores and child rearing. ...Japan's donation [to UN Women] has increased tenfold in the past two

years... [and] a new UN Women liaison office was recently opened in Japan.... Japan has pledged to contribute more than 42 billion yen... in the next three years. Japan will continue to implement further actions and initiatives toward resolving challenges for gender equality, development and peace..." [Speech]

Jordan steps it up: Pledges to align national laws with international commitments and expand support to women and girls in many areas

The Jordanian Government has committed to close the gender equality gap by 2030 through a variety of actions, including intensifying efforts to align national legislation with the Kingdom's international and regional commitments, in a participatory manner that ensures gender equality and the elimination of violence against women. The Government pledges to accelerate the implementation of resolutions to which it has committed itself before international committees and review relevant national plans and strategies to bring them in line with the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030, as well as provide the necessary financial and human resources to carry them out. Jordan pledges to expand the scope of economic, social, cultural and political support to women and girls, with special emphasis on marginalized adolescents, elderly women, poor or vulnerable women, rural women, women with disabilities, female refugees, displaced women and survivors of gender-based violence. It will address social norms and stereotypes that instill discrimination against women through education, cultural and media productions that promote positive roles of women as active partners in sustainable development and community building. The Kingdom will also: adopt policies that support women's access to leadership positions and participation in all levels of decision-making; empower the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) as a national mechanism in order to be able to carry out its mandate; as well as supporting and facilitating the work of civil society organizations, offering protection and social, economic and legal empowerment services to women throughout the country, including refugee camps and host communities. Jordan further commits to enhance women's access to justice and promote gender sensitization among judges in regular and Shari'a courts, general prosecutors and judicial police; and to accelerate the adoption of a national action plan to implement Security Council's resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, and all subsequent resolutions. [Commitment (English and Arabic)]

Kazakhstan: Senator Byrganym Aitimova

"My country will go beyond ensuring gender equality and women's empowerment at the national level to providing regional leadership. Hosting UN Women's multi-country office and the proposed UN Regional Hub in Almaty, Kazakhstan will strive, together with other Members States, to achieve the goals of the Beijing Declaration in the region of Central Asia and beyond." [Kazakhstan] "sees the need.. to manage the transition from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to SDGs, carrying forward lessons learned and galvanizing them into transformative change, even for the most marginalized and disadvantaged women and girls facing multiple intersecting forms of discrimination and abuse. ... Our declarations must be translated into adequate financing with strong transparent and open accountability governmental mechanisms, utilizing high-level comparable gender data with statistics in all aspects of gender equality. ... A sum of US \$56 million is allocated for developing programmes for women's entrepreneurship, representing presently 40% of the entire medium- and small[-sized] business sector in the country. ... The Government's "Kazakhstan Strategy 2050" [is] an exemplary national model, accompanied by its road map "Nyrly Zhol", meaning the bright future. We have enacted national legislation, made long-term financial commitments with unquestioned political support for the Beijing Declaration. In addition, we uphold all international instruments, including CEDAW, that have a bearing on women." [Commitment]

Kenya: President Uhuru Kenyatta

"My Government commits to safeguarding the gains realized by women under our new robust Constitution, through enactment of appropriate legislation and formulation of policies. My Government continues to commit to the implementation and enforcement of these policies and legislation.... My Government further commits to ensuring effective monitoring of the implementation and enforcement of these policies and legislation and will also ensure the acceleration of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the 23rd Special session of the UN General Assembly. We also commit to allocating adequate resources towards gender equality and to strengthen ... mechanisms for gender-sensitive budgeting. To ensure the economic empowerment of women, my Government will continue to refine the public procurement policy in order to ensure increased access for women to procurement opportunities. My Government will progressively address women's access to decent work and address the gender wage gap. My Government is also committed to accelerating the implementation of the national policy for prevention and response to

gender-based violence and the Prevention Against Domestic Violence Act; and will continue to engage men and boys in line with the HeForShe campaign. My Government continues to commit itself to eradicating all harmful practices, including Female Genital Mutilation and child marriages. We commit to ensuring women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life. We commit further to ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health as guaranteed by our Constitution and in accordance with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. We commit to ensure equal access of quality education for boys and girls and to strengthen programmes aimed at encouraging and mentoring youth, especially women to pursue careers in science, technology, ICT, engineering and mathematics."

