REPORT

WOMEN IN PARLIAMENTS GLOBAL FORUM

SUMMIT 2015

New Leadership for Global Challenges

23–25 March 2015 | Addis Ababa

THE SPIRIT OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY: ADVANCING SOCIETY
23–25 March 2015 | African Union Headquarters | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
About WIP

The Women in Parliaments Global Forum (WIP) is the global network of female Parliamentarians at national level, including the European Parliament, of whom there currently are around 9000.

WIP is an independent, international and post-partisan foundation established with the purpose of advancing society by building a network between Women in Parliaments.

Elected political decision-makers have a unique perspective on the issues relevant to people, as they are in permanent direct exchange with their electorate. Parliamentarians have privileged insight into, and influence on legislative issues as a result of continuous contact and exchange with their electorate and stakeholders.

Women need three things to fulfil their potential: communication, connection, community. At WIP, optimizing the power of communication and connection builds new communities of support for women in politics everywhere.
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INTRODUCTION

The Women in Parliaments Global Forum (WIP) Summit 2015 was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 23-25 March and focused on the theme of New Leadership for Global Challenges. The summit was co-hosted by the African Union in the Headquarters of the African Union Commission and was co-financed by the European Commission. Over 400 female Members of Parliament from 92 countries attended the WIP Summit 2015 which took place during the “African Union Year of Women’s Empowerment and Development towards Africa’s Agenda 2063” and the “European Year For Development”.

Parliamentarians from the WIP Global Network and high level speakers from a broad range of sectors delivered keynote speeches and participated in panel discussions, interactive sessions and networking during the WIP Summit 2015, exploring themes such as development, entrepreneurship, regional cooperation, education, health, the female political career and the necessity of female representation in political leadership in order to achieve true democracy in society.

WIP Awards were granted to countries which are recognised for their political empowerment of women, and to countries which show regional leadership in closing the gender gap in politics – namely Sweden, Ecuador, Bangladesh, Peru, Tunisia, Italy and Kenya. The Annual WIP Country Case Study was also launched at the WIP Summit 2015, which aims to enable countries to learn from each other’s successes and provide a platform for the exchange of ideas, best practices and problem-solving for members of the WIP Global Network. In 2015, Iceland was chosen as WIP’s Country Case Study, due to its exceptional success in closing the gender gap, and the 100 year anniversary of the women’s right to vote in Iceland.

WIP partnered with the United Nations and Government of Chile to present the Call to Action at the WIP Summit 2015, which was affirmed and signed by Members of Parliament in attendance. This Call to Action highlights how progress towards gender equality has been too slow and uneven, and underlines the necessity of taking immediate action in order to eliminate gender inequality by 2030 and achieving equal representation of Women in Parliaments.

A key objective of the WIP Summit 2015 was to facilitate lively discussions and enable participants to share views and discuss common solutions, the outcomes of which are outlined in the 2015 Women in Parliaments Global Forum (WIP) Declaration. The success of the WIP Summit 2015 provides a platform from which members of the WIP Global Network can tackle the numerous barriers to women’s empowerment that still lie ahead. Female parliamentarians are essential forces of change, and together Women in Parliaments can continue to address serious barriers to female political participation.
DECLARATION

We, Women in Parliaments, participating in the WIP Summit 2015 “New Leadership for Global Challenges”, held in Addis Ababa on 23-25 March 2015, organised by the Women in Parliaments Global Forum, co-hosted by the African Union Commission during the African Union Year for Women’s Empowerment and supported by the European Commission during the European Year for Development:

Declare 2015 to be a momentous year for regenerating commitment to achieving gender equality and sustainable development;

State the importance of freedom, peace and security, respect for all human rights, including the right to good governance, gender equality and women’s empowerment;

Reiterate that equality and growth can only truly be realised in societies that offer equal access to health care and education; in societies that have institutionalised mechanisms which support female political participation and female economic empowerment; and in societies that depreciate harmful traditional practices;

Commend the progress made with respect to reducing poverty and closing the gender gap, especially within the frameworks of the Millennium Development Goals and the Beijing Platform for Action;

Express our concern that in spite of certain development, progress is still slow and uneven around the globe;

Emphasise that robust, transparent and inclusive mechanisms of accountability to ensure implementation will be essential for the success of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Beijing Platform for Action;

Acknowledge that Parliaments play a pivotal role in deepening democracy and must monitor the implementation processes as part of their constitutional mandates of oversight and accountability;

Recognise that while each country faces specific challenges to achieving gender equality and sustainable development, the overall goal remains universal;

Take note that cooperation across borders, regions and parliaments serves as a strategic instrument to help improve responsiveness to broader inclusion and wider political participation;

We, Women in Parliaments, support UN Women and the Chilean Government in

➢ • Calling for renewed political commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals and to close remaining gender gaps and fully implement the 12 critical areas of the Beijing Platform for Action;
➢ • Calling for the empowerment of women, the realisation of human rights of women and girls and the expiry of gender inequality by 2030;
➢ • Calling for an end to the funding gap on gender equality, and matching of commitments with means of implementation;

We, Women in Parliaments
➢ Reaffirm our commitment to implement, monitor and assess the SDGs and the Beijing Platform for Action to create equal and developed societies for all.
Keynote Speeches

See the videos of the keynote speakers, listed below in order of appearance.

• **Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma**, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, WIP Advisory Board Member

• **Neven Mimica**, EU Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development

• **Silvana Koch-Mehrin**, Founder of WIP and former Vice-President of the European Parliament

• **Carlos Lopes**, Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

• **Lakshmi Puri**, Deputy Executive Director, UN Women, WIP Advisory Board Member, Representing the United Nations Secretary General Ban ki-Moon

• **Irina Bokova**, Secretary-General, UNESCO

• **Yvonne Tsikata**, Chief of Staff, World Bank

• **Mari Kiviniemi**, Deputy Secretary General, OECD, Prime Minister of Finland (2010-2011)

• **Joyce Banda**, President of Malawi (2012-2014)
Video Messages

- **Michelle Bachelet**, President Chile
- **Gordon Brown**, United Nations Special Envoy for Education
- **Violeta Bulc**, EU Commissioner for Transport
- **Kristalina Georgieva**, European Commission Vice President
- **John Key**, Prime Minister of New Zealand
- **Gabriela Rivadeneira**, President of the National Assembly of Ecuador
- **Kailash Sartyarthi**, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate
- **Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir**, former Prime Minister of Iceland
WIP Awards 2015

WIP believes that best practice examples are most convincing and can serve to encourage others. Based on the ranking of the WEF’s Global Gender Gap Report and the IPU’s ranking of Women in Politics, the WIP Awards acknowledge countries that are recognised for their political empowerment of women, and to countries which show regional leadership in closing the gender gap in politics. The aim is to inspire other countries to lead by the same example. In 2015, rankings showed that the same countries as in previous years topped the charts. To highlight and further encourage important progress made also in other countries, the WIP Awards 2015 were presented to countries not necessarily at the top of the ranking, but part of the frontrunners.

**Category Women in Parliaments**
- **Presenter:** **Rwanda**, Global Champion in percentage of Women in Parliaments and WIP Award 2013 recipient, represented by Donatille Mukabalisa, Speaker of Parliament.
- **Recipient:** **Sweden**, represented by Åsa Regnér Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality.
- **Recipient:** **Ecuador**, represented by Ximena Ponce, Member of Parliament, Former Minister for Economic Inclusion.

**Category Closing the Gender Gap in the Arab World**
- **Presenter:** **Algeria**: Kheira Leila Ettayeb, former Minister, officially representing H.E President of the Republic of Algeria Abdelaziz Bouteflika.
- **Recipient:** **Tunisia**: Faouiza Foddha, MP, Vice-president of the Tunisian Assembly of the Representatives of the people will receive the award on behalf of Tunisia.

**Category Political Empowerment : Ministerial Positions**
- **Presenter:** **Zainab Bangura**, UN Special Representative of Secretary General on Sexual Violence.
- **Recipient:** **Italy**: represented by Paola de Micheli, Under Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Economy.
- **Recipient:** **Bangladesh**, represented by Shahriar Alam, State MInister of Foreign Affairs.

**Category Global winners in closing the Gender Gap**
- **Presenter:** **Iceland**, represented by Hanna Birna Kristjánsdóttir, Member of Parliament, Former Minister of Interior.
- **Recipient:** **Kenya**, represented by Senator Naisula Lesuuda.
In 2015, the willingness of countries to commit to the next round of development goals will be put to the test, as these goals are negotiated and decided upon by the United Nations Member States.

The panelists discussed lessons learned since 2000, when 189 countries pledged to make progress on eight Millennium Development Goals in 15 years. The session also explored the role female parliamentarians play in ensuring that the implementation and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals. The panelists highlighted that the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals proved that the international community indeed can be mobilized to confront complex challenges. Discussions centred on the fact that the most important difference between the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals, is that the SDGs have at their core the resolve that no one is to be left behind and includes a solid determination to address inequalities. Girls and women shall have full and equal access to education, healthcare, sanitation and employment possibilities.

As key to the success of the SDGs, the panelists mentioned that Governments truly must prove that this agenda is a promise to the people and that national and international, private and public resources are mobilised alongside every effort in society to deliver on this promise. In conclusion, the discussants mentioned that the SDGs must be efficiently translated to national and local levels, to become the basis of a new social contract and a tool for accountability that parliamentarians can use in dialogue with their constituencies and governments.

