



THE GENDER EQUALITY CLARION CALL

Gender equality lies at the very heart of the three pillars of the United Nations: peace and security, human rights, and development.

Important gains have been made to advance gender equality across the world. Women's poverty is finally declining. Girls have made significant strides in education. A surge in positive legal reforms that promote women's rights are yielding immense benefits.¹

And yet, over recent years, we have observed a growing backlash against women and girls' rights, and the very concept of gender equality.

This backlash is compounded by conflict and crises, reduced civic space and increased restrictions on individual freedoms.

Now, almost 30 years after the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, that generated the most widely endorsed and visionary agenda for women's rights, many of the hard-won victories for women and girls are at serious risk.

These realities demand a radically different approach by the UN System.

1. The Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: [The Gender Snapshot 2024](https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/gender-snapshot/2024/) (https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/gender-snapshot/2024/)

In today's deeply polarized context, **the United Nations System must and lead the world humbly and boldly towards gender equality – both as a human rights issue and as a central prerequisite to peace and security, and sustainable development.**

Why? Because women and girls still see their rights denied, and they expect the UN System to stand with and for them.

In accordance with the United Nations Charter, international normative standards and Member States commitments, it is our duty to uphold the principles of human rights, equality and non-discrimination.

The current backlash is a stark reminder that rights and progress, once fought for, must be defended vigilantly. We must have a common understanding of the challenges in front of us as the UN system.



We must not remain silent in the face of violations of women and girls' rights.



We must send a clear message about the importance of gender equality, our collective commitment to human rights, and our core values and obligations.



We must counter every effort to undermine gender equality with a louder, stronger, and more unified call for it.

That is why the leadership of the UN System is adopting this new, internal **Gender Equality Clarion Call**. This Gender Equality Clarion Call requires all personnel in leadership positions across the UN System to act together, with urgency, in all countries and regions across the world:

1.

All UN leaders stand unwavering and united to uphold a strong policy stance on gender equality everywhere.

Our system-wide norm-based position will defend and advance gender equality and the human rights of women and girls in all their diversity across all UN System engagements with Member States and non-state actors.

2.

We strategically address pushbacks on gender equality and women and girls' rights everywhere through multistakeholder engagement.

We will take active measures to prevent rollback on gender equality, as well as move it forward. We will intentionally build an enabling environment so that women and girls' rights can thrive in all countries and regions across the world.

3.

Our coordinated and joint activities result in the reversal of systemic gender inequality across all sectors and UN pillars in all Member States.

Lack of policy coherence constrains our ability to uphold a strong policy stance and undermines our advocacy. Coordinated and coherent approaches to reverse gender inequalities will ensure that the United Nations system is more joined-up at all levels, for better impact.

4.

Support to and protection of women human rights defenders is part of our strategy to advance gender equality in accordance with international norms and standards.

Because of misogyny and a growing anti-rights agenda, women human rights defenders face increasing risks of violence and diminishing funding, bolstered by efforts to undermine inclusive democratic governance. The UN System will protect women human rights defenders and their organizations, and support and amplify the work that they do.

This Clarion Call is a foundational accelerator of the **Secretary-General's Gender Equality Acceleration Plan**, an agile, multi-sectoral, and impactful system-wide solution that places gender equality and women's rights at its very heart, refusing to settle for anything less than transformative results.

By actively advancing gender equality, we can break cycles of poverty, ill health, violence and inequality. By ensuring women's meaningful participation, protection, and rights, we can contribute to preventing conflicts and instability.

Let us show the world that the UN System clearly defines gender equality as an issue of power, critical to dismantle patriarchy, and a human rights imperative, essential for our operational effectiveness.

We will be judged not by our words but by our actions. Because gender equality is the way forward—not just for women, not just for girls, but for the future of humanity.



**GENDER
EQUALITY**
Acceleration Plan