



**Equal Futures Partner Countries: Commitments and Progress to Expand Women's Political and Economic Participation**  
September 23, 2013

Each country participating in the Equal Futures Partnership works closely with civil society and other stakeholders to identify areas for action. They then set achievable goals for action, and formalize those goals as commitments within the Partnership. Many have established coordinating bodies to develop and oversee the implementation of Equal Futures commitments. Moving forward, Equal Futures countries will report on progress within the Partnership and exchange best practices and lessons learned through technical working groups. Highlights from partner progress on commitments include:

***Australia:*** Australia has launched an online toolkit to help businesses increase women's leadership in traditionally male-dominated industries. Consistent with Australia's commitment, as of June 30, 2013, 41.7% of Australian Government Board appointments were held by women. Early this year, Australia also established a National Center of Excellence as a key joint commitment under its *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010–2022*.

***Bangladesh:*** Bangladesh is in the process of submitting updates to their commitments. They will be available shortly on the website.

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***Croatia:*** Croatia has developed a National Action Plan to promote women's political participation, strengthen the social and economic position of rural women, advance female businesses and women in the labor market, and support international efforts to empower women. To promote women's political participation, a targeted public campaign on the importance of gender equality in politics was conducted on the eve of the 2013 local elections. In addition, gender segregated statistics reflecting local election results have been made available to the public. Data on women in rural areas is being collected in order to develop a comprehensive action plan to strengthen the social and economic position of rural women. To advance women-owned businesses and women in the labor market, Croatia is stepping up efforts to implement existing laws and policies and is introducing additional measures such as additional scores for the participation of women entrepreneurs in all projects eligible for state funding. In order

to support international efforts to empower women, Croatia put special emphasis on these issues in pre-deployment education of Croatian diplomats, as well as on the realization, within the International Development Cooperation, of concrete projects in the area of education and small business for women in post conflict societies.

**Denmark:** In December 2012, Denmark passed a new bill on increasing the number of women on company boards and in management positions. The Danish government has held consultations with business organizations to discuss the most suitable methods to improve the representation of women on company boards. New efforts have been made to expand training for municipalities and front line staff on violence against women and in the family. More than 4,000 professionals have been trained in one-day courses. Many policymakers at the local level have evaluated and revised their action plans to combat domestic violence. A National Strategy on Honour-Related Conflicts, to cover the period from 2012-2015, was launched. Tangible progress has been made with regard to enhancing participation of ethnic minority women in Denmark through mentorship programs and support to ethnic minority women's entrepreneurship.

**European Union:** The European Union implemented a series of actions to fulfill its commitments to empower women politically. These include the implementation of the Spring Forward for Women program in the South Mediterranean region, the organization of a high-level conference on Women's Leadership in the Sahel Region, and the deployment of human rights observers and training on gender and human rights for the mission in Mali. The EU supported several activities to promote women's participation in mediation and conflict prevention by providing training directly (in Afghanistan) or through financial assistance to the civil society sector (in Cote d'Ivoire, Guatemala, Guinea Bissau, Maldives). Finally, the EU released the first report providing comparable and reliable data on support for women victims of violence in the EU Member States and, based on this data, in December 2012, the Council of the EU adopted conclusions to improve services for these women where needed.

**Finland:** All of Finland's Equal Futures Partnership commitments have been included in the 2012-2015 Government Action Plan for Gender Equality, which has a regular monitoring process. There are three specific commitments under the Equal Futures Partnership: (1) Promotion of gender equality in the strengthening of citizen participation and integration of immigrants, which will be advanced by integrating a gender focus in a Democracy Report to be submitted to Parliament early 2014. (2) Better inclusion of gender issues in economic policy-making, which will be advanced through a study commissioned on the impact of tax policy on the economic equality of women and men. (3) Promotion of gender equality and alleviating gender segregation in education and training, which will be advanced by incorporating a strong gender equality focus into the process of preparing new curricula for pre-school and basic education by January 2014. The teacher education and teacher-in-service education also have a gender component.