Kyrgyzstan steps it up: Announces new commitments in its National Action Plan for Gender Equality

The Government of Kyrgyzstan holds gender equality as a priority and has several measures outlined in the National Strategy for the Achievement of Gender Equality by 2020 for the advancement of women in the economy; education for girls and women; access to justice; and gender parity in decision-making and women's political participation. To support the implementation of this long-term strategy and to help close gender equality gaps, Kyrgyzstan joins Step It Up by committing to strengthen its 2015–2017 National Action Plan for Gender Equality by adding the following new measures: integrating gender-sensitive principles into human resources policy at a State and municipal level; providing informational support for promoting women's political participation and leadership; and implementing a social order mechanism for supporting women's political leadership at all levels and promoting female leaders' potential. [Commitment: en | Русский]

Lao People's Democratic Republic: Deputy Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith

"The Government has established a national institution...to promote gender equality and women's advancement...Gender equality has been enhanced...including in education and health...The maternal mortality rate has declined. The Government has endorsed the National Plan of Action on violence against women and...children, [and the] National Assembly has endorsed a law on the prevention of violence against women and children. Women's roles in all fields have been widely strengthened. For example, women account for 25 percent [of the current National Assembly]. The Government will continue to implement its gender equality policy through...2030, the 10-year social-economic development strategy and the five-year social economic development plan." [Speech]

Latvia: President Raimonds Vējonis

"We will continue to strengthen our legal framework, acceding to [the Istanbul] Convention by 2018. Latvia also supports other partner countries... We will continue to provide support to local authorities and civil society in Central Asia...to fight all forms of violence against women."

Liberia: President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

"Liberia has already demonstrated, by my election, its commitment to [women's] equality. However, I must be the first to admit that the gaps are many, and much more remains to be done. I therefore commit my administration to ensure that the Domestic Violence Bill, now under consideration by our legislature is passed into law to safeguard the safety of our women. My administration commits to continue adherence and enforcement of the law which denies bail to those who commit the offense of rape... My administration commits to uphold the rights and laws on children to ensure their access to quality education and their retention in schools ...My administration commits to ensuring training and better working conditions for healthcare workers to ensure better healthcare delivery service, given our recent experience with the Ebola Disease. My Government commits to continuing the effort to submit laws under much difficulty to our standing legislature to ensure the abolition [and] enforcement of the ban on Female Genital Mutilation. My Government commits to improving the living and working conditions of women in the informal sector, who provide the resilience of our economy and are the most disadvantaged. My Government commits to ensuring that the ongoing Constitutional review process guarantees women's full participation in governance and national affairs on a priority basis."

Liechtenstein: Prime Minister Adrian Hasler

"We remain committed to the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and are happy to endorse the political declaration adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women earlier this year. ... Our commitment to international criminal justice also has a strong focus on gender issues, as illustrated through our work with justice rapid response and the ICC trust fund for victims. ... Additional efforts will be needed to reach our goals with respect to political participation and to ensure equal pay for equal

work. We note in this regard the call to action by the UN Global Compact and others. ... Liechtenstein furthermore pays special attention to ending violence against women. To this end we have strengthened national legislation and run a successful government campaign to raise awareness.”

Luxembourg: Prime Minister Xavier Bettel

“To achieve a world where gender equality is a reality, my government is pursuing four main priorities in our government plan and also in our gender equality plan for 2015-2018. First we want to eliminate inequalities in decision-making and especially in the political and economic spheres. Luxembourg expects to implement a very robust policy in this area in order to achieve, by 2019, a minimum quota of 40 per cent of women on all executive boards in public establishments in Luxembourg. We will have 40 per cent also in the large enterprises and private businesses where women can be stakeholders and shareholders. We expect to have 40 per cent of women on candidacy lists for parties in political elections. ... Men should be involved in having professional equality for men and women. Family life and professional life should not be incompatible. ... It is up to us in politics to make sure that the two are compatible...so that women can do both. ... [My government] is committed to ratifying the Istanbul Convention as soon as possible. ... Women and girls must have access to the same [education] as men do, especially in sciences and maths. We are continuing to work to deconstruct stereotypes in the educational sphere with awareness-raising campaigns. ... We must end all forms of discrimination, especially sexism. We are working [on this] at the national and international level. We are maintaining our contribution to gender equality mainstreaming [at] the UN [and]...to UN Women.” [Speech]