Speakers:

- **Thomas Gass**, Assistant Secretary General United Nations Department for Social and Economic Affairs

- **Bineta Diop**, African Union Special Envoy for Women Peace and Security

- **Neven Mimica**, EU Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development

- **Carmen Moreno**, Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Commission of Women

* Session Chair: **Silvana Koch-Mehrin**, Founder of WIP, Former Vice-President of the European Parliament
The former president of Malawi, Joyce Banda, delivered a keynote speech that focused on the theme “The end of Power? Redefining leadership”. She addressed different styles of leadership and stated that leaders must be servants of the people. The former President highlighted that women by nature are born leaders as they often seek to serve people first and not to be served first. Joyce Banda urged the outcomes of the WIP Summit 2015 to feed into the Post 2015 agenda and Beijing +20 discussions, to ensure the achievement of gender equality, women’s empowerment and maternal health across the world.

In the following panel discussion, the participants from different continents reflected upon the world as we know it today, where power is shifting in a fast changing environment. This calls for a new type of flexible, innovative leadership and better styles of governance.

The panel discussion concluded that we need role models for new leadership, stressing that leadership can no longer be by control and command; it is about listening and leveraging a response, that leaders put people at the centre not only profit, that leadership has to strive for inclusion and that true leadership is about participation and engagement.

Speakers:

- **Maria Lucero Saldaña Perez**, Member of the Senate, Mexico
- **Mona Al Bahar**, Member of the Federal Council, United Arab Emirates
- **Febe Potgieter**, Advisor to AU Commission Chairperson Dlamini-Zuma
- **Stefana Miladinovic**, Member of the National Assembly, Serbia

**Session Chair:** **Begoña Lasagabaster**, Acting Director of UN Women’s Policy Division, UN Women
Reports from Plenary Sessions

Financing for Equality - Wednesday 25 March

The WIP Summit 2015 preceded the International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa, in July 2015, which will result in a new financing deal to implement the Post 2015 Agenda. Following the MDGs, large financial gaps remain and the commitments related to gender equality have not been realised. In order to truly advance the achievement of gender equality, ambitious financing will be needed to turn political aspirations into a reality.

This session organised by WIP, sought to point out the role female parliamentarians and leaders have in pressuring national development aid strategies to include the resources for financing equality. In the discussion, panellists reflected on the overall need to better understand the financing and costs related to empowering women.

Participants highlighted the need for better availability and use of gender data to guide financing discussions and policies. Gender equality must also become a priority for donors and should be seen as an investment and key accelerator for achieving sustainable development. Furthermore, panellists highlighted the importance of exploring different sources of financing and that one crucial issue is domestic public finance and domestic resource mobilisation.

The discussion also centred on the fact that gender aspects of funding should not only focus on the stand-alone sustainable development goal on Gender Equality, but also include other SDGs.

Speakers:

- **Caren Grown**, Head of Gender, World Bank Group
- **Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi**, Special Envoy for Gender, African Development Bank
- **Paola de Micheli**, Under Secretary for Ministry of Finance and Economy, Italy
- **Alexandra Otway**, Minister for Implementation, Grenada
- **Ximena Ponce**, Member of Parliament, Former Minister for Economic and Social Inclusion, Ecuador
- **Session Chair: Erastus Mwencha**, Deputy Chairperson, African Union Commission
The Future of Entrepreneurship

Today, about 200 million people globally are unemployed and estimates indicate that 600 million new jobs will be needed worldwide in the next 15 years. This panel explored the crucial role policy-makers play in stimulating inclusive growth through effective policies, regulation and incentives and how gender considerations are key to achieving sustainable private sector developments.

The panelists discussed reasons why there are not more female entrepreneurs. Only 30-37% of all SMEs are female owned which clearly shows that there are big gaps in the entrepreneurial space. The panelists agreed that explanations include women’s lack of access to finance (for example the inability of women to have a bank accounts; worldwide, 1.3 billion women do not have bank accounts), women’s roles as mothers and social norms as well as legal restrictions (for example inheritance and divorce laws vary widely and often heavily restrict or discriminate against women).

The participants underlined the importance of access to funding, good networks, new legislation, education, leadership and confidence in yourself. One of the panelists drew on experiences from Germany that recently introduced legislation which stipulates that 33% of leadership positions in the public and private sector must be occupied by females.

Speakers:

- **Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi**, Special Envoy for Gender, African Development Bank
- **Caren Grown**, Head of Gender, World Bank Group
- **Helen Hai**, Chief Executive Officer of Made in Africa Initiative
- **Kersten Karuschkat**, German Entrepreneur
- **Gundrun Zollner**, Member of Parliament, Germany

Moderator: **Celestine Munda**, EY Partner
Where there is a lack of international cooperation, countries and regional organisations should step in. Stronger regional networks can play a vital role in attaining broader results and consensus. The objectives for cooperation may vary, but working together across borders in regional networks is crucial to take joint action. This session sought to explore the benefits of regional cooperation and the mechanisms involved for enhancing female participation in both the public and private sphere.

The invited speakers represented different types of cooperation networks and were invited to share their experience on how regional mechanisms can help improve responsiveness to broader inclusion and wider political participation. Several International organizations and regional organisations play an active role in contributing to enhance women’s political participation and this session also explored ways to further collaborate in this field.

The panelists concluded that in today's interconnected global world, there is still a very important place for regional co-operation - but it doesn't have to be based simply on geography. At the panel session on regional co-operation, four panelists and the audience considered different types of regional co-operation that work effectively, including examples based on common language as well as cultural or geographic ties.

Speakers:

• **Carmen Moreno**, Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Commission of Women

• **Françoise Bertieaux**, Chair of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Francophonie

• **Dubravka Filipovski**, Member of Parliament Serbia, Founder of the Women Parliamentary Network

• **Kasthuriraani A/P Potto**, Member of Parliament, Malaysia

• Moderator: **Jane Dudman**, The Guardian
The female political career

This panel sought to discuss the gender specific obstacles to participating in political life as well as experience of disproportionate levels of threats, harassments and violence.

The Parallel Session ‘The Female Political Career’ presented the joint WIP-World Bank Study on how non-legal barriers for women in politics can be abolished. Women’s lack of experience in power positions was brought up as one of many reasons to why women are underrepresented in the political sphere.

Women need to be encouraged to take on positions that are new to women and to overcome the fear of the unknown. At the same time it is crucial for women to access their rights, money and education in order for them to prosper in their careers, be it in politics or on other arenas. Media was also addressed as being an impactful player in putting obstacles in female’s political career. Media should play a constructive role in highlighting and supporting female careers instead of attacking and spreading bad images of women thriving to gain a successful political career.

The cultural aspect of what is expected of women also plays part in putting obstacles to female political careers. Addressing these issues would abolish gender specific obstacles and encourage women to gain power positions within politics.

Speakers:

- **Joanne Hayes**, Member of Parliament, New Zealand
- **Elżbieta Radziszewska**, Deputy Speaker of the House in Poland
- **Pia Elda Locatelli**, Former Member of European Parliament and Italian politician
- **Helga Stevens**, Member of the European Parliament, Vice Chair of the European Conservatives and Reformists Group

Session Chair: **Nayé Bathily**, Head, Global Parliamentary Unit, World Bank Group

Moderator: **Rick Zednik**, CEO, EurActiv
The Future of Education

Education is paramount when it comes to the development and overall progress of a country or a society. It is in particular a strong lever for women’s empowerment, gender equality and fighting deeply rooted gender-based stereotypes. This session sought to explore how to overcome gender disparity highlighted in accessing education and on examples of initiatives and best practices.

Panellists reported from their country and/or their own experience in fostering free and accessible education for all. The necessity for life-learning quality education and a rights-based approach was underlined and so was the importance of recognizing education as a public good. Several key issues were further discussed starting with the difficulty, especially at parliamentary level, to secure funding for education, even more so in the current economic situation.

Speakers and participants also insisted on the crucial role of education in eliminating gender stereotypes by encouraging women to engage in fields of education or vocational training traditionally male-dominated (e.g., science or electricity). To quote one of the speakers, “It is society, not biology, that determines which jobs women can occupy”. The need for specific training for teachers and adequate facilities (e.g. separate toilets for girls) was also pointed out in order to improve access to and quality of education for women and girls. The importance of having women teaching to other women was mentioned and all participants agreed on the positive and necessary contribution of women to the reconstruction of our economies worldwide.

Another crucial aspect debated during this session was the importance of a dedicated and independent body in charge of education, so to reduce the political or religious influence still prevalent in many countries.

Speakers:

- **Gordon Brown**, United Nations Special Envoy for Education, UK (Video Message)
- **Kailash Sartyarthi**, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, India (Video Message)
- **Aïcha Bah Diallo**, Founding member of the Forum for African Women Educationalists, Guinea-Conakry
- **Fidelma Healy Eames**, Senator, Education Champion, Ireland
- **Eden Tadesse**, A World At School Youth Ambassador, Ethiopia

**Session Chair:** **Sering Falu Njie**, Deputy Director, Policy, UN Millennium Campaign
This panel sought to discuss the critical barrier to female leadership and gender equality that is Universal Access to Healthcare, in terms of developing sufficient policy responses to the absence of healthcare provision, especially in low and middle-income countries.

