



# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



## Women in the Changing World of Work: Planet 50-50 by 2030

### Message by UN Women executive director, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, on International Women's Day

ACROSS the world, too many women and girls spend too many hours on household responsibilities — typically more than double the time spent by men and boys.

They look after younger siblings, older family members, deal with illness in the family and manage the house. In many cases this unequal division of labour is at the expense of women's and girls' learning, of paid work, sports, or engagement in civic or community leadership. This shapes the norms of relative disadvantage and advantage, of where women and men are positioned in the economy, of what they are skilled to do and where they will work.

This is the unchanging world of unrewarded work, a globally familiar scene of withered futures, where girls and their mothers sustain the family with free labour, with lives whose trajectories are very different from the men of the household.

We want to construct a different world of work for women. As they grow up, girls must be exposed to a broad range of careers, and encouraged to make choices that lead beyond the traditional service and care options to jobs in industry, art, public service, modern agriculture and science.

We have to start change at home and in the earliest days of school, so that there are no places in a child's environment where they learn that girls must be less, have less, and dream smaller than boys.

This will take adjustments in parenting, curricula, educational settings, and channels for everyday stereotypes like television, advertising and entertainment; it will take determined steps to protect young girls from harmful cultural practices like early marriage, and from all forms of violence.

Women and girls must be ready to be part of the digital revolution. Currently only 18 percent of undergraduate computer science degrees are held by women. We must see a significant shift in girls all over the world taking STEM subjects, if women are to compete successfully for high-paying 'new collar' jobs. Currently, just 25 percent of the digital industries' workforce are women.

Achieving equality in the workplace will require an expansion of decent work and employment opportunities, involving governments' targeted efforts to promote women's participation in economic life, the support of important collectives like trade unions, and the voices of women themselves in framing solutions to overcome current barriers to women's participation, as examined by the UN secretary-general's High-level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment. The stakes are high: advancing women's equality could boost global gross domestic product by US\$12 trillion by 2025.

It also requires a determined focus on removing the discrimination women face on multiple and intersecting fronts over and above their gender: sexual orientation, disability, older age, and race. Wage inequality follows these: the average gender wage gap is 23 percent but this rises to 40 percent for African American women in the United States. In the European Union, elderly women are 37 percent more likely to live in poverty than elderly men.

In roles where women are already over-represented but poorly paid, and with little or no social protection, we must make those industries work better for women. For example, a robust care economy that responds to the needs of women and gainfully employs them; equal terms and conditions for women's paid work and unpaid work; and support for women entrepreneurs, including their access to finance and markets. Women in the informal sector also need their contributions to be acknowledged and protected. This calls for enabling macroeconomic policies that contribute to inclusive growth and significantly accelerate progress for the 770 million people living in extreme poverty.

Addressing the injustices will take resolve and flexibility from both public and private sector employers. Incentives will be needed to recruit and retain female workers; like expanded maternity benefits for women that also support their re-en-

try into work, adoption of the Women's Empowerment Principles, and direct representation at decision-making levels.

Accompanying this, important changes in the provision of benefits for new fathers are needed, along with the cultural shifts that make uptake of paternity and parental leave a viable choice, and thus a real shared benefit for the family.