Malawi: President Arthur Peter Mutharika

“My Government and I personally are committed to the accelerated implementation of actions and activities, which aim to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in Malawi. ... The HeforShe Campaign is one of the strategies that my Government has adopted to address gender inequalities, end gender-based violence, promote women’s political participation and facilitate the economic empowerment of women. Nation-wide sensitization on the campaign has been carried out and men have been mobilized to support gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Subsequently, Malawi has enacted the groundbreaking Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Law that puts the age of marriage at 18 years. ... Gender-responsive budgeting was prioritized in the formulation of the national budget. In addition, traditional leaders established a Chief’s Gender Council to support the campaign on ending of child marriage, promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. My Government has identified gender equality and women’s empowerment as one of the core priority areas of the revised Malawi Growth and Development Strategy. My Government is working closely with banks, microfinance institutions and other stakeholders to increase women’s access to financial services and productive resources. The Gender Equality Act of 2013 provides for 40:60 or 60:40 of either sexes representation in politics and decision-making. Further, a National Plan of Action on Gender-Based Violence has been developed to end the epidemic.” [Speech]

Malaysia: Prime Minister Najib Razak

“Malaysia has always stood by the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action... Malaysia has a long tradition of empowering women. ... In Malaysia, we aim to achieve high-income nation status by 2020. But we cannot do this without women being equal partners, and we need them to be drivers of growth – growth that will bring prosperity to all our citizens. ... In our last budget, we made upholding the role of women one of our main strategies. ... We set a target of increasing the female labour participation rate from 54 per cent as of last year to 59 per cent by 2020. And next year, all Malaysian public companies must disclose their level of gender diversity in their annual reports. ... As we are aware that single mothers and female-headed households are often socially and economically disadvantaged, particularly in rural areas, my Government is going to launch a national action plan to empower single mothers next month.”

Mauritania: President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz

“Our country through its national policies [has sought to] empower women in all sectors and positions of leadership, be it in...legislative...judicial [or] executive [institutions] or political parties, also in civil society organizations, military and security agencies, [and]...business. Thus women have become influential actors in our society [who] cannot be bypassed in national life. I would like to reiterate our commitment to gender equality, because this is an absolute necessity [that] we have to work to achieve.” [Speech]

Mexico: President Enrique Peña Nieto

“We are again taking a transcendental step in mainstreaming the gender perspective [guiding] the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. For Mexico, it is of great satisfaction to have achieved the incorporation of this

approach in the document that will guide international efforts on development. In keeping with this vision, Mexico included the gender perspective at the core of our national development plan and promoted political reform which commits parties to ensuring that 50 per cent of candidates to legislative seats be for women. Thanks to this measure today, the recently elected Chamber of Deputies in Mexico is made up of 42 per cent women. To continue to move forward toward greater equality, the Government of Mexico will implement three important measures: We will have, at the ministerial level, the coordination of the work of our national activity on equality of men and women; ... we will promote more shared responsibility between men and women to improve on the distribution of work in the home; [and] we will scale up actions to prevent adolescent pregnancies and to reduce maternal mortality.” [Speech]

The Federated States of Micronesia: President Peter Christian

“I propose that we reach our goal before its time...Micronesia has adopted a strategic development plan that started in 2004 and will end in 2023. That plan encompasses the participation of women in all spheres of our national building efforts...The Government of the Federated States of Micronesia will pursue with more vigor the unfinished work of the MDGs, while focusing on Sustainable Development Goal 5 and its cross-cutting [effect].” [Speech]

Montenegro: President Filip Vujanović

“The Government of Montenegro is committed to ensure that women and girls have equal rights and opportunities in all spheres of life and live free of violence. Our National Plan for Achieving Gender Equality...was based on the Beijing Platform for Action...We commit to the implementation of the plan to improve the role of women in all areas of the society. The law on gender equality has been amended, and Montenegro pledges to fully implement the amended law to ensure women’s full participation in decision-making...Montenegro was a strong advocate for the stand-alone goal on gender equality and...all gender-related targets and indicators in the new development framework...Thus, Montenegro commits to implement all national and international standards [to achieve gender equality]...Additionally, it will undertake regular awareness-raising and educational campaigns on ending violence against women and engage men and boys [in this effort].” [Speech]