The participants of the parallel session ‘The Future of Health’ agreed that women’s health needs to be centre stage in the Post 2015 development goals. Healthy women mean healthy economies and healthy societies. Universal Health Coverage (UHC), which is about addressing disparities in health outcomes at all levels, is a key instrument for promoting women’s health. UHC is also compelling because it addresses all dimensions of improving access to health, outlined in three specific points: (i) mobilizing more resources for health, (ii) providing financial coverage/protection to the population, and (iii) improving health services. Addressing all dimensions is needed to build resilient health systems. Finally, it was recognized by all participants that adequate resources must be mobilized for country plans, and while international support was important, domestic resource mobilization would show commitment to UHC and women’s health.

Speakers:

• Shahriar Alam, State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh

• Zainab Bangura, United Nations Special Representative of Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict

• Linda McAvan, Member of the European Parliament, Chair of the Development Committee

• Sipho Moyo, Executive Director Africa, ONE

• Åsa Regnér, Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality, Sweden

Moderator: Sarbani Chakraborty, Senior Director, Global Public Policy at Merck.
UN Women and UNDP organised a side event on synergies between the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the post-2015 development agenda. The 20-year review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action took place at an opportune moment at the end of the MDGs and Member States’ deliberations on the post-2015 development agenda and proposed the Sustainable Development Goals. This session sought to review the many lessons learned from the Beijing assessment to ensure the future framework delivers transformative change in the lives of women and girls.

Discussions focused in particular on the following matters: women continue to be under-represented in leadership and decision making across public and private spheres; the persistance of gaps between norms and implementation, as well as between commitment and action, exacerbated by discriminatory social norms, gender stereotypes and unequal power relations between women and men; the increase of conservative and extremist resistance to gender equality, and violent conflict; how disabling economic crises and instability have contributed to inadequate resourcing for gender equality; the absence of strong accountability mechanisms and insufficient data to monitor progress.

The panel considered actions and strategies that MPs might adopt to ensure that lessons are heeded in the post-2015 agenda. Specifically, the panelists discussed how Parliamentarians can ensure that commitments on gender equality are fully implemented and increased resources are mobilized, and how changing gender stereotypes and discriminatory norms can be addressed by MPs. Finally, participants deliberated on mechanisms for a stronger parliamentary oversight of the SDGs.

Speakers:

• **Letty Chiwara**, UN Women Country Representative, Ethiopia

• **Bineta Diop**, African Union Commission Special Representative on Women, Peace and Security

• **Lebogang Motlana**, Director, UNDP Service Centre, Addis Ababa

• **Bernadette N A Lahai**, Member of Pan-African Parliament

• **Denise Roche**, Member of Parliament, New Zealand

Moderator: **Begoña Lasagabaster**, Chief of Leadership & Governance for UN Women
Reports from Working Groups, Tuesday 24 March

Small scale mining (UN ECA)

The Working Group agreed on the topic (small scale mining) being important to discuss, especially knowing that Africa’s rise is dependent on the mining sector. Therefore women are needed; however the conditions under which they work need to be improved. Women are at risk in the mining sector and their children are at risk as the women are breast feeding their children in dangerous environments.

Key recommendations to female MPs:

The need to acquaint themselves better with the African Mining Vision (AMV) and push for its domestication at the country level in the form of country mining visions; Women MPs need to be strategic and introduce gender responsive legislative and policy frameworks in the sector through avenues such as Private Member’s Bills in order to catalyze action should there be delays or opposition; Lobbying for the incorporation of women in artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) in the fiscal space in order to support their access to funding; Lobbying and advocacy towards meeting the practical needs of women in ASM such as reproductive and hygiene needs of women as well as childcare facilities; Need to mobilize themselves at parliamentary and Cabinet position to lobby for the practical needs of women and their strategic interests in the mining sector; Need to ensure membership in critical parliamentary committees that determine the legislative course of action in mining and related sectors; Need to place themselves in strategic roles in the parliamentary committees such as rapporteuring, in order that gender-responsive actions are captured and reported; The need to spearhead the domesticating the AMV into Country Mining Visions; The need to the creation and institutionalization of a Parliamentarians’ Forum to work with the African Minerals Development Centre in much the same way as the current civil society organizations (CSO) platform.

 Speakers:

- **Thokozile Didiza**, HOD Parliament of South Africa
- **Dorothy Kazunga**, Deputy Minister – Gender and Child Development, Zambia
- **Marit Kitaw**, African Minerals Development Centre
- **Margaret Zziwa**, Speaker, East African Legislative Assembly

| Moderator: **Thokozile Ruzvidzo**, UNECA – African Centre for Gender |
Ending Harmful Traditional Practices

This session sought to discuss about harmful traditional practices such as Female Genital Mutilation, early and forced marriages and violence against women under all its forms. By bringing together MPs and experts from the civil society, this working group aimed to exchange best practices and discuss further steps in terms of awareness-raising, prevention and legislative framework.

The presence of MPs and experts from different countries, confronted to a variety of harmful traditional practices and of religious and cultural environment, allowed for a very comprehensive and rich discussion. A wide range of issues were discussed: (i) the importance of education and awareness-raising, especially at local level; (ii) the necessity for enhanced training of teachers, civil servants, polices forces, judges, medical personnel and all other relevant actors (iii) the differences of approach between proponents of strong and immediate actions backed by ambitious and comprehensive legislation and those who advocate a more cautious and tailor-made approach; (iv) the gap between the legislation and its actual implementation; (v) the difficulty of confronting religion or tradition; (vi) the difficulty faced by victims, especially girls, in terms of medical and psychological assistance, protection and legal recourse; (vii) the difficulties faced by many female MPs to secure funds and push forward ambitious legislation in a political world where gender-based discriminations remains significant and the necessity to involve more men.

All the participants underlined the need for more ambitious and harmonized legislation, strengthened cooperation especially through networks and parliamentary groups, increased funding and better monitoring.

Speakers:

- **Bogaletch Gebre**, Women's-rights activist and co-founder of KMG Ethiopia
- **Emma Julia Fabián Hernández**, Member of Parliament, El Salvador
- **Gina Michele Sanze**, Member of Parliament, Central African Republic
- **Angelika Mlinar**, Member of the European Parliament, ALDE Vice President.

**Session Chair:** **Gary Quince**, Head of the EU Delegation to the African Union
Reports from Working Groups, Tuesday 24 March

The Future of Parliamentary Networks

This session sought to assess the value of Parliamentary Networks in supporting Parliamentarians working to enhance cooperation and understanding in certain areas, and to discuss their important role in a fast changing world order.

Certain political objectives rise above party politics, national constraints and social divides and supporting female leadership is such an objective. It is therefore vital that Parliamentarians, whilst serving the best interests of their constituents and electorates, must also have means to reach out to one another and work towards goals of common value and salience. Parliamentary Networks are a powerful way of bringing Parliamentarians from diverse backgrounds together, and pool resources towards common action. This is especially poignant in terms of giving female Parliamentarians the chance to increase their networking potential. Panellists representing a range of Parliamentary Networks highlighted how their work can bring democratic oversight to international institutions, support transcontinental initiatives, combat global issues such as corruption and climate change, and help diversity approaches to key issues such as regional security. Above all, participants and panellists highlighted that said Networks allow individual Parliamentarians to overcome traditional left-right party politics.

Speakers:

- **Eva Beuselinck**, Policy Analyst, Governance Reviews and Partnerships Division, Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate-OECD

- **Miranda Calha**, Vice President of the Portuguese Parliament, NATO Parliamentary Assembly

- **Magda de Meyer**, Member of the European Parliamentarians for Africa (AWEPA)

- **Marie Claire Mukasine**, Senator, Rwandan Parliament, Upper Chamber, The Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC)

- **Tarun Vijay**, Member of Parliament India, World Bank Parliamentary Network

- Session Chair: **Hanna Birna Kristjánsdóttir**, Member of Parliament, Former Minister of Interior (Iceland), WIP Senior Special Advisor
WIP PROGRAMME 2015

WIP Session at the WEF Annual Meeting
22 January, Davos, Switzerland

WIP Session at the OECD Global Parliamentary Days
27 February, Paris, France

WIP at the Conference of women Parliamentarians from South East Europe
2-3 March, Belgrade, Serbia

WIP Outreach campaign on the International Women's Day 2015
8 March

WIP Session at the Commission on the Status of Women
9 March, New York, United States

WIP Summit 2015 New Leadership for Global Challenges
23-25 March, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

WIP at the 3rd Global Baku Forum
30 April, Baku, Azerbaijan

WIP at the Crans Montana Forum
10-13 June 2015, Brussels, Belgium

WIP at the High Level Political Forum on sustainable development
7 July, New York, United States

WIP at the Conference Financing for Development
13-16 July 2015, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

WIP Summit in Mexico
7–9 October 2015, Mexico City, Mexico

WIP Outreach campaign on the International Day of the Girl Child
11 October

WIP at the Trust Women Conference
17-18 November 2015, London, UK

Please note that an updated programme of the WIP activities is available at: www.womeninparliaments.org
It is a great honour for me to welcome you to the Headquarters of the African Union, and to wish you a fruitful stay in the hospitable city of Addis Ababa. The theme for the summit is interesting one, but at the same time a difficult one: New leadership for Global challenges.

