



Equal Futures Partner Countries: Commitments and Progress to Expand Women's Political and Economic Participation
September 22, 2014

Each Equal Futures Partnership member works closely with civil society and other stakeholders to identify areas for action. Partners in turn set achievable goals for action, and formalize those goals as commitments within the Partnership. Members' progress in implementing their commitments to promoting women's political and economic participation are highlighted below.

Australia: Australia will continue to build on its commitment to the Equal Futures Partnership in order to expand economic opportunities for women and increase women's participation in politics and civil society. Australia's new commitments are three-fold and will further improve women's leadership opportunities. First, in partnership with the Global Women's Leadership Initiative, Australia will establish the Australian Chapter of the Women in Public Service Project, which will support the next generation of female Australian leaders through a training institute to develop students' leadership skills and a mentoring program. Second, the Australian government has committed to developing and testing a prototype National Domestic Violence Order Information Sharing System to enable jurisdictions to share information about domestic violence and family court orders. Third, Australia is improving women's representation and leadership in male-dominated industries in order to advance women's full participation in the workforce and the economy. They are doing so by providing additional support to the Australian Human Rights Commission in order to develop a resource for employers providing necessary information for sustaining ongoing employment for employees who are pregnant, on parental leave, and returning to work from parental leave.

Bangladesh: Bangladesh is in the process of submitting updates to its commitments.

Belgium: Belgium is in the process of submitting updates to its commitments.

Benin: Benin is in the process of submitting updates to its commitments.

Chile: Chile joined in 2014 and will be submitting its updates in 2015.

Croatia: Croatia undertook further efforts to advance its commitments under its National Action Plan for its participation in the Equal Futures Partnership. To promote women's political participation, the government is preparing amendments for the Gender Equality Act in the section

regulating sanctions for failure to include at least 40 percent of the under-represented gender in electoral lists. The government is preparing an action plan to strengthen the social and economic position of women in rural areas. To advance the role of women in business, the government adopted in June 2014 a Strategy of Women Entrepreneurship Development (2014-2020). To reduce gender disparity in positions of economic leadership, a project entitled “Breaking through the glass ceiling - Equal opportunities in access to positions of economic decision-making in Croatia” was launched at the end of 2013. In the defence sector, the new policy document entitled “Gender Mainstreaming Policy in the Ministry of Defence and Croatian Armed Forces”, was adopted in September 2013. In 2014, the first Croatian female officer promoted to the rank of brigadier general was assigned to a general post in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), Afghanistan, as a gender advisor to the ISAF Commander. Croatia has also taken steps to integrate gender perspectives and the promotion of gender equality in all its foreign policy activities and international development cooperation.

Denmark: Denmark has made progress in implementing its Equal Futures commitments in several areas. First, Denmark advanced women’s participation on corporate boards and improved gender balance in Danish companies by requiring that certain companies set targets for increasing the representation of the under-represented sex. Companies are also required to develop a policy to increase the portion of the under-represented sex in the company’s other management levels. Sanctions/fines can be imposed if the companies do not meet the obligations in setting target figures and establishing policies to meet them. Second, Denmark addressed violence against women as a barrier to political and economic participation by developing training for over 4,000 municipal management and front line staff on handling family and intimate partner violence. The government launched the “2020-goals”, aiming to decrease by 30 percent the percentage of women taking refuge in a women’s shelter more than once. Third, Denmark has enhanced ethnic minority women’s political and civic participation by launching a national strategy against honor-related violence, including establishing a central advisory unit to offer special expertise in honor-related cases and amending the law with provisions obligating municipal councils to offer citizens over 18 years of age an action plan in cases where the individual is at risk of a serious honor-related conflict. Teachers, social workers, and educators are being educated on this issue. Furthermore, the government launched a strategy to prevent women and minors from being forced into entering a religious marriage or from being kept in a religious marriage against their own free will.