**Indonesia:** Following the April 2013 EFP meeting, Indonesia has established cooperation with various stakeholders including: country partners, state-owned companies, and financial institutions to support the implementation of commitments in economic sectors. We provided wider access to finance for women entrepreneurs through various sources such as credit through a government-subsidized micro finance

program (KUR), the revolving fund management institution (LDPB), community saving and loan groups, cooperatives, and microfinance institutions. We conducted financial literacy, entrepreneurship and leadership trainings programs. To expand access to market, we held several exhibitions and assisted in increasing the use of ICT tools. Political empowerment: we implemented activities promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, with a focus on aligning policies regarding women's participation in politics and decision making in preparation for the general election in 2014. We also conducted activities including: capacity building for women in civil society; established a women's political party forum; planned a national program for gender mainstreaming and capacity building for legislative members elected in the 2014 general election; and facilitated the provision of gender disaggregated data for the 2014 general election to relevant institutions. Barriers for business women continue to exist; success depends upon the business environment. Women's businesses also need technical supports to scale operations. To fulfill the EFP commitments in the future, Indonesia will look to secure technical assistance, particularly in creating programs to transform and upgrade women's micro level business into small and medium enterprises; and in improving the integration of gender perspective in macroeconomic policies. In terms of sharing best practices with other EFP members, Indonesia is open to provide technical assistance, share expertise and lesson learned regarding implementation of Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting (GRPB) in Indonesia in all sectors.

**Italy:** Italy is implementing new programs and projects to improve women's access to scientific, technological and research careers. It is also strengthening women's access to companies' top positions through the implementation of a law on equal access to boards of directors and boards of statutory auditors of companies listed on regulated markets and companies with public participation. Italy is also taking action to support female entrepreneurship through special dedicated fund and focusing on implementing its National Action Plan against Gender-Based Violence and Stalking.

**Japan:** Japan aims to realize a society where all women can flourish. To that end, Japan is striving to create women-friendly working environments and expand women's participation in policy and decision making processes. To achieve these goals, Japan will: provide an incentive to private companies that are actively engaged in empowering women and helping employees maintain balance between work and child-rearing; make sure that working women and men are provided with sufficient support for child-rearing and will work to dramatically raise the percentage of female workers' participation in the labor market; and work to expanding women's participation in policy and decision making processes, with a target of increasing the percentage of women in leadership positions to at least 30% by 2020.

**Jordan:** Jordan is in the process of submitting updates to their commitments. They will be available shortly on the website.

**Latvia:** To advance the efforts to implement educational and awareness-raising activities that address labor market segregation and provision of equal opportunities for men and women, Latvia has developed recommendations for balancing the number of women and men in the labor market and for the promotion of gender mainstreaming at different levels of education. Latvia is currently developing a new policy planning

document that will address prevention of trafficking in human beings. In addition, Latvia has been actively working to improve women's health care, particularly by increasing the availability of health care services during pregnancy.

**Mexico:** Mexico will strengthen public policies and programs to promote the participation and economic empowerment of women at all levels. Mexico will place a special focus on the development of female indigenous entrepreneurs will be particularly promoted. Needs based qualitative diagnostics analysis will be conducted and actions developed to address the needs. These programs and needs will be integrated into an official government action plan. Political empowerment: Mexico will develop strategies that promote leadership and significant participation of women in decision making positions to promote building citizenship notions and the full exercise of the political rights. To achieve the eradication of violence against women, Mexico will take actions to address the entire cycle of violence including: prevention, attention, sanction and access to justice. These actions will be framed in strategies that increase, promote and strengthen the integral and effective prevention of violence against women and girls. Mexico will strengthen the services provided to women and girls regarding all forms of violence and guarantee effective justice and due diligence are conducted without discrimination of women and girls.