Honourable Members,

During the first Women in Parliament Global Summit in Brussels in 2013, we celebrated 120 years since New Zealand women won the right to vote, the first in the world. It made me wonder how long it took before the suffrage translated into the election of the first woman legislator. Well, in New Zealand, although women could vote since 1893, it was only in 1919 that they were allowed to stand for elections. The first New Zealand MP, Elizabeth McCombs was only elected to office in 1933. The first female Members of Parliament were in fact from Finland, who extended the franchise to women in 1906, and elected the first two women to office in 1906, and elected the first two women to office in the next year. This is a story that is repeated across the world.

Back to 2015, and this gathering of Women in Parliament, representing 9,923 women MPs from all corners of the world, shows that things changed very slowly over the last century. Though we represent more than 50% of the global population, we are less than a quarter of its Members of Parliament. There is now general agreement that we need for starters a critical mass of at least 30% of women in Parliaments, to begin the shift towards gender parity.

Let us take stock of where we are in Africa on this particular matter of Women in Parliament. Today, out of 55 African countries, we have fourteen countries with 30% and more female MPs: Rwanda (63.8), Namibia (47), Seychelles (43.8), Senegal (42.7), South Africa (41.5), Mozambique (39.6), Angola (36.8), Tanzania (36), Uganda (35), Algeria (31.6), Zimbabwe (31.5), Tunisia (31.3), Cameroon (31.1) and Burundi (30.5). We are looking forward to the 2015 elections in Burkina Faso, Benin, Burundi, Egypt, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Sudan and Togo, who all have still not reached this critical mass of at least 30%, to finally do the right thing so that they too can cross this threshold.

Globally, women still make up less than a quarter of all Members of Parliament. The struggle for representation in government, in the judiciary, in fact in all spheres of the public and privates sector is therefore far from over, and must
Honourable Members,

Africa this year celebrates the Year of Women’s Empowerment and Development, and with the rest of the world 20 years since the historic Beijing conference. Our choice to focus on women 2015 is part of the ongoing struggle for gender equality on our continent.

At the beginning of 2015, the African Union Summit adopted its vision for the next fifty years, Our theme is leadership, but leadership needs to have a vision. Agenda 2063 is our vision for the Africa we want. It is based primarily on investing in Africa’s most precious resource, its people. It is for this reason we emphasize access to health for all, girls and boys education, and an African skills revolution that will see more of our young people and women focusing on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics and also on research and innovation. This is both to develop their talents so that they reach their full potential, but also for them to use their energy and innovation to drive Africa’s development towards shared prosperity.

Agenda 2063 also emphasises the development of infrastructure (railways, road, aviation and maritime transport, energy, ICT, water and sanitation and other social infrastructure) as well as the need to transform African agriculture and agribusinesses, and to beneficiate and add value to our natural resources. This means a deliberate plan to banish the handheld-hoe to the museum and modernizing and mechanizing agriculture. We have started a campaign to replace the hoe with tillers and tractors where appropriate in the next ten years. After 10 years we only want to see the hoe in agricultural museums.

Agenda 2063 is also about ensuring that we benefit from our vast oceanic spaces and the resources it hold, by developing our blue economy. As we gather, the first-ever Conference of African Women in Maritime is taking place this week in Luanda, Angola, where women in the sector will discuss how they will cooperate to make inroads into shipping and maritime transport, into fishing, offshore mining and other aspects of the Blue economy.

Agenda 2063 also prioritises democracy, human rights, gender equality, the empowerment of women and young people, management of diversity, as critical to good governance, the eradication of poverty, ending gender-based violence and the building of tolerant, caring, stable inclusive and peaceful societies.

Honourable Members,

We know that these aspirations outlined above will happen faster and will be more sustainable through the empowerment of women and girls. This is why it is so important to ensure that in all our countries, we reach this critical mass of women in parliaments and governments. In addition, we must also share experiences as Members of Parliament on how we take the gender agenda forward in the work that we do.

During the African year of women, we prioritize financial inclusion and economic empowerment, working with our sister from the ADB Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi; access to modern technology, inputs, capital, land and markets to women in agriculture; and expanding opportunities to education and training to girls and women, in addition to our ongoing advocacy for women’s right to representation and participation and in all areas of human endeavor. We must ensure that these and other issues critical to women are at the centre of the post-2015 development agenda, and to the sustainable development goals.
Honourable Members,

I have spoken about some of the issues that concern the African continent, but these are global concerns and issues, hence the relevance of the theme for this Summit, ‘New Leadership for Global Challenges.’ These universal challenges, of increasing women’s access to economic resources, their participation in public life, and of ensuring human security, peace and a sustainable environment are matters that concern women everywhere. It is true that we need leadership that can deal with these challenges, decisively.

I believe that we need leadership that puts people at the centre of everything, that listens and understands the needs of the people; and that is compassionate and empathizes with its people. We need leadership that serves as role models, that inspires young people, and the population in general, to want to reach greater heights. We need leadership that knows how to manage diversity by respecting every race, gender, culture, religion and language, and who builds tolerance. It must be a leadership that embraces diversity as a strength, rather than a threat. If not, it encourages exclusion, and exclusion breeds extremism. Our global leadership should understand Newton’s third law of physics: that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Or the maxim, do unto others as you want them to do unto you.

We need leadership that understands that they are as good as their teams, and therefore encourages team work and empowers those around them; that shines the light for others, but are ready to receive light from them as well. The leadership we need must be honest, transparent and ready to acknowledge mistakes, understanding as one of our young poets said: that “every beautiful rock has its fault lines”. Nobody is perfect, but working together we can complement each other.

We need leadership who are flexible, who can change when there is a need for change. Leaders who understands that you cannot do the same thing over and over, and expect different results, as Einstein said. We need leaders who as they grow the economy put people at the centre, not only profit. Leaders who understand that they should bequeath this planet to future generations, and that it should still be pleasant and provide for them and other species. Leaders who are ready to build a humane world where every human being is celebrated and valued, and therefore always working towards bequeathing future generations a better world than the one they found.

We need leaders of strong character, knowing that character is not build overnight or congenital, but is forged on the anvil of experience, self-discipline, dedication and integrity. It is a global leadership for a more humane, just and caring world. This global and national leadership we talk about, must include women as part of that leadership and of humanity. As women leaders, this should be the type of global leadership we want to be part of, and that we strive to build.

I wish this summit fruitful deliberations, and look forward once again to the vibrant discussions.

I thank you
Neven Mimica  
EU Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to be in Addis Ababa for the Annual Summit of the Women in Parliaments Global Forum. I would like to thank Silvana Koch-Mehrin for the kind invitation to address this distinguished gathering, and the African Union for co-hosting the event.

I am in the early months of my mandate, but I can assure you that I am resolved to keep on fostering gender equality as one of my top priorities. I embrace this as a Commissioner, but, more importantly, as a human being.

This event is focusing on a fundamental issue. If we sincerely want to address the challenge of women's empowerment and representation, we will need new leaders who will be prepared to make the case. This applies to parliamentarians, administrators, business leaders, academics and the media, among others.

International organisations and participatory networks such as this one play a key role. Synergies with civil society organisations are also crucial for moving the gender agenda forward at local, regional and global level.

This Summit is taking place at a very important moment in the international development agenda. It is almost twenty years since the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action were adopted. They represented a historic step forward in recognising the situation of women and girls and making a commitment to their empowerment and full participation in society.

Twenty years later, it is appropriate to take stock of how much progress has been made in meeting those objectives. Despite visible progress, gender equality still needs our full commitment in order to achieve more tangible and lasting results. We have done a lot, but we need to do more. And more importantly, we need to do it better.

There are 45% fewer maternal deaths in the world than in 1990. But 800 women still die every day from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. In 2015, this figure is simply unacceptable.

According to UNESCO statistics, by 2012 the global adult literacy rate had risen to 84%. But women represent over 60% of the world’s illiterate. This imbalance must have specific reasons that we need to address.

The percentage of women in parliament has nearly doubled in the last twenty years. But women still account for only 22% of parliamentarians in the world. This means that the voice of half of the world’s population is not heard loud enough.

There are many more examples that show that there is still a long way to go to ensure that women have a full and equal voice and choice in all areas of life.

Now is the time to take decisive steps to close the gender gap once and for all. As you know, 2015 is a crucial year for shaping the future direction of sustainable and inclusive development. The current Millennium Development Goals have played an important role in gender equality and women’s empowerment. But we need to go further and faster. The post-2015 agenda has to be a universal one. This means that it also concerns our societies in the developed world, including the European Union. Commitment to gender equality must therefore be a constant element in our own ‘domestic’ efforts and not just something that we preach to others.
The new sustainable development goals, which we hope to endorse at the UN Summit in New York in September, must include strong commitments on gender equality and women’s empowerment. We will keep on working hard to have them both as a stand-alone goal and as a key element for the achievement of all other goals.

In practical terms, this means ensuring that women and girls have full and equal access to education, healthcare, sanitation and employment, and do not suffer from discrimination, whether it be institutionalised or derived from the traditional role of women in their cultures and societies. There can be no development without empowered women – as they are the key for the world’s prosperity and well-being.