European Union: The European Commission's Strategy for equality between women and men (2010-2015), as well as the European Union (EU) Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy, provide the framework for EU engagement on improving women's political empowerment both within the EU community and globally. The EU regional program "Spring Forward for Women" focuses on political and economic empowerment of women in the southern Mediterranean region. This program is being implemented by UN Women and aims to empower women to engage in decision making spaces and in the economy. In 2013, the EU gathered in Brussels women political decision-makers and parliamentarians from Arab countries to support enhancing knowledge and confidence of women in leadership roles. A 2014 iteration of this

initiative is forthcoming. In September 2013, the EU co-chaired the Third Ministerial Conference on “Strengthening the Role of Women in Society” in the Euro-Mediterranean region. Ministers reaffirmed commitments and obligations to concrete measures aimed at achieving equal participation of women and men in political, economic, and social areas of life. It was agreed to establish a Euro-Mediterranean Forum aimed at ensuring effective dialogue on gender-related policies, legislation, and implementation. Within the EU region, the EU prioritized increasing the representation of women in corporate boards; for example, the European Commission proposed a Directive (European law) providing for a 40 percent minimum representation by women as non-executive directors in large listed companies by 2020, based on clear criteria and a comparison of candidates’ skills and qualifications. Small and medium enterprises are excluded from this rule. As the push for gender balance on boards gains steam in Europe, companies are progressing; since October 2013, when the proposal was made, the rate of progress has been four times higher than between 2003 and 2010.

Finland: Finland’s Equal Futures Partnership commitments are included in the government’s Action Plan for Gender Equality 2012–2015. One of Finland’s commitments is to promote gender equality in citizen participation and the integration of immigrants. A Democracy Report, submitted to Parliament in March 2014, describes efforts to enhance equal participation and is intended to initiate an action program for monitoring and enhancing the development of policies and programs to promote equal participation by men and women. In autumn 2014, the Parliament will issue guidelines for further government efforts in response to the report. A second area of Finland’s commitments within the Equal Futures Partnership is promoting better inclusion of gender issues in economic policy-making. To this end, the government commissioned a study on the impact of tax policy on the economic equality of women and men, which will be finalized in fall 2014. A third priority area is promoting gender equality and alleviating gender segregation in education and training. The government launched in 2014 a new effort around general education (primary, lower secondary level ages 7 to 16) to reduce the differentiation between girls and boys in learning, including by updating curricula with a specific gender focus. Lastly, Finland is committed to promoting gender equality and women’s leadership through its international cooperation and is keen to look for partnerships in this regard.

Indonesia: The Ministry of Women’s Empowerment and Child Protection (MoWE-CP) carried out several strategic measures to create an enabling political environment for fostering women’s empowerment and promoting gender equality in various sectors. At a structural level, agreements with 32 government agencies and local governments focus on gender mainstreaming and protection for women and children, facilitating action to implement Indonesia’s Equal Futures commitments in several sectors. In politics, MoWE-CP and the General Elections Commission (KPU) signed a memorandum of understanding on increasing women’s participation in elections, including capacity building training for all female legislative candidates, using media to promote female legislative candidates to the public, and leadership training for women in government. In the economic sphere, MoWE-CP has worked to integrate gender perspectives and support women’s economic empowerment within its policy and programs by increasing women’s access to capital and markets;

providing training on issues such as licensing, product packaging and quality improvement, and export activities; and improving financial literacy education across the country. Further, the National Program for Community Empowerment provides soft loans for female entrepreneurs, and, in collaboration with many state-owned banks, distributed credit amounting to Rp.140 trillion (approximately \$12 billion) through April 2014, benefitting 19 million micro-small entrepreneurs. The Jakarta Stock Exchange facilitates accessible stocks products for women's groups. Additionally, training on women's entrepreneurship has been provided by the Indonesian Business Women's Association.