Mozambique: President Filipe Jacinto Nyusi

“Our Government has committed itself to: designing national planning guidelines with a strong gender dimension, which provide technical support and capacity-building for public institutions in order to meet this objective. [We are] firm in combatting harmful gender practices that violate human rights such as early marriage, sexual abuse and trafficking of children. In this regard, the development of a national strategy is underway as well as a review of the current gender policy and strategy for its implementation in order to repeal discriminatory practices. We [commit to]: expansion of social protection and access to productive resources [for women] as well as funding mechanisms for the development of income-generating activities and self-sustainment for their family members. Mozambique supports the principles of the African Union and the United Nations concerning gender equality and women’s rights. ...Last Tuesday we appointed a woman [with] the ability and competence to be in charge of the revenue authority in Mozambique and we are very happy with this appointment.”

Namibia: Deputy Prime Minister Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah

“The Beijing Platform for Action remains a powerful guide and source of inspiration to all of us. Since independence, Namibia has paid special attention to women’s empowerment and gender equality...it is an integral part of our Constitution...Significant targets...have been met... We’ve increased the number of girls in primary and secondary schools...and the [share] of women in the National Assembly from 24 per cent in 2009 to 46 per cent in 2015.... We still face challenges [that] need to be addressed... Namibia commits herself to women’s empowerment and ensuring that women’s rights are protected, and that women have access to services such as education, health and employment, among others. We also commit ourselves to fight gender-based violence...[and] to make sure women as agents of peace play their role both in the community and national level. We will continue to have our women in uniform to serve in UN peacekeeping. We commit ourselves to continue to...fully embrace the critical role women play in society. Finally, gender equality and women’s empowerment [are] prerequisites for sustainable development. Therefore Namibia commits herself to ensure equality between men and women.”

Nepal: Deputy Prime Minister Prakash Man Singh

"Over the years, Nepal has made substantive efforts of further promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women. ... The following actions are the highlights of our commitments and achievements in this field: adoption and implementation of proportionate, inclusive and affirmative policies and laws; mandatory participation of women in all civil and security agencies; implementation of action plans, including CEDAW and the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action; implementation of national action plans based on the UN Security Council resolutions 1325 and 1820; enactment and enforcement of laws and rules with the government's zero-tolerance policy tool on sexual and domestic violence, workplace-related sexual harassment, child marriage, witchcraft allegations, and other gender-based discriminations. [We have elevated] the national women's commission to constitutional status; [mainstreamed] gender as a cross-cutting issue in all development policies and programmes, including through a gender-responsive budgeting system, which has now reached 22 per cent of the total budget. [We are] integrating ... legal rights and instruments –including ICCPR, CEDAW, CRC, CRPD– into national legislation. Nepal has an inclusive and democratic Constitution written by the elected representatives of the people which was promulgated last week on 20 September. While women enjoy all the fundamental rights and freedoms that are enshrined in the new Constitution, art. 43 specifically deals with the rights of women that include the right to lineage, right to safe maternity and reproduction, right against all forms of exploitation, equal rights in family matters and property. The Constitution ensures at least 33 per cent representation of women in Parliament. Most importantly, the new Constitution has a provision according to which persons of the same gender...cannot occupy both the elected office of the president and the vice-president at the same time..."

Netherlands: Prime Minister Mark Rutte

"Netherlands government is committed to increasing women's economic independence and financial self-sufficiency. Equality between women and men is also a guiding principle of our foreign and development efforts because gender equality provides a basis for stability and economic prosperity. We work closely with governments, businesses and civil society organizations ... around the world to achieve this goal. In January 2016, my Government is launching a programme called Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women. Its aim is to support women's economic and political participation, and combat violence against women and girls in low-income and lower-middle-income countries. It will be the largest fund of its kind in the whole world. An important part of our international efforts is advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights. For women worldwide to have a voice and economic opportunities, they need to be able to make their own choices about sexuality and family planning. So in 2016 the Netherlands is launching another major fund to advance these rights around the world." [Speech]

Norway: Prime Minister Erna Solberg

"In two weeks time, my Government will present a white paper to the Norwegian Parliament on gender equality. This will lay the foundation for long-term targeted efforts for equality between women and men. The focus will be on education, work and the business world, as well as health, violence and abuse. These are universal issues when it comes to gender equality. No country is perfect. We all have to do our job. A strong legal framework is essential for combatting discrimination, including gender discrimination. In 2016, my Government will present a renewed comprehensive equality act and discrimination bill to the Norwegian Parliament. Yesterday, UN Member States formally agreed on the [Sustainable Development Goals], which sets 2030 as an expiration date for gender inequality. Some say that this is too ambitious. I say, "Let's speed it up." Because this is a question of human rights. We need to accelerate the implementation of the [Beijing Platform for Action] that we adopted 20 years ago. ...Let us therefore commit ourselves to doubling our efforts..." [Speech]

