

NGO Committee on the Status of Women  
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*Empowering  
Women*

The Future women and girls need: how can we make it happen?

Speech by Ms. Lakshmi Puri (10 minutes)  
Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director of UN Women

Madam Chairperson,  
*Representatives of the NGO community,*  
*Dear colleagues and friends,*

*→ beherans of Beijing  
Women's*

Let me start by congratulating the NGO Committee on the Status of Women for organizing this panel discussion and thank you for giving me the opportunity to reflect on the barriers and opportunities that exist to make gender equality a reality for women and girls worldwide.

*NGO CEO forum on BT2008*

We have gathered here with a very urgent message: it is time to accelerate efforts and ensure the commitments made by world leaders in Beijing in 1995 are fulfilled. It is time to put an expiration date on gender inequality around the world. As our Executive Director of UN Women always emphasizes – we must tell the international community that by 2030, gender based inequality and discrimination should be no more.

*I was in Rome for EU + Feminist Europe →*  
*What women & girls want & need*

When defining the "future women and girls need" we need to start by bringing the discussion to the right players – starting *with* women and girls. We need to learn from them, their needs, their demands and their hopes for their own future. And this is where civil society's role is critical not only their wisdom and experience on the ground but because they have been able to bring together women and girls and make their voices heard in the decision making process.

*UNWOMEN is there to amplify their  
further & convene the key players  
stakeholders to dialogue & to  
action*

Beijing+20 has given the international community the unique opportunity to reflect upon progress made, identify remaining challenges and strategies for moving forward – and this reflection will be voiced and influence the definition of the next global development framework we know as post-2015. **And we must make Beijing+20 a game changer for the women's rights agenda.**

*to define the future women & girls needs & work*

While our analysis of the national reports is ongoing, we are seeing progress in, for example:

*following from the ECES region critical areas*

- social protection policies to address women's poverty through diverse measures including pensions, family and child allowances and public works programs;
- policies to address the economic barriers to girls' education such as removal of fees and provision of stipends, particularly at the post-primary level;
- policies to guarantee women's sexual and reproductive health and rights including access to sexual and reproductive health information, education and services;
- public awareness campaigns and other specific initiatives to prevent violence against women and girls;
- labour market regulation and employment policies that seek to improve pay and conditions for women;
- quotas and temporary measures to increase women's participation in public life;
- legal reforms to repeal discriminatory laws in areas such as family law and property rights.

*mindset change on GEMW*

*institutions - Parliaments, etc, judi  
law enforcement  
Public Service  
Promotion  
Sector*

**Yet we are also seeing that much more needs to be done.** Women continue to face barriers in attaining better working conditions, prospects for advancement and equal pay or equal access to social protection – despite increased educational attainment and rising participation in the labour market. The disproportionate share of unpaid care work continues to limit women's and girls' ability to access education, training, and decent employment opportunities.

*to management & leadership positions*

And violence against women and girls persists in all of its many forms- and continues to be the most pervasive human rights violation of our times.

*Participation & leadership in public institutions & private sector*

Within a very diverse ECE region, the conditions women face in Central Asia and the Caucasus countries is different from those living in the European Union. I just to highlight a few interesting facts:

- Under MDG 3, gender equality targets in education have largely been achieved in the region, with women actually outnumbering men in tertiary education in many countries. However, these gains in education do not translate into parity in labour market participation.
- While overall, water quality has improved over the last 2 decades in Europe, there are still 120 million people in the Europe and Central Asia region living without access to safe drinking water or sanitation. People living in the rural and remote areas of the Caucasus, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia are the most at risk. Women in some areas must travel long distances to water sources, which may be contaminated, and in these areas water borne illness is not uncommon.
- Labour migration is prevalent throughout the region, with a majority (57%) of the international migrants in EU countries originating from the other countries in the region. Women make up 52% of these migrants and they often find work in low-wage sectors of the economy, which are often unregulated, making them vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, and violence. Furthermore, conflict and boundary disputes exist in many parts of the region but the crises in Ukraine and along the Turkey/Syria/Iraq border are new emerging dimensions within the larger frame of conflict in the region, including an overrepresentation of women and children among the internally displaced population. They face limited access to livelihoods and the resulting poverty led some IDPs to force girls into early marriage or take their children out of school to help earn an income.
- Increasing tolerance for nationalistic tendencies and xenophobia have been observed in countries throughout the region in recent years. A return to

*not even 33%*

*Gender Equality*

*unpaid care burden*

*women's access to essential public services*

*WASH*

*women's migrant workers trapped sex work exploit*

*of* ~~fundamental~~

conservative religious values is also being witnessed in a number of countries throughout the region.