In this complexity there are sim-

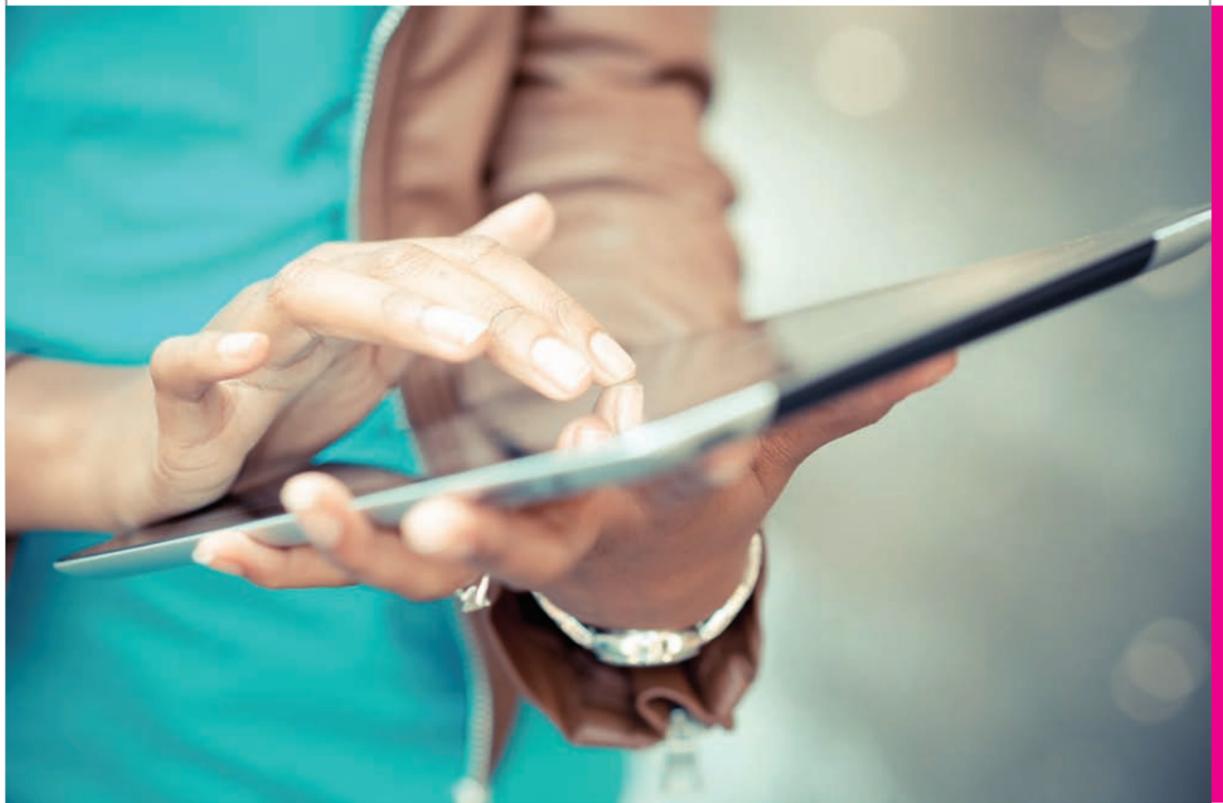
ple, big changes that must be made: for men to parent, for women to participate and for girls to be free to grow up equal to boys.

Adjustments must happen on all sides if we are to increase the number of people able to engage in decent work, to keep this pool inclusive, and to realise the benefits that will come to all from the equal world envisaged in our Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.



UN Women executive director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka.

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# Zim celebrates International Women's Day 2017

*THE 2017 International Women's Day celebrations were held yesterday (Wednesday) at the Harare International conference Centre in Harare.*

*Below is a speech by Women affairs Gender and Community development Minister Nyasha Chikwinya to commemorate the 2017 International Women's Day.*

March 8 marks a special day, earmarked globally, to celebrate and commemorate women.

These celebrations focus on respect, appreciation and love towards women for their economic, political and social achievements. During this time, recognition is given to women as the key agents for achieving economic, environmental and social changes required for sustainable development.

This year's commemorations are being held under the international theme: #BeBoldForChange#, and the national theme: "The woman we want: Is Bankable, Business Minded, Brainy, beautiful, Bold, Blessed and Balanced."

The 2017 theme could not have come at a better time especially when gender parity is the hype of the day. A lot of efforts and progress have been registered at the regional and international level towards achieving empowering women and elevating them politically, economically, culturally and socially.

Worth mentioning is the Commission on the Status of Women Conference which also made a point on the issue by captioning the theme of the 61 session as "the women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work."

Most professions are still male dominated, leaving women to occupy lower levels of the organizations result in failure to address concerns specific to women such as maternity leave, sexual harassment, to just plain old equality issues. Women are still struggling to make their mark in their chosen field, with many still feeling that they have to make the impossible decision to choose between career and family.

