



Gender Equality and Women's Leadership for a Sustainable World

High-level Panel Discussion with the President's Group of Gender Equality Leaders

**Opening remarks by
H.E. Ambassador Mona Juul
Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council**

On behalf of the President of the Economic and Social Council, I am honoured to join the opening of this high-level event that celebrates and demands women's leadership for a sustainable world. I also extend my warm appreciation to the President of the General Assembly for her unwavering championship of gender equality and women's and girls' enjoyment of their human rights throughout her stewardship of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development confirms the centrality of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls to sustainable development and poverty eradication, and for progress across all the Goals and targets.

The focus of your event complements the work of this year's High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The theme of "*Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality*" compelled discussion of barriers to transformative and lasting change, and identification of strategies for overcoming those.

Global trends that threaten the achievement of the SDGs are clearly in evidence. The Special edition of the Secretary-General SDGs progress report highlights that major gender inequalities persist. Women represent less than 40 percent of those employed, occupy only about a quarter of managerial positions in the world, and face a gender pay gap of 12 percent. Throughout the world,

unpaid care and domestic work is disproportionately carried out by women and girls, resulting in pronounced income and time poverty. About a fifth of women aged 15 to 49 experienced physical or sexual partner violence in the last 12 months.

There is simply no way that we can achieve the 17 SDGs without achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls.

Achieving gender equality is not women's responsibility – it is a societal responsibility – a responsibility of all of us. And for a sustainable world, women's and girls' voice, agency, leadership and participation are indispensable.

Women's movements and women's and girls' organizations in all their diversity, from small local cooperatives and self-help groups to global networks, are key drivers of change. Their work, whether it is for climate justice, equal pay, freedom from violence, or sexual and reproductive health, is vital in enhancing women's daily lives. Providing adequate funding for the women's movements is of critical importance.

Countless women and girls leaders have spearheaded sustainable development solutions. Strengthening their voice, agency, participation, capacities and leadership in all spheres of life is critical. I applaud their leadership and courageous actions everywhere, to bring a sustainable world within reach.

We must further nurture the ability of girls and young women to take their lives and the decisions on the future of the world in their hands.

While women constantly push for improving societies and their condition, we should recognize the critical importance of institutions and mechanisms to promote gender equality and women's leadership.

I can assure you of my own and the Economic and Social Council's commitment to continue to promote gender equality and women's empowerment around the world. These are a backbone for the SDGs, major priorities for my country and core values for me personally.

I thank you.