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United Nations Economic and Social Council

TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES

**Observance of International Women's Day
6 March 2020**

**Statement by the
President of the Economic and Social Council
H.E. Mona Juul**

It is an honour to issue this statement on the occasion of the 2020 International Women's Day in my capacity as President of the Economic and Social Council.

ECOSOC has a long tradition of, and deep commitment to, fighting for the realisation of women's rights, of gender equality, and the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and girls.

From its establishment, in 1946 as a functional commission of ECOSOC, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) has time and again played a pivotal role in shaping the international normative agenda for promoting women's rights, and achieving gender equality.

As early as 1948 ECOSOC had adopted a resolution calling on Member States to implement the principle of equal pay for work of equal value for men and women everywhere. This then contributed to the adoption, in 1951, of the [Convention concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value](#).

Then again in 1953 CSW set the agenda through drafting the first international instrument to recognize and protect the political rights of women. Followed by the first international agreements on women's rights in marriage in 1957 and 1962.



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These early efforts to secure women's rights, culminated in the adoption, by the General Assembly in 1967, of the [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#) (CEDAW). CEDAW, a legally binding document, in turn laid the groundwork for the Beijing Declaration and Programme of Action whose 25th anniversary we are celebrating this year.

These legal, and standard-setting, achievements towards equal rights would not have been possible without the vision, dedication and grit of thousands of primarily women advocates who argued, advocated and persuaded those around them that women's rights were human rights that needed to be respected and upheld.

Today in 2020, as we look back at our achievements in securing and expanding women's rights, we cannot overlook that much more still needs to be done to promote women's rights and eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls, everywhere.

Too many women and girls today continue to be denied their rights.

Too many women and girls today continue to be left behind.

Yet we know that gender equality and the empowerment of women is central to the achievement of every single one of the sustainable development goal in the 2030 Agenda. Therefore, promoting women's rights and equality needs to be a key priority of the Decade of Action to deliver sustainable development for every woman, man and child by 2030.

This year, ECOSOC and the High-level political forum on sustainable development will focus on the topic of "Transformative pathways to realize the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development". Gender equality and the empowerment of women is one such transformative pathway for accelerating SDG achievement. It is in and by itself a critical accelerator for SDG progress.



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As President of the Economic and Social Council, I commit ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies, in particular the Commission on the Status of Women, to continue the important work of advancing the global agenda on gender equality and the empowerment of women to complete the unfinished business of defending and upholding the rights of women and girls everywhere.



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