



## **Concept Note**

### **Informal High Level Event of the General assembly:**

#### **Women in Power - Call to Action &**

#### **Women leaders - voices for change and inclusion:**

#### **Joining forces and redoubling efforts to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment for all**

**September 12, 2019**

**ECOSOC Chamber**

As President of the United Nations General Assembly's 73rd Session (September 2018-September 2019), H.E. María Fernanda Espinosa has ensured that gender equality and women's empowerment are among the foundational priorities during her tenure. To this end in March 2019, following her High-Level event 'Women in Power' the President of the General Assembly (PGA) launched her Call to Action for equality and women's empowerment together with 22 leaders who participated in the high-level event. The Call for Action identifies eight key areas to ensure women's leadership through concrete efforts in the areas of policy making and advocacy.

The President also established an informal Group of eminent leaders to identify the obstacles that impede women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels. The Group met in two occasions to share ideas and experiences on the issue of women's leadership.

Also in the context of International Women's Day – 8th March 2019 – to call attention to the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women and to underscore the need to actively counter threats posed to the multilateral agenda that is inextricably linked with the core values and objectives of promoting the rights of women and girls globally – 47 women leaders joined together to forge Women leaders - voices for change and inclusion.

Conceived and led by Helen Clark, former prime minister of New Zealand from 1999 to 2008 and Director General of the United Nations Development Programme from 2009 to 2017, Irina Bokova former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria and Director General for UNESCO from 2009 to 2017, and Susana Malcorra, former Minister of

Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina 2016-17 and Chef de Cabinet of Secretary-General from 2012-2015, the initiative brought together women who as part of their individual profiles and professional trajectories have forged significant contributions from the unifying perspective of multilateral agendas for promoting humanitarian relief, advocating for human rights principles and normative policies, advancing sustainable development, and seeking to lend solution to some of the world's most complex conflicts and challenges.

The initiative also garnered the strong support of the President of the United Nations General Assembly (PGA) who, in her letter dated 25 March 2019 commended the efforts of the Women leaders - voices for change and inclusion initiative, underscoring her focus on bolstering gender equality and women's empowerment as priorities and calling attention to her Call to Action that identifies the eight key areas to ensure women's leadership through concrete efforts in the areas of policy making and advocacy. In voicing her support, the PGA stressed that "as women leaders, we have a special responsibility to raise our voices in support of gender equality and inclusion everywhere..." Joining the Women leaders - voices for change and inclusion in her personal capacity, the PGA also expressed her hope that synergies could be created "between the two initiatives by joining forces and redoubling our efforts to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment for all."

In this context the informal event of the General Assembly under the leadership of both initiatives has the objective to call for synergies and to garner the confluence and momentum generated by the PGA's Call to Action and the Women leaders - voices for change and inclusion initiatives.

In particular the event will be focus on:

1. Create synergies with networks that encourage women participation and support the sharing of knowledge and experience (based on point 3 of the Call for Action)
2. Consider measures to create an environment where gender equality is respected, and inclusion is part of the organizational culture in all spheres of society, including the role of men in gender equality (based on point 8 of the Call for Action)
3. Promote the mentoring of young women to strengthen their capacity to participate in politics (based on point 1 of the Call for Action)

The event also will bring the opportunity to address the results of the strategy developed by the President of the General Assembly to push forward the gender equality and empower of women agenda in the work of the General Assembly and to gain momentum for the preparation of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action.