Pakistan: Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif

"We welcome the inclusion of a stand-alone goal on gender equality and women's empowerment in the post-2015 development agenda. The challenge now is to invest sufficient resources and to adopt appropriate policies to ensure its full and effective realization. ... We have introduced many initiatives over the years, including the...establishment of national and provincial commissions of the status of women. Led by women, they are independent and contributing to formulation of legislation and policies for women's empowerment and gender equality. [We have] strengthened and improved the implementation of the national policy for development and empowerment of women...and [enacted and implemented] pro-women legislation including the criminal law amendment act and women in distress in detention act... [W]omen's empowerment is the first pillar of our key planning document, Vision 2025. All countries stand to benefit from the empowerment of

women. We are therefore determined to ensure a more central role for women in the political, economic as well as other spheres of national life."

Panama: Vice President Isabel Saint Malo

"We are working to strengthen our electoral system [in terms of] women's representation.... Panama will take the steps necessary to promote the rights of women and girls. In the Government of Panama we are determined to [make] headway... Panama is also committed to eradicating violence against women."

Paraguay commits to boost resources for rural women and improve coordinated action to prevent violence against women and punish perpetrators

In a speech prepared in the context of the Global Leaders' Meeting, President Horacio Cartes said: "I make a firm commitment to strengthening the actions needed to speed up the advancement of real and effective equality between men and women in my country in accordance with the national regulatory framework." He outlined the country's priorities for increasing women's economic empowerment, through significant steps to include rural women with scant resources in public programmes by getting them into productive projects, providing them with access to credit and training, and enacting the Public Policy Law for Rural Women. He committed to boost the implementation of this Law with as many resources as possible and to increase the number of rural women engaged in agricultural work who are beneficiaries of agrarian extension programmes. To preventing and punish gender-based violence, he said he is doubling political support to approve the Draft Law for Comprehensive Protection for Women against any kind of Violence, now being discussed in the National Congress, and committed to improving the coordinated actions among the different institutions to prevent any danger, help women facing violence and trafficking, and punish perpetrators. To improve women's public and political participation, through the governing mechanism for public policies for gender equality, he said Paraguay will promote legislative reform aimed at democratic parity, and political agreements to increase women's presence in decision-making positions and in positions of power. [Commitment statement: en | es]

Romania: President Klaus Werner Iohannis

"Romania stands for gender equality and will continue to be fully committed to the protection and promotion of all the rights of women, as well as to the implementation of legal international instruments, such as the Beijing Platform for Action, Istanbul Convention or UN Security Council resolution 1325 ... I'm personally committed ... to launch a new integrated system to track, report and prevent all forms of violence; to create the new profession [of] gender equality expert across Romania; as well as to develop and implement programmes to engage girls and boys in political, social and economic life, to create the next generation of leaders."

Rwanda commits to increase economic participation of women

Rwanda makes the following commitments to increase the economic participation of women: Achieve gender parity in financial inclusion by 2030. To close the existing gap, the country pledges to work to increase access to financial services for women as well as improve use of available financial products. Rwanda also commits to achieve gender parity in waged non-farm employment. Currently, women account for just over a quarter of all off-farm jobs, and their transition from agriculture is slower than that of men. As part of this effort, Rwanda will triple the number of girls enrolled in Technical and Vocational Training by the year 2020. Finally, Rwanda commits to bridge the digital divide between men and women, and to attain parity in ICT usage by the year 2020. Currently, only 35 per cent of women own mobile phones compared to 49 per cent of men. Women are also under-represented as ICT graduates in higher education. [Speech]

Samoa: Prime Minister Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi

"In Samoa... we are acutely aware that we must make every effort to develop and release the full potential of our women... We have already made important strides in... education as well as employment opportunities. Many... ministries are led by women... Still, much remains to be done... Samoa is committed to mainstreaming policy on gender equality and the empowerment of our women across all sectors of government.... Given that climate change affects men and women differently, we have now integrated fully the needs of women and girls into our national climate resilience, disaster prevention and response policies and operations. ...In May 2015, salaries for village women representatives were raised to address [a] gender pay gap.... The Constitutional Amendment Act of 2013, which guarantees a minimum of 10 per cent of seats for women in our national parliament...[will make] women representatives...an integral and permanent feature of our parliament.... Samoa is committed to [advancing] the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action within the next development agenda." [Speech]

Senegal: President Macky Sall

“We have a law on equality in public bodies to which people are elected. Our legislation for two years now has allowed Senegalese women to give their citizenship to their foreign spouse and to their children – this was not the case previously, it was only through the father or the husband that citizenship could be conferred...”