Italy: Italy has strengthened its legislative framework to promote and protect human rights by increasing ratification of international and supra-national standards. Over the past year, political will coupled with effective implementation measures has led to several achievements, including: the translation of the anti-trafficking EU Directive; the adoption of the biannual National Action Plan on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325; increased levels of women's participation and economic empowerment at the national level; and increased attention to promoting gender equality in Italy's development cooperation. In addition to new commitments, Italy has focused on fighting trafficking in persons by increasing data collection; unifying short and long term assistance into one single programme of first aid, assistance, and social integration; identifying multi-annual intervention strategies, including measures aimed at increasing public awareness, social prevention, and social integration of victims. Furthermore, Italy has introduced measures to prevent female genital mutilation (FGM) and coordinate activities carried out by relevant ministries in the prevention, response, and eradication of FGM, including victim assistance. Italy has strengthened the collection of data and information at national and international levels, particularly on implemented actions and planned strategies to combat FGM. For future action, Italy has identified other priorities: (1) supporting female entrepreneurship and an increase in women's employment opportunities; (2) enforcing laws on gender equality and equal opportunities for all; (3) eliminating gender inequalities in primary and secondary education; (4) promoting work/life balance and (5) eliminating gender-based violence.

Japan: The Japanese government is taking a multi-layered approach to empower, support, and promote women to be actively engaged in the formal economy and society. In addition to developing incentives for private companies, the government is helping to raise awareness by advertising the best progressive practices, publishing data regarding female representation in managerial positions, and reviewing tax systems. The government is expanding after-school programs for elementary school children in order to enable and facilitate parenting men and women to work with an increased access to childcare. Also, in support of life-work balance, the government is encouraging companies to improve work environments and increase diversity in work places. Prime Minister Abe has taken a strong lead on this issue, and in September 2014, made history by including five women in his Cabinet. The international symposium "WAW!" (World Assembly for Women in Tokyo) took place for the first time in September 2014 with a number of world leaders. In conjunction with "WAW!," a "Shine Week" was organized with nearly 100 women-related events interlinking the public sector, private companies, and social

organizations. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is keen to connect such initiatives with international efforts.

Jordan: Jordan is in the process of submitting updates to its commitments.

Latvia: In order to promote women's economic independence and the provision of equal opportunities in the labor market, the government adopted in 2013 a series of recommendations aimed at promoting gender equality in education by 2020, including through the launch of targeted programs. The government further adopted in 2013 the "National Strategy for the Prevention of Trafficking in Human Beings 2014-2020". The strategy includes tasks and measures aimed at ensuring sustainable, well-planned, and coordinated implementation of human trafficking prevention policy at the national level. With regards to improving maternal health, the government implemented several measures to increase the availability of health care services during pregnancy. For example, in the first half of 2014, Latvia strengthened regional centers of prenatal care and worked in cooperation with non-governmental organizations and local authorities to develop informal education for adolescents on sexual and reproductive health issues. As a cross-cutting effort, the government has launched a series of awareness raising activities on gender equality, human trafficking, and maternal health.

Mexico: Mexico, in fulfillment of its international obligations on human rights and consistent with the objectives of the Equal Futures Partnership, adopted a National Action Plan in September 2014, covering 27 federal public institutions. The actions advance the promotion of: (1) social development through increased gender equality; (2) economic opportunities for women and girls; (3) women's political participation; (4) prevention of gender-based violence; (5) women's access to justice; (6) specialized care for migrant women and victims of persons trafficking; (7) statistical information with a gender perspective; and (8) exchange of good practices and increased international cooperation. These actions are carried out through joint work with the private sector and civil society. With the adoption of the National Action Plan, Mexico seeks to undertake a multi-sectoral approach to empowering women and girls, and seeks to eliminate current barriers to their participation in the political, economic, social, and cultural life of the country.