Let me stress here that the European Union remains fully engaged in the promotion of gender equality and women’s rights. As our current Action Plan on Gender Equality expires this year, the European Commission is preparing a comprehensive and robust successor. Our new Action Plan will be much more focussed on results and more tailored to specific needs on the ground. And gender perspective will continue to be reflected in all our programming documents for assistance to partner countries.

I hope that the discussions at this Summit will inspire us to take forward our thinking and action on all of these issues. Our agenda offers a wide range of possibilities to deepen our knowledge, and rightly takes time to recognise those countries that have facilitated the political empowerment of women and shown regional leadership in closing the gender gap in politics.

I wish you all a very successful Conference!
Thank you.
Carlos Lopes  
**Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa**

Your Excellency Dr. Kassa Teklebrehan, Speaker of the House of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia  
Your Excellency Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission,  
Your Excellency Ms. Hanna Birna Kristjánsdóttir, former Minister of Interior for Iceland,  
Your Excellency, Ms. Joyce Banda, former President of Malawi  
Ms. Silvana Koch-Mehrin, Founder of Women in Parliaments,  
Ms. Irina Bokova, Secretary-General of UNESCO,  
Mr. Neven Mimica, EU Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development,  
Ms. Lakshmi Puri, Deputy Executive Director of UN Women  
Honourable Members of Parliaments,  
Distinguished Guests,

It is an honour and pleasure for me to be here with you today. On behalf of the Economic Commission for Africa, I wish to commend the organizers of this year’s summit, for an excellent choice of theme—‘New Leadership for Global Challenges’. This theme enables us to address the systemic and emerging challenges of the new century, and how they are affecting women. Members of parliaments are change agents. The expectations become greater when women assume positions of power and influence. Your sensitivity, special ways and contribution are the new leadership and the new change the world needs, in order to address the current and emerging global challenges.

African Heads of State and government have recognised the critical importance of advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment. Their commitment to gender equality is further reflected in the African Union’s mandates and policies such as the Protocol on Women’s rights. This political determination was recently re-affirmed their declaration of 2015 as the Year of Women Empowerment and Development towards Africa’s Agenda 2063.

Distinguished Participants,  
Allow me to share with you the story of an African woman. It echoes the plight of many more across the continent. She was married for 13 years and for every day of those 13 years she worked hard with her husband to cultivate a small piece of land he owned growing vegetables which she then sold in the market. Tragedy struck when her husband died leaving her to fend for their two young daughters. Four days after burying her husband the latter’s family evicted her, taking possession of the land and house and leaving her destitute. With no means of support to reclaim the land or any assets to her name she gave up trying to fight for it. She is now trying to rebuild her life working as a farm labourer. Her elder daughter has stop going to school as they can no longer afford school fees. Worried about being able to provide for her children, she is considering an early marriage for her elder daughter. This may jeopardize the kid’s dream of becoming a teacher.

Distinguished Participants,  
International and regional instruments to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment are supposed to be the basis to demand accountability, to pass non-discriminatory laws and ensure the formulation of inclusive policies that are gender and socially responsive. You will agree with me that concerted effort and collaboration between you as legislators and your colleagues in the other arms of government is an essential ingredient. It is well known that
laws and policies alone do not necessarily bring the changes needed. While they do provide a normative framework for protection and support from the State, and a basis for engagement amongst stakeholders, they cannot be isolated from other socioeconomic improvements.

Although no study is available correlating gains in social equality and progress in equal representation in legislative bodies, we all know the latter is a demonstration a strong public opinion favourable to diversity recognition. If we are to change the plight of that African women I was describing we need laws that incentivize transformation: laws that regulate heritage, access to assets, capital; laws that give an equal chance to girls and boys; laws that protect children from being married. Needless to say all of that will be incomplete without the socio-economic conditions created out of a proper contextual reading. Otherwise it will be futile and at best wishful. The presence of women parliamentarians in such critical processes is obvious. As mothers and providers they have faced situations their male colleagues only assess and read about.

Over the past twenty years, parliaments around the world have recorded an increasing women presence; Africa has been no exception. By 2012, 11 African countries were among the world top 36 houses of parliament that reached the 30% threshold. A threshold considered necessary for women to have an impact on decision-making. Amongst the countries in the world with the highest number of women elected to parliament 7 are African, with Rwanda occupying the top position. As of 2014, Rwandan women made up 64 % of the Chamber of Deputies and 38% of Senators. With these figures Rwanda has exceeded the gender parity targets set out in the Beijing Platform for Action as well as in the Protocol of the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa. This is by all means an historical achievement.

Indeed the Inter Parliamentary Union shows an increase in percentages of women in parliaments across Africa; including 44% in Seychelles, 43 % in Senegal, 42% in South Africa, 41% in Namibia, 40% in Mozambique, 37% in Angola, 31% in Burundi and many more like Algeria and Tunisia with over 30%. These figures place Africa as a top performing continent in securing women’s political agency. In 7 African countries, at least 30% of ministers are women, with Cape Verde recording the highest number at 50%, ranking second globally, after Finland with 63%. South Africa, Burundi, Tanzania and Guinea-Bissau also rank among the top 20 countries globally with the highest numbers of women ministers. The adoption of gender responsive electoral models, the use of affirmative action as well as quotas has helped ensure an overall representation of up to 20% of women in parliaments across the continent.

The entry of women in institutions like parliaments and other corridors of power has vastly contributed to giving them a voice in matters that shape their destiny and affect their lives. The ascendancy of female ministers handling so called ‘hard’ portfolios, such as Defence, Foreign and Home Affairs has defied the stereotypes of women ministers being confined to ‘soft ministries’ which address welfare issues. Africa is starting to become used to prominent female leaders such as Presidents Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia, Catherine Samba-Panza of the Central Africa Republic, or former President of Malawi Joyce Banda; and few Vice-Presidents, including the most recent one in Zambia, Inonge Wina.

Indeed the foremost international figure is our Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma. They are contributing for changing mindsets on the role of women in governance.
But this is not enough. We want more. Africa’s narrative has changed from pessimism to a rising and transforming continent. The ‘African Moment’ is here and women parliamentarians must leverage this to ensure that women and girls benefit from it. A combination of high economic growth and improved business environments is making the continent more attractive to economic activity. Those countries that undertook a rebasing of their national accounts have discovered that their economies are significantly bigger than they thought. But the revised GDP series for Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia point to the fact that the services sector is the single largest component of African economies, accounting for half or more of total GDP, while the manufacturing and agriculture sectors remain essentially unchanged or have shrunk. This is an untapped opportunity where women can and must ingrain themselves.

The continent’s growth is impressive but it has not sufficiently contributed to social transformation. It has largely been ‘non inclusive’ due to its limited job creation and overall improvement to the living standards of the citizens. Indeed, increasing educational attainments by women and their rising participation in the labour market have not been matched by better conditions of employment or prospects for advancement and equal pay. At the current rate of progress, the ILO estimates that it would take more than 75 years to reach equal remuneration for work of equal value. Dynamic African countries will not be built, if women and girls, who form the majority of the population, remain marginalized or excluded.

The question therefore is what legislative action could remedy this?

For a start, labour market policies could bolster women’s access to income, by guaranteeing adequate minimum wages and equal pay for work of equal value. Additionally, carefully designed social protection policies could increase women’s income security as well as strengthen their voice. It is vital that parliamentarians strategically focus on leveraging the sectors that are poised to bring about the structural transformation needed in the continent. This entails the revitalization of the industrial sector including manufacturing, agri-business and the adding value to the extractives with full women opportunities.

Distinguished Participants,
Allow me to mention another fundamental issue that must be addressed: illicit financial flows. A recent Report, we produced with the AUC, under the leadership of President Mbeki, indicates that Africa loses at least US$50 billion annually through illicit financial outflows. This deprives governments of resources required to progressively realize economic, social and cultural rights through the provision of basic social services. It limits resources that could be spent on reducing poverty and vast income inequality that impacts women disproportionately. One known casualty is child and maternal health. If a stop were put to illicit financial outflows, the number of countries in Africa that could reach the universally agreed targets to reduce mortality could triple. This startling picture calls for concerted efforts to ensure that development resources remain in the continent in order to make a difference in the life of every woman and girl.

Distinguished Participants,
The Africa Regional Review Report on Beijing + 20 shows progress in the economic empowerment of women in agriculture, business development and finance. A number of countries since the 1990’s have made tremendous strides in the successful institutionalization of gender-responsive budgeting initiatives. This methodology has undoubtedly become an important tool for promoting gender equality. In 2012, more than 20% of African countries
had such initiatives. South Africa and Tanzania were among the pioneers of gender budgeting in Africa. In 1996, South African Non-Governmental Organizations partnered with Members of Parliament and jointly launched the South African Women’s Budget Initiative. This has been cited as one of the most successful and institutionalized initiatives. Ethiopia, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda have also taken women’s concerns into account in national budgets.