Senegal is part and parcel of the momentum here. We have new policies such as caesarean operations free for all Senegalese women in public hospitals; social security grants help the most vulnerable in society and these are managed by women; universal health insurance is there; we have the emergency community development programme; and one of the essential planks of this is to lighten the burden of women working in rural environments. We are committed to giving meaning to the empowerment of women. Politically, we have the law on equality. We want to ensure that the presence of women is not just shown in terms of quantity but in terms of quality, so that we have true equality.”

Sierra Leone: President Ernest Bai Koroma

“We have enacted...legislation...towards the empowerment of women and ensuring that there is equality. Additionally, knowing that education is key, we have emphasized providing a free education for our girls in primary schools and senior secondary schools. We are also providing free tertiary education scholarships for girls...in the sciences. We have provided free health care for women who are pregnant, lactating mothers and children under five. The policies that we have adopted so far have ensured that as of now there is [gender] parity...in primary school...and an increased number of girls finishing...junior secondary schools.” [Speech] [Previous commitment]

Slovenia: Prime Minister Miroslav Cerar

“Slovenia is fully committed to...the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. We reaffirm the 2030 Agenda...where the implementation of each and every Sustainable Development Goal must include equal participation and equal enjoyment of rights for women and girls... Inequalities between women and men still exist, and no country is immune to this. We pledge and call on others to...further challenge traditional notions of masculinities, and traditional norms, laws, and practices that support them. We also believe that gender equality...requires active involvement of men and boys. This is why...ministers of my government and I joined the HeForShe campaign. Slovenia will continue to support and promote the role and responsibility of men and boys as allies and agents of change in the promotion of women’s and girls’ rights. For several years, Slovenia [has kept] the issue of violence against women and girls high on the political agenda, [making] significant progress in preventing and combatting violence. Recently we became party to the...Istanbul Convention. Slovenia has affirmed its commitment to foster gender equality...by adopting the national programme for equality between women and men by 2020.”

South Sudan: Vice President James Wani Igga

“Gender equality and women’s empowerment have been at the centre of our Government’s policy and initiatives. We are committed to that. The good news for South Sudan is that even though it is lagging behind in...many indicators of women’s empowerment...the country has taken steps to catch up with the rest of the world. A number of women’s health facilities have been built across the country, leading to a marked reduction in maternal and infant mortality rates. In my Government our vision and policy is to end gender inequality by 2040.”

Spain steps it up: Investments in equal opportunities, awareness campaigns

Emphasizing that the fight against gender violence is a "national priority" that deserves special attention, Spain vows to continue working for a comprehensive response to all forms of violence, such as trafficking for sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation, forced marriage and sexual assault. Investing in gender equality, Spain's Strategic Plan for Equal Opportunities 2014-2016 is allocated a budget of EUR 3.1 million. To promote the participation and leadership of women in political, economic, social and cultural life, the country commits to strengthen the initiative "More Women, Better Business", aimed at moving towards balanced participation in management positions in companies. A Code of Good Governance of Listed Companies, adopted in February 2015, urges companies to increase the number of directors representing at least 30 per cent of the total by 2020. Spain also commits to conduct awareness campaigns to fight against stereotypes, promote equal opportunities and combat violence against women, primarily directed at youth and adolescents. In October, under the Spanish presidency of the Security Council, the High-level Review on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 will be held to assess progress, renew commitments and address obstacles in the

implementation of the resolution, as the country celebrates the 15th anniversary of its adoption. As a symbol of its importance, the Prime Minister of Spain will host a high-level debate on 13 October. [Commitment: es]

