

Speech by Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka at 2014 Global Summit of Women
June 5, 2014; Paris, France

Good evening.

It is wonderful to be here today with so many outstanding women, and so many enlightened men!

I'd like to thank our President and my old friend, Irene Natividad, for her leadership and tireless work for gender equality.

As the Executive Director of UN Women, the development of new partnerships for the empowerment of women is a top priority for me.

I have attended this forum in the past, and I believe that *GlobeWomen* is a fantastic example of the type of partnership that can achieve real change.

With government, the private sector, and the non-profit sector working together, we can drive rapid and transformative change for women and girls.

I firmly believe that to succeed in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment, we need the institutional power of government, the passion and expertise of the not-for-profit sector, and the creativity and dynamism of private enterprise.

Gender equality has immense social and economic benefits.

Women's empowerment is not just the right thing to do; it also makes sound business sense.

I'm very pleased to be able to report to you that earlier this week, UN Women hosted the first meeting of our Private Sector Leadership Advisory Council.

It brings together CEOs from companies with global reach, who have demonstrated a commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

Our plan is to collaborate closely, using our respective strengths to improve and expand efforts to include women in the economy, end violence against women, and mobilize resources and support for UN Women.

We have 10 CEOs currently on board, but we are expecting the group to grow – and we welcome interested parties!

A starting point for UN Women's engagement with the private sector, as you may be aware, is with our Women's Empowerment Principles.

This seven-step blueprint to empower women in the workplace, the marketplace and the community has now been signed by over 700 CEOs from around the world.

I urge you to join them in confronting inequality and driving inclusion and innovation!

Nearly 20 years ago, the world came together in Beijing for the Fourth World Conference on Women.

There, 189 governments adopted a visionary roadmap for gender equality: the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

More than 17,000 delegates and 30,000 activists pictured a world where women and girls had equal rights, freedom and opportunity in every sphere of life.

While much progress has been made in the past two decades, no country can claim to have achieved equality between men and women.

It is time for the world to come together again for women and girls and complete this journey.

UN Women has launched a year-long campaign to re-energize the vision laid out at the Beijing Women's Conference.

Our goal is to renew commitment, strengthen action and increase resources to realize gender equality, women's empowerment and human rights.

We call it: Empowering Women, Empowering Humanity: Picture It!

The Beijing Declaration laid out actions to address 12 critical areas of concern for women and girls across the globe.

Governments, the private sector and other partners were urged to:

- reduce women and girls' poverty;
- ensure their right to access education and training;
- safeguard their health – including their sexual and reproductive health;
- protect women and girls from violence and discrimination;
- to ensure that technological advances benefit all; and
- to promote their full and equal participation in society, politics, and the economy.

We are calling on governments to realize the commitment they made back in 1995 to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a visionary roadmap for gender equality.

And we are calling on the people of the world to picture AND take action to realize a future without gender inequality.

A world without discrimination and violence against women.

A world with equal pay for equal work.

A world in which girls' education is recognized as an investment in the future.

A world where every woman, man, girl and boy enjoys human rights and human dignity.

I am pleased to announce that UN Women has a new campaign called HeForShe to engage men and boys to speak out for the rights of women and girls. We have reached more than 27 million people on social media.

A man in Nigeria who signed on as a He for She has committed himself to speak out whenever he hears of a woman or girl suffering from violence at the hands of men. He has intervened on behalf of his neighbor woman and the violence has stopped.

A man in Zimbabwe who has declared himself a He for She has started a group of husbands in his community to advance gender equality.

I encourage all men here to join and take a stand and be on the right side of history. Be a He for She!

I want to close by sharing with you call to action for all of humanity, which is the SHE Imperative.

The S stands for safety so that every woman and girl can live free of violence.

The H stands for human rights to which every woman and girl and all human beings are rightfully entitled.

The E stands for equality.

Together we can make this century, the 21st century, the one to realize the promise of the founding document of the United Nations, the promise in the UN Charter of the equal rights of men and women.

I thank you and look forward to working with you to make this promise a reality.

Thank you.