Morocco: In the past decade, Morocco has intensified its political, economic, social, and human rights reforms, helping to further the values of democracy and human rights as well as a foundation for fair and sustainable human development that reduces gender disparities. These reforms were strengthened in the 2011 constitution, with a view toward enhancing women's rights. The Government Plan for Equality "IKRAM" (2013) was developed with key stakeholders and is focused on the following objectives: (1) institutionalize and disseminate the principles of equity and equality, and pave the way for gender parity; (2) combat all forms of discrimination and violence against women; (3) strengthen the education and training system on the basis of equity and equality; (4) promote fair and equal access to health services; (5) upgrade basic infrastructure to improve the living conditions of women and young girls; (6) promote social and economic empowerment of women; (7) support equal and equitable access to provide for administrative, political and economic decision-making positions; and (8) support equal opportunity between men

and women on the job market. Morocco has already taken strides in promoting these objectives and actions, complemented by the establishment of a national institution to promote human rights, good governance, and participatory democracy, which has the authority to fight against gender discrimination and to promote and monitor gender equality. In addition, the government has sought to protect women from violence through: (1) the creation of an institutional structure to provide services to women; (2) the development of a national system for observation and statistics; and (3) targeted legislative and legal measures.

The Netherlands: The Netherlands is in the process of submitting updates to its commitments.

New Zealand: New Zealand is focused on promoting women in leadership positions, with the target of 45 percent participation of women on state sector boards and 10 percent participation of women on boards of the top 100 companies listed on the New Zealand Stock Exchange (NZSX). In the private sector, New Zealand continues to support the 25 Percent Group and monitor the implementation of New Zealand stock market's (NZSX) diversity listing rule. In 2012, women held 14.75 percent of board positions in the top 100 companies on NZSX. In 2014, figures compiled by NZSX demonstrate women comprise 12 percent of directors and 19 percent of officers of all listed companies. Through research and publications, the government made the case for organizations to increase the number of women in leadership and ensure pathways for women within their organisations, and has engaged with private and public sector organisations on issues connected to improving the “pipeline” of women into leadership roles. The government is investigating women's career pathways to identify how organizations can address the barriers to women seeking leadership roles. In the public sector, since 2001, the proportion of women managers in the public service has increased (40.8 percent to 47.4 percent), as has the proportion of female senior managers (32.7 percent to 39.8 percent). The proportion of women Chief Executives is currently at 22.2 percent. The Ministry has worked with government agencies to increase the number of women on state sector boards and committees, leading to the establishment of a public sector network specifically aimed at addressing diversity. For example, the New Zealand Police is actively addressing leadership diversity within its organization.

Peru: Peru reaffirms its commitment to continue to implement national policies on gender equality for the empowerment of women, resulting in a more modern and inclusive state, and that allow the advancement of development without discrimination. Peru will implement the 2014-2015 Intersectoral Action Plan, “Women's empowerment and economic independence in Peru,” under the framework of the Political Dialogue Project, which focuses on promoting the empowerment and economic autonomy of women in Peru. During 2014-2015, the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion will focus on promoting financial education for rural and urban-marginal women, building on evidence indicating that strong financial education promotes opportunities for women through more effective administration of family resources. With regards to women's political empowerment, in order to strengthen implementation of gender quotas in regional and municipal elections, the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations will supervise quota compliance during the 2014 electoral process in 10 regions

Senegal: In advance of 2014 local elections, Senegal is working to implement the gender parity and gender equality law, with approximately \$120 million budgeted annually since 2012. The caucus of women leaders has developed activities at the national level around health, education, and infrastructure. In addition, the National Observatory of Parity, a monitoring body, has designed an advertising spot to inform the public on the scope of the law and of challenges related to its implementation. With the support of UN Women, other awareness-raising initiatives have taken place, including messaging caravans, and information workshops for women on the structure and functioning of local governments. The Senegalese Women's Council has worked on projects to improve women's access to decision-making and to build leadership capacity in political parties and across civil society on promoting gender equality, including the intersection of gender and electoral processes, decentralization policies, the electoral code and parity, and democracy and human rights. Overall, significant progress on legal reforms has occurred, for example women are now able to pass on her nationality to her foreign husband and children. The government trained 25 women reporters who began to make radio productions, facilitate talks, and conduct advocacy with their listening groups on women's leadership and gender equity, contributing to 1,833 radio broadcasts to date. Five new mutual health organizations were created to facilitate access to health care, including training on financial and administrative management. Economically, over 500 women have received support to enhance trade. However, the implementation of the law on parity in local elections has faced some constraints. The government plans to carry out a study and continue outreach and advocacy with different leaders (political, customary, and religious) to promote their support for the gender parity law. Ultimately, all actions stemming from government political will were supported by technical partners, financiers, and civil society organizations.