Sri Lanka: President Maithripala Sirisena

"Free education for both boys and girls, and free healthcare were introduced very early after independence. ... Since the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, further steps were taken to achieve gender equality. This was mainly by introducing reforms to domestic laws and mainstreaming gender-related priorities into government action plans.... [A] National Action Plan on women... is currently being updated.... We also have [a] dedicated Ministry on women's matters. My Government and I take the responsibility of ensuring [the] promotion and protection of the rights of women in my country very seriously and we remain firm in our commitment to strive continuously with diligence to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment." [Speech]

Sweden: Prime Minister Stefan Löfven

"We will ensure that our national policies and our national budget allocations contribute to gender equality. And we will ensure that our development and humanitarian aid is gender-sensitive across all areas of cooperation and support. Fellow feminists, the Beijing Platform for Action and our new 2030 Agenda are powerful action plans for equality, for development and peace. In this spirit, Sweden is taking action to strengthen women's contribution to peace and security. We will develop a network of women mediators, which within two years, will be ready to assist peace efforts wherever they occur. The aim of this initiative is, however, not only to develop our own capabilities, but more importantly also to cooperate with female mediation networks from the global south. We know that women's participation at all levels is vital to the success and sustainability of peace processes and peacebuilding efforts. So proactive leadership is needed to promote and include women. " [Commitment, speech]

Switzerland: President Simonetta Sommaruga

"True to its commitment to the protection of those who defend women's rights, Switzerland will pursue the promotion of their freedom of action and of expression, without fear of reprisal. As a Government, we also have the political duty to connect the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and Agenda 2030, in order to move forward their goals, which are complementary, at the national level. The translation of these efforts into internal policies remains a priority. We [will make] efforts, in particular, to combat wage discrimination, to achieve a better work-family balance and to fight against domestic violence. Switzerland has the firm intention to continue to support the action of UN Women and to increase its contribution to almost US \$50 million for the period 2015 to 2017. It is also important to Switzerland that all other United Nations entities whose mandates it supports mainstream a gender perspective into their respective activities. Finally, Switzerland considers it fundamental that the international commitments made be accompanied by strong follow-up procedures. The Commission on the Status of Women, due to its responsibility in the follow-up and the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, must play a central role in this." [Speech: en | fr]

Thailand: Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha

"Recently, Thailand promulgated the 2015 Gender Equality Act, which became effective on 9 September 2015, so we can protect all individuals from gender-based discrimination. Thailand is resolved to move forward on gender equality in the following areas: First, by developing a curriculum on gender roles to cultivate positive attitudes and an acceptance of gender equality in children from an early age. Second, by collecting sex disaggregated data, for analytical purposes and for formulating gender-sensitive policies as well as for monitoring progress made in the realization of gender equality. Third, by providing training to relevant public agencies at the national level in order to promote gender-responsive budgeting. Thailand's next national and economic and social development plan will also focus on people-centred, inclusive development, and also on reducing social inequality. This will provide further opportunities for women to participate even more equally in our national development." [Speech]

Timor-Leste: Prime Minister Rui Maria Araujo

"The Timor-Leste Constitution... provides that men and women must be treated equally in all aspects of life.... Our Government... prioritized action to end the discrimination of women and girls... and to stop gender-based violence. Timor-Leste fully supports [Sustainable Development Goal 5], which seeks to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. We also recommit to implement the Beijing Platform for Action as we celebrate 20 years since its adoption. Our country has a proud history of support for women. During our

fight for independence, women participated actively in all fronts of the struggle. And now Timor-Leste has one of the biggest proportions of women parliamentarians in the world and the highest in the Asia-Pacific region. In our last elections, 38 per cent of those elected to the national parliament were women. ... We must improve the situation of women and address the pervasive gender discrimination if we are to meet our development goals. ... We fully commit to achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls.” [Speech]

Tunisia: Prime Minister M. Habib Essid

"Women have been actively participating in political work. This is in addition to the 50 per cent quota in candidate lists in elections. In addition, we have enhanced the gender equality principle in all our laws and we have stressed the importance of protecting the gains for women’s empowerment and equal opportunities between men and women when it comes to taking responsibility in all walks of life. ... Tunisia has made great achievements towards gender equality. This is evident in many indicators including the increase in the levels of female enrolment, and the benefits for women in terms of the services for training, and increasing women’s participation in all walks of life. All rights of women are enshrined in our Constitution and international conventions. This is a commitment by Tunisia and we are anxious to protect women so we could overcome all attempts against our modern society in Tunisia. Our experience in democratic transition recently is witness to the fact that women should be represented in all legislative bodies. Hence, we enhance women's ability to participate in politics and in public affairs. This is a commitment."