Policies and legal mechanisms alone cannot help in curbing the problems faced by women at the workplace. The overall attitude and accept-

ance level of people need to change. The problems that women face in their workplaces should be put to an end.

This year's commemorations will be committed to:

- Sharing experiences and initiatives in addressing the challenges faced by women with emphasis on the environment at their workplaces.

- Publicise women's achievements and the challenges they face thereby mobilizing support for their rights and empowerment projects.

- Source membership for women's associations through exhibiting available opportunities and challenges.

- To source for women's markets.

As we join the rest of the world in celebrating International Women's Day, my ministry will also be launching the Women's Bank as a champion programme for women empowerment. The event intends to:

- To raise the nation's awareness on the need and importance of women's economic empowerment.

- To share experiences and initiatives in addressing the challenges faced by women with emphasis on financial inclusion.

- To network and mobilise for meaningful broad based women empowerment.

- To celebrate women's achievements.

- Help promote change, demolish stereotypes and promote a solid understanding of the actual situation of women.

- To raise awareness that gender issues and concerns have to be integrated into development policies, plans and strategies.

- To make recommendations on problems requiring immediate attention in the field of women's rights.

- To advocate for the implementation of Integrated Agreed measures for the advancement of women.

The international Women's Day provides a platform for putting women at a vantage pedestal. I am urging everyone to take bold pragmatic action to accelerate gender parity.



Women affairs Gender and Community development Minister Nyasha Chikwinya



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ACCORDING to the United Nations, the first International Women's Day was marked in 1909 in America, marked as the National Woman's Day on February 28 that year. The Socialist Party of America marked this day in honour of the 1908 garment workers' strike in New York, in which women had protested against bad working conditions and work hours.

Since then, this day celebrates women's contribution and also talks about their development. International Women's Day has helped to build a strong support system and courage for all women. The first International Women's Day was celebrated on March 19, 1911. The first Women's Day on March 8 was marked in 1914, in Germany.

In December 1977, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution and proclaimed a United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace. This day marked the demand of strong rights for women, including the right to vote, to hold public office, and a voice against employment and sex discrimination.

The International Women's Day movement has helped to bring about a major change in the world and women are looked upon with respect and dignity, but there is a long way to go before women get the respect they deserve from men. There are certain colours which represent women's struggles on International Women's Day, including purple, white and green. On Women's Day, activists wear a purple ribbon on their wrist to support equality, justice, dignity and respect to women.

**UN supports International**

## Be bold for change

### Women's Day:

In 1945, a Charter of the United Nations signed the first international agreement for the equal rights between women and men. The UN became a major force in helping change the traditional legacy of women. Every year, there is a unique theme for International Women's Day by the UN. The UN theme for International Women's Day 2017 is 'Women in the Changing World of Work: Planet 50-50 by 2030' with the hashtag is #BeBoldForChange. Every year, the UN theme for International Women's Day sends out a strong and powerful message for gender equality.

The targets of the "Women in the Changing World of Work: Planet 50-50 by 2030" are as follows:

- By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and Goal-4 effective learning outcomes.

- By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.

- End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.

- Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.

International Women's Day is a time to reflect on progress made, to call for change and to celebrate acts of courage and determination by ordinary women who have played an extraordinary role in the history of their countries and communities.

The idea of this theme is to consider how to accelerate the 2030 Agenda, building momentum for the effective implementation of the new Sustainable Development Goals, especially goal number 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; and number 4: Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning. The theme will also focus on new commitments under UN Women's Step It Up initiative, and other existing commitments on gender equality, women's empowerment and women's human rights.

The world of work is changing, and with significant implications for women. On one hand, we have globalisation, technological and digital revolution and the opportunities they bring, and on the other hand, the growing informality of labour, unstable livelihoods and incomes, new fiscal and trade policies and environmental impacts—all of which must be addressed in the context of women's economic empowerment.

The Charter of the United Nations, signed in 1945, was the first international agreement to affirm the principle of equality between women and men. Since then, the UN has helped create a historic legacy of internationally-agreed strategies, standards, programmes and goals to advance the status of women worldwide.

## Arundel School



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