Despite these pockets of progress, gender inequality and women’s empowerment remains a challenge that requires upstream policy formulation and re-energised efforts to close the gaps in sectors that are lagging behind. Your leadership must address these and many other challenges. The first is to effectively exercise an oversight role to ensure the formulation of inclusive, gender and socially responsive legislation particularly in transformative and productive sectors. For instance, a strong call is needed for policies, laws and programs to harness Africa’s Green and Blue economies as well as women’s economic participation in them as a response to climate change challenges. The second must be for parliamentarians across all frontiers to work together in advocating for responsive policy frameworks. The range of opportunities and space offered by ICTs as well as a wide array of knowledge platforms facilitates swift communication and information sharing.

One could add a third, around the issue of leveraging your influence to ensure that the values of Pan Africanism, Africa’s diversity and plural culture, heritage and religion are upheld. This would also pave the way for creating a new type of leadership where women inclusion, at all levels of governance, will bring to bear their unique contribution to complex conflict and peace building processes – a preserve that has traditionally tended to focus on institutions and nations rather than communities and individuals. Making Africa a continent free from armed conflict, terrorism, extremism, intolerance and gender-based violence is central for transformational change.

Distinguished Participants,
The Economic Commission for Africa stands ready to offer technical support to put in place gender responsive policies that address the continents’ development priorities. ECA has revamped its research and advocacy priorities to ensure that its work is relevant to the transformative agenda of the continent and has taken a firm ‘Africa First’ position.

The Commissions’ new Continent-Wide Initiative for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment provides strategic focus in line with its new vision. It builds on three interlinked components, namely, economic empowerment; women’s human rights and the social sector. The focus of our interventions will support Africa’s structural agenda particularly women’s socio-economic bargaining power. We are looking forward to working with you as members of parliaments to enrich the development of legislation that will make a difference.

Let me go back to that women farmer with whom I started this narrative. She is quite removed from the news that hit the New York Times this week end that a growing number of women in the US are selling their breast milk, transforming it into a commodity. Market maximization is just one more demonstration that the world needs a compass. You are the most capable of providing it. So that her daughter can one day also aspire not just to be a school teacher but may be a member of parliament as well.

I thank you.
Lakshmi Puri
Deputy Executive Director, UN Women, WIP Advisory Board Member, Representing the United Nations Secretary General Ban ki-Moon

Your excellency, Madame Zuma, Chairperson of the AUC, my dear friend, Silvana Koch-Mehrin, Founder of Women in Parliaments (WIP), Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, Executive Secretary of ECA, Carlos Lopes, Development Commissioner of EU and HeForShe champion, OECD Deputy Secretary-General, Special Representative Zainab Bangura and President Joyce Banda, Excellencies, distinguished guests, and dear friends, It gives me great pleasure to join you here today, and to represent the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-Moon, at this 2015 Annual Summit of the Women in Parliaments Global Forum.

Let me also thank our co-hosts, the WIP and the African Union Commission, for organizing this meeting in this wondrous Nelson Mandela Hall. I am sure his legacy will inspire our deliberations. I recall his powerful words: “Freedom cannot be achieved unless women have been emancipated from all forms of oppression. Our endeavours must be about the liberation of the woman.”

And of course the political commitment to achieving the full and equal enjoyment and realization of their human rights and fundamental freedoms by all women and girls is the key to broader achievement of the justice, freedom and the equality project of humanity. For gender inequality, discrimination and violence is the most taken for granted and difficult to uproot, and yet, a ubiquitous challenge that the project faces today.

Let me also extrapolate Madiba further to pay tribute to WIP and say that the presence of so many women from so many parts of the world underlines the weight of the pledge by women in Parliaments everywhere to work for gender equality and women’s empowerment as a critical enabler and beneficiary of peace and sustainable development - economic, social and environmental - and human rights. And may I add, people-centred development.

Madiba said, “This is a daunting task. The legacy of oppression weighs heavily on women. As long as outmoded ways of thinking prevent women from making a meaningful contribution to society, progress will be slow. As long as nations refuse to acknowledge the equal role of more than half of themselves, they are doomed to failure.”

And this is exactly what this Summit is about: Recognizing the longstanding and emerging challenges to gender equality, including new forms and modalities of oppression and exploitation that demand pledging on an unprecedented scale, and scope of the mobilization of action and investment to tackle them.

It’s also about your signaling the importance of women’s role in decision-making at all levels and all areas and spaces for the whole society, nations, regions, and the world to succeed! For instance African women’s rise is the key to Africa Rising. So they must design, strategize and lead its rise. This is what Madame Zuma highlighted.

You are also here. I hope to build networks of parliamentarian solidarity across countries and cultures to achieve that. And because you are both the representatives of women and men - of the people - you are well-placed to ignite popular solidarity movements for gender equality in your constituencies and countries – [from the] ground up, as much as lead by example at the top. This is critical to change social norms and discriminatory practices.
You must also drive strengthened laws, policies and measures and their full effective and accelerated implementation as set out in the Political Declaration of the 59th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. [You must] ensure gender responsive budgets and allocations and use of resources, and translate global norms, standards and commitments - both extant and potential - into transformed reality in women’s and girls’ lives.

2015 is a historic moment for gender equality, as we review the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 20 years on, and begin to set the first ever universal sustainable development agenda which —I am confident —, will include a comprehensive and transformative goal on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls everywhere. We must seize the moment!

This is also a time in which historic international processes and agreements on sustainable development, financing for development (FFD in this very city), climate change, humanitarian action and the Sustainable Urban Agenda, and the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) plus 10 are all being negotiated. The entire peace architecture and peace operations of the United Nations is being reviewed as it is the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, and Peace and security.

Women’s input and leadership is essential in these – not simply because women have the right to be present in decision-making, but because women bring a different range of experiences and perspectives on these issues that deserve to be raised and incorporated in decision-making.

It is also because only with women’s voice, leadership and participation, the outcomes and implementation of all these processes will set the real grounds for humanity to adopt new models and transform through genuine gender mainstreaming. It will ensure that we fast forward to achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment by 2030 - the goal also set in the context of the Political Declaration adopted by the 59th Session of Commission on Status of Women as the expiry date for gender inequality, discrimination and violence against women.

Empowering and reaching out to the most marginalized women and girls by tackling stark and rising inequalities and multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and vulnerability (Political Declaration) - be it in relation to poverty, race, ethnicity, rural and remote location, disability, HIV and AIDS and throughout the lifecycle is a must.

It is critical to ensure that all stakeholders have a say in developing the new agenda, in setting priorities and in holding decision-makers in all branches of government and public services, and as well as in the private sector, in civil society and academia accountable to achieving those priorities. Women parliamentarians are well-placed to be that inclusive and integrative force and those that must hold themselves and their HeForShe male Parliamentarians accountable, and, mostly men executive heads to deliver on this.

Women in power and decision-making is not a parochial aspiration. As our Beijing campaign says, it’s about Empowering Women, Empowering Humanity. Now is the time for women’s empowerment, equality and full participation in politics, society, and the productive economy including through strengthening and supporting women’s organization in all sectors.

There is still a long way to go.

For nearly two years, UN Women has strongly advocated for a transformative, stand-alone goal on gender equality,
women’s human rights and women’s empowerment in the post-2015 development agenda, as well as mainstreaming of gender equality across all other goals through gender-sensitive targets and indicators.

The work of the Open Working Group, as well as our sustained and agile advocacy with Member States in partnership with the United Nations system and civil society resulted in a set of proposed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which include the distinct, comprehensive and transformative Goal 5 on “Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls,” including important and pioneering targets on ending violence against women and on ending harmful practices, like child marriages and female genital mutilation, on unpaid care and domestic work, on sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, on voice participation and leadership in private and public life and on economic rights and access to, control of and ownership of productive assets. There are also cross-cutting gender equality targets in the other sustainable development goals. And in this package, there are also targets on the means of implementation.

We must all focus between now and July on ensuring that gender equality perspectives are centrally reflected and integrated in all elements of the post-2015 development agenda – the Political Declaration, goals, targets and indicators, means of implementation, global partnership, follow-up and review, accountability. Parliamentarians must push for ambitious outcomes and provide ideas how to home grow and own the SDG’s in your national and regional contexts.

The design and implementation of the post-2015 development agenda must build on existing commitments to gender equality, such as those contained in CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action, and should draw on the lessons learned from the 20-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

The 20-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and its commemoration (Beijing+20) has involved stock taking - 168 countries presented reports, all regions had review conferences - CSO and government - and a global Review at the CSW59 was just completed. The historic Political Declaration adopted assessed that despite efforts and some advance, progress has been slow and uneven, and no country has achieved gender equality. Old and new gaps and challenges need to be tackled. They therefore strongly commit to and set out six strategies to stimulate full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Platform. It also directed all governments and stakeholders to use opportunities of major United Nations conferences including post-2015 to prioritize and integrate gender equality perspectives.

Beijing+20 commemorations will culminate in September 2015 at the Global Leaders’ Commitment Conference co-hosted by China, to be held on 26 September in parallel to the post-2015 Summit. The Forum will engage Heads of State and Governments to Step It Up and make commitments to implement the Platform for Action and achieve gender equality and women’s empowerment within the post-2015 development agenda.

Effectively monitoring the targets for women and girls requires systematic sex-disaggregation of indicators across all goals and specific indicators to capture the unique experiences, needs and interests of women and girls. We therefore need a data revolution the most in this area, and not only because we treasure what we measure, but because investing in it is worth it.