*that militate against women's rights*

**So how can we build the future women and girls need?**

The Beijing twenty year review and appraisal is enhancing and reenergizing the international commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action as the golden standard of gender equality.

*→ Being mother based only, UNGA main bases*

*Goals  
Secret*

Together, we have succeeded in having a transformative goal on gender equality and the empowerment of women included in the proposal of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goal to the General Assembly. And we have made sure that gender equality and the empowerment of women is mainstreamed in other proposed goals.

The targets in the goal on gender equality and the empowerment of women go much further than MDG3 that include:

- ending all forms of discrimination and violence against women;
- recognizing and valuing unpaid care and domestic work, through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family;
- ensuring women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life. *SRHR*
- Also with the gender goal, the OWG recommended undertaking reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources all of which is extremely relevant to the elimination of poverty and discrimination.

*NOT*

Our challenge now is in closing the gap between commitments and implementation. Our priority now is ensuring that the recommendations made by

the OWG are adopted and strengthened into the post-2015 development agenda. Also, on the means of implementation we need that:

- The full diversity of stakeholders, especially of marginalized groups and individuals are meaningfully engaged with an understanding that their agency and voice are the keys that can unlock the fullest potential that communities have for building more sustainable and inclusive development.
- Legislation and policies must be backed by adequate and predictable resources, and be fully enforced and implemented at all levels. The European Union could be a driving force and an inspiration for other European countries.
- Effective accountability mechanisms are put in place— based on existing mechanism such as the Universal Periodic Review of the Human Rights Council - at the global, regional and national levels are key. Also, civil society has an important role to hold stakeholders accountable.
- We need also grassroots action to make the necessary changes at all levels. And we count on the continued analysis carried out by civil society. One recent example is the analysis by the European Women's Lobby "From Words to Action" – 20 years of the BPfA" which includes important recommendations for action.
- ~~And lastly~~ we must have a data revolution. We need evidence that can demonstrate whether progress is being made – and for whom. It is essential that we have data not only at the national level, but for different groups of people, in particular those who are poorest, most vulnerable and disadvantaged, and most at risk of being left behind. And in this regard we have made good progress with the adoption of a minimum set of 52 gender indicators by the Statistical Commission.

interest  
women is  
their duty

goals  
of  
private  
sector  
cross

• Last but not least women & girls need

Also, the European countries must be prepared to will be able to use the new and universal development framework as a reference for their own strategic planning processes. For the European Union this would be, for example, the Europe2020 strategy, the next Action Plan for Gender Equality and Women's

enhance dedicated and other...  
front resources, technical, financial support  
to capacity building, training

Empowerment in Development and the next Gender Equality Strategy, all currently under preparation.

*sparkling political will and energy*  
But let me emphasize that top down approach will no longer work. We need to reach out to individual people by using all of the resources we have at our disposal.

*drive a global movement in solidarity with women*  
UN Women has been doing just this through social media and online platforms.

*for gender equality, engaging young people, consciousness and women's leadership, new boys, the confidence in women*

- Through our "Empowering Women, Empowering Humanity: Picture It!" we have been able to spread awareness throughout the world on the 12 critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action and sensitizing the next generation to issues of gender equality and women's empowerment.

- Through our "HeForShe" campaign and the Secretary-General "UNiTE" Campaign, we have been able to reach millions of women and men to engage them on promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women. We are particularly proud of the attention our HeForShe campaign has received and how the men around the world are raising up in support of women's rights.

As the legendary feminist Gloria Steinem stated "The human race is like a bird with two wings, and if one wing is broken, no one can fly." We must and we need to make sure that the post-2015 development agenda ensures that women and all of humanity is able to reach its fullest potential and fly.

*movement*  
As my last message I would like to express UN Women gratitude to civil society for contributing to our creation and for being our biggest allies in the crusade to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women. The creation of UN Women's national, regional and global Civil Society Advisory Groups is a testament to this.

*we need it to continue to grow is prosper & we need to work in partner with*

*Role of Media & Social Media*

*standing up*

*CSO & women's*

Dear friends, the future women and girls need is one that <sup>believes</sup> doesn't give up  
on them. Let us raise the challenge! <sup>in their</sup> empowerment  
<sup>and their capacity</sup>

Thank you.

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*B* KCB region