United Republic of Tanzania: President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete

“We will do everything in our power to implement Goal 5 on women’s empowerment and other key gender equality targets and indicators in all other SDGs. ... We have enacted laws against gender-based violence against women and children, gender-responsive budgeting systems where women’s issues are given priority ... [and provided] money for the establishment of a women’s bank...which is providing soft loans to women entrepreneurs ... We will ensure the full co-domestication of all women’s rights treaties, particularly CEDAW, to ensure women enjoy their full rights and opportunities. We will amend all remaining laws which maintain cultural aspects that are deemed discriminatory against women, specifically laws related to marriage, property and inheritance and development of a standalone act on ending violence against women. We will promote and support financing of gender equality in line with the Addis Ababa Financing for Development Agenda. Last but not least, I will implement the principle of 50/50, and will put in place effective mechanisms of monitoring and accountability to implement all gender equality and women’s rights commitments at national and local levels. [Collection] of sex-disaggregated data for evidence-based policy will also be undertaken. Tanzania commits itself to ensure that economic growth is leveraged to support women’s rights and economic equality and opportunity, which recognizes their critical importance for sustainable development. I therefore call on my fellow global leaders to put our commitments into action.” [Speech]

The United States of America to work towards a world where every woman and girl can enjoy their rights and freedoms

In a statement for the 20th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, US President Barack Obama recommitted his country to the basic principle affirmed in Beijing: “[w]omen's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace.” He said: “Within the United States, we are taking steps to support working families, encourage women and girls to pursue careers in the STEM fields, and provide additional opportunities for women entrepreneurs. But we know that much work remains ... my Administration continues to work to advance the empowerment and education of women and girls here and abroad. It's why we are dedicating additional resources to address violence against women and girls. It's why we are investing in job training and apprenticeships to help women earn better-paying jobs. It is why we launched ‘Let Girls Learn’, to address the challenges adolescent girls around the world face in enrolling, completing and succeeding in school. And it is why my Administration's Stand with Civil Society initiative is supporting the right of women and all people around the world to work peacefully for the betterment of their societies without fear that their rights and freedoms will be unjustly abridged. Today, we renew our resolve to work tirelessly towards a world where every woman and girl can enjoy the rights and freedoms that are her birthright.”

Viet Nam: President Truong Tan Sang

"Gender equality is not merely a goal but rather the common thread of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Viet Nam pledges to devote all resources needed to bridge the gender gap in all domains. Viet

Nam will continue to step up awareness-raising campaigns on gender equality, and work hard to ensure that 100 per cent of its radio and television stations broadcast exclusive gender equality programmes.... The HeforShe movement has found strong resonance in Viet Nam. Viet Nam pledges to further improve the access of women, especially those in difficult areas, to health care, education and employment services. Viet Nam sets a target that by 2020, 50 per cent of its rural women will have access to various forms of vocational training, and 95 per cent of women aged 15-40 living in remote areas [will be] literate. The country is also committed to sparing no efforts to gradually eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls, and has set a target that at least 50 per cent of all the reported victims of domestic violence [are] provided with health care and counselling services."

Zambia: President Edgar Chagwa Lungu

"It's been 20 years since the Beijing Platform for Action, and now 15 years since the Millennium Declaration. While much has been accomplished, I believe a lot more remains to be done. I therefore wish to commit myself and the people of Zambia to ensuring that what remains to be done will truly be done...My Government is committed to addressing the persistent gender inequalities and ensuring the empowerment of women in our pursuit of national development. While we have not had [large] numbers of women attaining elected legislative positions in my country, the Government has tried to compensate by having more women in strategic and top management positions...Violence against women and girls continues to be a problem...Zambia continues to fight this scourge...I'm proud to be a champion of HeForShe. Women's economic empowerment is one area that requires investment, [such as through] the facilitation of access and control of resources such as land, and credit for small to medium businesses...with a bias towards women...Our vision of the government is to achieve full participation of men and women in decision-making processes. And [attain] sustainable development through gender equity and equality so that no one is left behind on account of sex, age, social or economic and health status."

Source: UN Women

- See more at: <http://beijing20.unwomen.org/en/step-it-up/commitments#sthash.dRUSBZFX.dpuf>