The expectations of an ambitious post-2015 development agenda must be matched with an equally ambitious level
of investment and dedicated and significantly enhanced resources and means of implementation - also pledged in the Political Declaration - financial, technological, institution and human capacity building among others. This includes prioritized, substantially increased investments in the gender goal targets, including through domestic resource mobilization, official development assistance, North-South and South-South and triangular cooperation. It requires that both national and international macroeconomic policies and aid, trade, technology transfer and debt policies also are gender-responsive, just and equitable.

The forthcoming third International Conference on Financing for Development in July 2015 is a golden opportunity for the international community to articulate a clear financing strategy for the overall implementation of the post-2015 development framework. It also provides a critical opportunity to ensure that financing strategies are capable of delivering on gender equality and women’s rights commitments and bridging the enormous resource gap. If we do not effectively link financing with the gender equality goal and indeed with all the sustainable development goals, they will remain “ink on paper”.

Moreover new media and innovative data applications can be successful vehicles of positive change: we can highlight our UN Women awareness-raising campaign #Heforshe, or #Beijing20 which not only use data-driven social media to amplify their effects, but can also give us real time updates, disaggregated by country, about how much our message is coming across.

We count on your leadership to ensure a strong accountability framework. Women parliamentarians must not allow governments to flinch from this as it is both indispensable for democracy as it is for reaching the targets of the SDGs. This includes accountability of the private sector, as well as mechanisms at the international, national and local levels for their effective delivery on the international commitments on gender equality and the empowerment of women. Civil society and women’s organizations have a central role in multi-stakeholder accountability. Women parliamentarians must foster and draw upon the experience, expertise and wisdom of feminists, women’s human rights defenders and activists as allies and social movement builders.

Also based on the principle of shared responsibility, we must engage and make advocates of and hold accountable other influential levers of change - men and boys, the largest youth population in history, faith-based, cultural and traditional leaders and new and old media to create a monumental groundswell of people’s will and solidarity around standing up and stepping it up for gender equality.

We have for many decades turned to women parliamentarians, the very audience present here today, to push for these changes. We turn to you today yet again to drive home the urgency of Planet 50-50 by 2030 and to act decisively to achieve it. In the words of the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, “too often, leaders have used women to advance power. I believe we must use power to advance women.” We must make all our parliaments and governments feminists as much as our societies, too. UN Women believes that this is the best time to do that. The stars are aligned and though the challenges may be many and grave in many parts of the world, we count on your new leadership to make this mission possible. May your legions grow!

Thank you.
Irina Bokova
Secretary-General, UNESCO

Excellency Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission,
Commissioner Neven Mimica
Speaker of the House of Parliament HE Tekleberhan
HE Joyce Banda, Former President of Malawi, Honourable Bethel
Ms Silvana Koch-Mehrin, Founder of Women in Parliaments, former Vice-President of the European Parliament,
Carlos Lopes, Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa,
Dear Friends
Honourable Members of Parliament,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for this opportunity to speak before the Women in Parliaments Annual Summit, a very impressive global
gathering of women parliamentarians and politicians. This has special meaning to me personally. I was member of
the parliament of Bulgaria for two terms. These were some of the most important and passionate years of my political
career. I know the importance of parliaments and I know the importance of women in parliaments.

I am especially honoured to speak in this splendid hall named after the man who changed the history of the continent
and the world. In his first State of the Nation address, in 1994, President Nelson Mandela declared: Freedom cannot
be achieved unless women have been emancipated from all forms of oppression. UNESCO started its year-long
celebrations of its 70th anniversary in November 2014 with the Mandela Day to pay respect to a great humanist.
Mandela said these words just one year before the 4th World Conference on Women held in Beijing. I was honoured
to be in Beijing in 1995, as a member of the Delegation from Bulgaria, and I recall vividly the energy of that moment.

We mark this year the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action – and I have just returned
from the 59th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which explored achievements and sought to
mobilise all to tackle new challenges. There has been tremendous progress across the world since 1995. Maternal
mortality has been cut by almost half. There have been strong steps towards parity for girls and boys in primary
school. More and more women are active in politics. Africa, for one, boasts 14 out of the world’s 46 countries where
women account for more than a quarter of Parliamentarians. The Economist magazine estimated the increase of
employment of women in developed countries during the last decade has added more to global growth than China.
But steep challenges remain.

Women represent only one in five parliamentarians. Only 20 national leaders in the world are women. Five of the
world’s parliaments have no women representatives, and there are eight governments with no women ministers at all.
The situation is stark in education. Girls and women are still the majority of out-of-school children, youth and illiterate
adults.

According to UNESCO’s Global Monitoring Report on Education for All, there are 31 million girls who should be in
primary school but are not, and the number is higher for the secondary. By 2011, only 63 percent of countries had
achieved gender parity at primary level, and only 38 percent of countries at secondary level. In sub-Saharan Africa, if
trends continue, the richest boys will achieve universal primary completion in 2021 – while the poorest girls will wait
until 2086. Across the world, there remain 493 million illiterate women. Too many girls, in too many countries, are held back because they are girls. They are forced to work, married off, taken away from school. Recent analysis by the UNESCO Global Monitoring Report shows school-related gender-based violence to be far too prevalent.

This situation is not acceptable.

In order to get access to economic resources, women have to be educated; they have to have the necessary skills. Inequality condemns individuals to poverty, it undermines the health of societies, it curtails opportunities for sustainable growth. I know I am preaching to the converted, but we must never tire in sharing our message.

Gender equality is a human right.
Gender equality is a development multiplier.
Gender equality is a force for peace.

We have no more powerful transformational force, and this starts on the benches of schools. Education is the breakthrough strategy for human development. It gives voice, encourages civic participation, and widens opportunities on the labour market. According to UNESCO’s Global Monitoring Report, if all girls had primary education in sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia, child marriage would fall by 14 percent; if they had secondary education – this would fall by 64 percent. This is why gender equality and education must stand at the heart of the global sustainable development agenda States are shaping this year.

Let underline here the importance of the parliamentary voice in crafting the new agenda, to strengthen its link to the aspirations of citizens in every society. We need to get the new global agenda right – we must also act on the ground. This spirit guides the partnership between the African Union and UNESCO. I commend the African Union and African Heads of State and Government for the declaration of 2015 as the Year of Women’s Empowerment and Development towards Africa’s Agenda 2063.

This marks the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as the 5th anniversary of the African Women’s Decade (2010-2020) and 15th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325. UNESCO is deeply committed to supporting implementation of the African Union Commission Strategic Plan for 2014-2017. I have built the priorities of this plan into the UNESCO Operational Strategy for Priority Africa – including the goal to “mainstream the participation of women and the youth in all priorities and activities of the Union and the continent.”

I recall well the conference we held at UNESCO in 2012, with Dr Dlamini-Zuma, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Panafircan Woman Organization. In follow-up, in the framework of UNESCO’s 70th anniversary, we will launch this year a publication on the Panafircan Women Organization – to highlight the leadership of African women in shaping the continent today. In the same spirit, UNESCO launched with the African Union Commission an award-winning e-learning tool called “Women in African History”, to pay tribute to the role of women in Africa’s emancipation and development.

“Nobody tells the story that African women are at the forefront of development.” These are the words of Dr Dlamini-Zuma, so we started to tell this story jointly with the African Union, and this tool seeks precisely to tell this story,
drawing on the power of new technologies.

These same convictions guide UNESCO in its action across the world. In Afghanistan, we have reached 600,000 learners with literacy, with women and girls as a priority. In Iraq, we have set up Community Learning Centres to provide literacy to girls and women. In Pakistan, we are targeting girls and women with literacy skills, and I launched last year the Malala Fund for Girls’ Right to Education, with the Government of Pakistan. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, UNESCO has established a Regional Research and Documentation Centre for Women, Gender and Peace-building in the Great Lakes Region, to prevent gender-based violence and promote women’s role in peacebuilding. In Ghana, The Gambia, Nigeria and Liberia, UNESCO has launched a woman’s leadership training programme. In Morocco and Tunisia, we are working to promote women’s leadership within political parties.

With South Sudan, where 88 percent of women are illiterate, UNESCO is helping the Government implement its first education strategy. I am convinced we need new forms of “soft power”, working with governments, with civil society, with the private sector.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
This is about leadership. Girls and women are already pioneering change across the world, in schools, in communities, in parliaments – we must recognize this role and multiply it ever more.

Last July, I went to South Sudan and met a young women student who read to me the following poem she had written:

Education is a sword that cuts and chops
The edges of illiteracy, ignorance and indolence
This is precisely why we must do everything to support the right of girls and women to education, to eliminate illiteracy and ignorance.

Let me also mention the example of Malala Yousafzai, who was attacked on 9 October 2012, in Pakistan and who was jointly awarded the Nobel peace prize in 2014 with Kailash Satyarti. Malala was shot, precisely because she is a leader. I was honoured to attend the Nobel Prize ceremony in Oslo on 10 December, when Malala said: “I am just a committed and stubborn person, who wants to see every child getting quality education, who wants equal rights for women and peace in every corner of the world”. This is leadership. Well, let us all be stubborn and more dedicated.

As women parliamentarians, I believe you know the importance of this message more than anyone. I wish thank each of you for your leadership, and, in this hall, I pledge that I will do everything to empower girls and women, everywhere, in every society.

