

Open Letter to the next UN Secretary-General on Gender Equality

Dear Future UN Secretary-General,

We – organisations, advocates, practitioners and researchers committed to gender equality – are writing to urge the next Secretary-General to operationalise gender equality across the UN system.

We recognise and build on the work of the many organisations and advocates who have long pushed for gender equality in international institutions – from campaigns for gender parity in international courts and tribunals, to those calling for the UN's first woman Secretary-General.

We share the conviction that it is past time for the United Nations to be led by a woman. Our focus is what the future Secretary-General must be held accountable for in delivering on gender equality.

The next Secretary-General will take office at a moment of growing pressure: coordinated global rollback on women's rights, shrinking civic space for feminist movements, silencing of public commitment and action on intersectional gender justice, and a funding crisis that has hit gender equality programmes disproportionately.

Gender equality shapes outcomes across peace and security, health, education, development, humanitarian response, climate action and human rights. Yet gender equality is dangerously backsliding in many countries around the world.

The stakes for what the UN delivers on gender equality have rarely been higher.

We believe the next Secretary-General must act on five commitments to advance gender equality. The purpose of these commitments is to shape a United Nations that delivers better outcomes for everyone everywhere:

Measure it.

Every UN agency must report sex-disaggregated data as standard without exception. You cannot manage what you do not measure.

Analyse it.

Gender analysis must inform every UN initiative before it launches, not after. Retrofitting gender onto programmes designed without it does not work.

Centre it.

Feminist voices must shape every UN process, not as guests, but as architects. Consultation is not the same as power.

Fund it.

Gender equality needs dedicated resources in every UN budget. Mainstreaming without money is just words.

Institutionalise it.

Gender equality must be a condition of leadership across the UN system that is built in, not bolted on. What is optional will be skipped.

These are not new ideas. They are the promises of the Beijing Platform for Action, adopted by 189 governments thirty years ago, repeatedly reaffirmed, yet still undelivered. The UN's System-Wide Gender Equality Acceleration Plan sets out the challenge and the ambition. The five commitments above provide a pathway to realising these goals.

We call on the next Secretary-General to deliver on these five commitments – and we, the undersigned, commit to holding them to account during their tenure.

The undersigned:

See the full list of signatories [here](#).