Sierra Leone: Through the commitment of the President, Sierra Leone enjoys significant political will in championing gender equality and women's empowerment domestically and regionally. The government developed the Agenda for Prosperity – its National Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRSP III 2013 -2018) – which has eight pillars, including a stand-alone pillar on gender, complemented by efforts to mainstream gender issues across the other pillars,. Within government, the President has shown his commitment to promoting women's rights and representation as a key strategy to achieving gender equality, particularly by appointing women in such prominent positions as Chief Justice, National Electoral Commissioner, Solicitor-General, Commissioner-General of the National Revenue Authority, Executive Chairperson of the Environmental Agency, Auditor-General, Administrator and Registrar-General, Brigadier-General (the first women in this position in the sub-region), and State Chief of Protocol. The President further established the office of the Special Adviser on Gender in the Office of the President with full budgetary allocation. As part of the commitment to the Equal Futures Partnership, moreover, Sierra Leone has, through the Cabinet, approved the development of a comprehensive Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy including a draft Bill advocating for a minimum 30 percent quota for women in governance at all levels. In addition to advancing gender representation in senior and decision making roles, Sierra Leone has sought to incorporate gender equality principles in the government process, such as by incorporating 20 percent of overall performance rating of senior public or civil servants (e.g.

ministers and heads of institutions including higher education and local government) focused on progress made in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Switzerland: Switzerland joined in 2014 and will be submitting its updates in 2015.

Thailand: Thailand is in the process of submitting updates to its commitments.

Timor Leste: Timor Leste is in the process of submitting updates to its commitments.

Tunisia: Tunisia is in the process of submitting updates to its commitments.

United Kingdom: The United Kingdom joined in 2014. The UK will accelerate its work to tackle the gender pay gap, address the problem of workplace discrimination, promote female entrepreneurship, and increase in the number of women in leadership positions both in the corporate world and in other important decision making positions. They are taking action to enable girls and young women to make school and career choices that are best suited to their talents and are not affected by harmful stereotypes. They will work with careers professionals, businesses and women who have excelled in their fields to send the message that girls and women can be as good as boys and men whatever they chose to do. They are also working to help women with caring responsibilities start or get on with their careers. And because they recognize that older women are sometimes not valued as they should be for the skills they have to offer, they are testing possible ways to address the issues they face in that late stage of their career. They will also work to give women the opportunity to talk directly to policy makers in order to make their concerns heard.

United States: In order to continue pursuing a strong women's economic and political empowerment agenda, in June 2014, the White House partnered with the Department of Labor and the Center for American Progress to host the historic White House Summit on Working Families, which elevated the ongoing national conversation about making today's workplace work for everyone. The Summit convened businesses, economists, labor leaders, legislators, advocates, and the media to spark a conversation on the issues facing the entire spectrum of working families – from low wage workers to executives. The Summit on Working Families covered issues such as equal pay for women, paid family leave, paid sick days, child care, pregnancy discrimination, minimum wage, talent attraction and retention strategies for companies, and helping women succeed in STEM careers and non-traditional jobs. In conjunction with the summit, President Obama signed an Executive Order to help federal employees better balance work and spending time at home, and announced a package of public and private sector efforts that take a strong stand to protect pregnant and working women, increased investments for research to understand the economic benefits of paid leave, expanded apprenticeships for women, targeted resources to help more women enter higher-paying STEM and other fields, and made child care more affordable for working families. In preparation for the summit, the White House Council on Women and Girls held discussions around the country with working families, employers, business and labor leaders, economists, and advocates to seek out new ideas for ensuring fair pay, encouraging more family friendly workplaces, and improving and strengthening our businesses and our economy as a whole. President Obama will continue to push these issues as key priorities and will expand on this agenda in the coming months.

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