I see this as the most important human rights issue for the 21st century.
Excellences, Dear Colleagues,

Representing a feminist government, I am grateful and honoured to receive this award acknowledging the efforts by the political parties of Sweden in improving the gender balance of our national parliament.

However, it is important to recognise that we are dealing with an achievement in the long-term, that is, since the early 1990’s. In the past two elections, the total number of female MP’s has actually declined from an all-time high of 47 percent (2006) to nearly 44 percent (2014). While this figure is still decent by international standards, it should remind us that the victories of yesterday cannot be taken for granted. They must be continuously defended.

The Swedish government, on the other hand, enjoys a 50-50 balance of women and men in charge (state secretary, political advisors). This is a vital condition for our feminist approach.

I think that women and men should deal with whichever area they like in politics, defence, and agriculture, whatever. But research shows that women’s presence in parliament change politics and legislation on social justice, gender equality, SRHR, children rights etc. In many parliaments, also in Sweden sometimes women from different parties work together.

However, discrimination, oppression and violence pose strong barriers to women’s exercise of civil and political rights across the globe. I’m very concerned about this. Women activists from NGOs and political parties face severe resistance in the world right now. Many women politicians are truly courageous and it’s an obligation of the states and fundamental task of democratic systems to protect and defend women politicians and women’s rights. We are all responsible to speak out when women’s political rights are violated.

Promoting gender equality and women’s role in development, including their political participation and influence, are key priorities of Sweden’s aid policy.

Empowerment is a significant dimension of this work, not least when women and girls enter new fields with limited resources and experience. It is very important that women of the whole society feel politics is for them. It seems to me that poor and low educated women in local politics are more likely than others to face resistance.

At home we have been successful in recruiting women to lead our central government agencies and public institutions. The majority of managers in the Swedish public sector are women, most notably at the local and regional levels. This is unfortunately not true in the private sector.

In order to create enabling environments for female leaders, we also need to address male dominance and stereotype norms around masculinity. Men must see women as equals and acknowledge their experience and knowledge. Our overall progress towards gender equality has so far largely concerned women advancing in areas that were previously reserved for men. The opposite movement of men into traditionally female territory is slow and many times non-existent.
Therefore women remain with the principal responsibility for unpaid household tasks and looking after children and other relatives on top of income generating activities and public engagements. The unfair sharing of domestic work and care puts a glass ceiling on women’s development in general and, in my view, it is for men rather than women now to break it.

Looking forward, I believe that men should take greater responsibility for household duties and supporting women’s political activism and professional careers, in public and private. I am convinced that such a transition would have a massively positive impact on the situation for female leaders and leadership in Sweden and the world.

So, now is the time for men to get engaged! Headed by Prime Minister Stefan Löfvén, all male ministers of the Swedish government are championing the UN Women He for She-campaign. Other men and boys should follow their example, speaking out and acting against violence and discrimination faced by women and girls.

Gender equality is a necessary precondition not only for women’s and girl’s enjoyment of human rights but for the future welfare, economic growth and rights and sustainability of our societies. Gender equality is an engine for advancement, not a gift to women. Let us all join forces to make men and boys part of the solution.

2015 has been announced as the year of women’s empowerment in the African Union, we also celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Beijing declaration and Platform for Action. It is rewarding to see the increasing international attention towards gender equality, women’s rights and empowerment.

It is very important that the future Post 2015 remains with a strong objective and content on gender equality. And that budgets are there. By working together we will be much more successful than on our own. Therefore I am grateful to be here and to learn from and share experiences with all of you. Once again, on behalf of the Swedish government I am honoured to accept this award.

Thank you.
Thomas Gass  
Assistant Secretary-General of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Excellences,  
Honourable Senators and MPs,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The introduction to this panel says that the world will reach a turning point in 2015! Allow me to explain how I understand this turning point and the opportunity and challenge that 2015 represents for us, and especially for you, honourable Representatives.

As underscored by our Secretary General, Mr Ban Ki Moon, in his recent Synthesis Report “The road to dignity by 2030 “, we are at a historic crossroads. With our globalized economy and sophisticated technology, we can decide to end the age-old ills of extreme poverty and hunger. We can embark on a course that accelerates the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and keeps the rise in global average temperature below 2 degrees Celsius.

Or we can continue to degrade our planet and allow intolerable inequalities to sow bitterness and despair. Our choice must be to embark on a path to inclusive and shared prosperity in a peaceful and resilient world, where human rights and the rule of law are upheld.

I asked the organisers to include in your conference package the draft Sustainable Development Goals… It’s not a glossy publication because it is still a draft. This document is the result of nearly two years of discussions and negotiations including consultations with major groups including NGOs, Business, youth, women, indigenous peoples, local authorities and others… It’s 17 Goals and related Targets will be the core of the emerging Post2015 Agenda that is to be adopted in a special meeting of heads of state and government in September this year / coinciding with the 70th anniversary of the UN. This Post 2015 Agenda can become a powerful tool in the hand of parliamentarians – in the hand of women and men who are committed to bring to bear their leadership on the challenges of this planet.

A) The essence of the Post2015 Agenda

Now, I can already imagine some of you say: “17 Goals and 169 Targets - This is like the Millennium Development Goals except more complex”. Please hear me out. This Post2015 Agenda, while it builds on the MDGs is very different from the Millennium Development Goals.

The implementation of the Millennium Development Goals proved that the international community can be mobilized to confront complex challenges. Governments, civil society and a wide range of international actors coalesced behind the Goals in a multi-front battle against poverty and disease. They generated innovative approaches, vital new data, new resources and new tools and technology for this struggle. Sound public policies inspired by the Goals, enhanced by collective action and international cooperation, led to some remarkable successes.

In the two decades since 1990, the world has halved extreme poverty, lifting 700 million out of extreme poverty. In the decade between 2000 and 2010, an estimated 3.3 million deaths from malaria were averted and 22 million lives
were saved in the fight against tuberculosis. Access to antiretroviral therapy for HIV-infected people has saved 6.6 million lives since 1995. At the same time, gender parity in primary school enrolment, access to child and maternal health care and in women’s political participation has slowly improved.

But essentially, the MDGs were a “strategic plan for the development cooperation community”, developed by technicians to fix the most pressing issues in the “global South”. And as other speakers will confirm, the results are mixed, and for some goals such as MDG 5 on reducing maternal mortality and achieving universal access to reproductive health they are insufficient/unsatisfactory they fall short of the targets.

The Post 2015 Agenda, developed by virtue of the two year process I just spoke about, is more of a “Shared Vision of Humanity in 2030”. A framework of targets that should be realised for all by 2030.

So if you are looking for a quick recipe to deal with the world’s challenges, or a short guide to set global and national priorities – you will be disappointed.

But if what is needed, is the basis for a new social contract between those who govern and those who are governed – between the duty bearers and the rights holders, then you may find these Sustainable Development Goals extremely useful.

If indeed, the heads of state and governments assemble in NY in September, not so much to strike a deal with each other but to pledge to their people, back home, that this vision is also for them, then this agenda can become transformative. It will be universal – valid for all countries - and yet adaptable to the conditions of each country. It will place people and the planet at the centre.

Examples Goal 5
5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate

5.5 Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life
5.a Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws

The other important difference between the Millennium Development Goals and these Sustainable Development Goals, is that the SDGs have at their core the resolve that no one is to be left behind. The Secretary-General expressed it by “urging the international community to agree that none of these goals or targets should be considered met unless it is met for all social and economic groups”. This determination to address inequalities, is a golden thread through this Agenda.

It means that we can no longer hide behind averages. We will have to begin our efforts by identifying the most vulnerable groups and address the environmental, social, economic and political risks they are facing.
B) What is needed and how can WIP help

The credibility of this new agenda rests on two things – both are directly dependent on parliaments:
- A realisation by the executive that this Agenda will truly be a promise to the people; and
- The mobilisation of resources national and international, private and public, but also the mobilisation of every effort in society to deliver on this promise.

Four high-level international meetings in 2015 will bring together the essential elements of this new agenda. The first took place last week and was the international conference on disaster risk reduction in Sendai Japan. If we are committed to giving adequate attention to the most vulnerable, disaster risk reduction is a good place to start. The next will be the third International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held here in Addis Ababa in July, and for which negotiations are already ongoing.

That will be followed by the September Summit that will adopt the Post 2015 Agenda, which will bring together the SDGs and the result of the Addis conference.

And in December in Paris, the (COP21) Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Paris in December, at which Member States have pledged to adopt a new agreement to tackle this threat that would make it impossible to deliver on the new sustainable development agenda.

These conferences and their outcomes are all different and yet closely linked. An ambitious result on Climate Change in Paris depends very much on the level of interest, ambition and flexibility that negotiators, particularly from OECD/Developed countries, will show in Addis.

But in the end, these international processes will only be successful, if the Heads of State and Government, when they come to New York in September, know that their people know that they are going there to make them the promise that this New Agenda, these 17 Goals are also valid for them.

Only if they are translated to the national and the local level, then will the SDGs become the basis of a new social contract and a tool for accountability. A tool for you, honourable MPs to use in your dialogue with your constituencies and your governments.
OUR PARTNERS
WIP wishes to acknowledge the support of our valued partners who have collaborated with WIP for the WIP Summit 2015:

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