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**The Netherlands:** The Netherlands will encourage employers to commit to increasing their present ratio from 9% of women on boards of directors and supervisory boards to 30 percent. The Netherlands will set up programs to encourage more girls to choose technical education programs and more boys to go into the primary education sector. To meet the commitment of encouraging employers to increase their present ratio from nine percent of women on boards of directors and supervisory boards to 30 percent, the Netherlands has started the "Talent to the Top" initiative. Internationally, the Netherlands established the Women on the Frontline initiative to strengthen the financial and organizational management of women's organizations in the Middle East and North Africa. This initiative is open for other partners to join. The Netherlands also strengthened programs to engage young people in preventing violence against women and is exploring ways to increase the gender sensitivity of its education system. The Netherlands also aims to expand participation of women in the political sphere (currently women make up just 42 percent of the parliament and just 30 percent of the Cabinet).

**New Zealand:** New Zealand has released a report on *Realizing the Opportunity: Addressing New Zealand's leadership pipeline by attracting and retaining talented women*. The report addresses key issues that affect the career progression of women into senior management and executive roles in New Zealand. The report considers why, despite highly qualified women at all levels and a strong business case for gender balance, women remain underrepresented in management and executive roles. Three specific areas of focus used to frame the paper are: unconscious bias, particularly among senior leaders; processes for women re-entering the workplace following career breaks; and flexible working arrangements that better meet individual and business needs. This report provides an opportunity to encourage employers to consider how unconscious

bias, career breaks and flexible working conditions affect women in leadership in their organizations. The report is available at [www.mwa.govt.nz](http://www.mwa.govt.nz)

**Peru:** The Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations (MIMP), in coordination with other civil society representatives, developed a national advocacy strategy to promote and support a bill that proposes that political parties should alternate a woman and a man in their electoral list. The bill seeks to improve the effectiveness of the affirmative measures in the electoral system and it is being debated in the various committees inside the Congress. Eleven decentralized public hearings, as well as information and awareness efforts at various parliamentary offices and through broadcast media, have been conducted. The Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion (MIDIS), has reaffirmed its initial commitment to carry out interventions that will include within the financial system the most vulnerable population. This commitment will impact one million people, 80% of whom are women living in Peru's rural areas. Indicators, tools, strategies and pilot projects have been designed to help MIDIS achieve the goals of this commitment. To reinforce the Peruvian commitments regarding political empowerment, the MIMP is committed to: promoting civic schools for adult women and teenagers; fostering economic development for women through corporate commitment for the eradication of gender violence and the promotion of equity in their institutional policies; and helping public agencies reconcile the demands of work and family life.

**Senegal:** Senegal is in the process of submitting updates to their commitments. They will be available on the website shortly.

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**Thailand:** Thailand has implemented programs to increase the participation of women in politics through partnership and collaboration among government agencies, non-governmental organizations and women's networks. Efforts have been made to educate citizens about the importance of women's participation in politics and administrative functions. Training and workshops have been organized for women on local government administration to prepare women candidates before elections. Discussion forums were held to build up women's networks, and budgetary support has been given for local activities to promote women's political participation. There were also visits and discussions held with party leaders to sensitize them on this issue.

**Timor Leste:** Timor Leste is in the process of submitting updates to their commitments. They will be available shortly on the website.

**Tunisia:** Tunisia is in the process of submitting updates to their commitments. They will be available shortly on the website.

**United States:** The United States is announcing new federal initiatives and public-private partnerships to get girls the STEM education they need to be prepared for high-quality STEM jobs. The Administration is also promoting new efforts to train women veterans to run for public office and provide media literacy education to youth – with a focus on gender and women's leadership – so as to empower them to be the next

generation of great leaders. To ensure that women who are victims of domestic violence are getting the support and tools they need to achieve economic independence, the Administration is broadening the availability of asset building services for survivors, as well as working to create housing stability for the most vulnerable groups, specifically women and girls who are living with HIV/AIDS and are also victims of violence. The Administration is also announcing new partnerships to make innovative online business education resources available to women business centers across America. Finally, next Spring President Obama will convene a White House Summit on Working Families. This summit will elevate the ongoing national conversation around making today's workplace work for everyone – from working parents struggling to balance the demands of their jobs with the needs of their families, to businesses seeking to attract and retain skilled workers and improve their bottom lines.

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