



UNITED NATIONS ASSISTANCE MISSION IN SOMALIA (UNSOM)

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia

Message for International Women's Day

Mogadishu, 8 March 2015

International Women's Day, observed globally on 8 March, is the day when we celebrate the achievements of women while reinforcing their rights and calling for greater equality.

This year, International Women's Day bears special significance as the global community takes stock of the progress made and the gaps remaining since the adoption of the historic Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 20 years ago. Somalia has not been left behind, having gone through the national review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in 2014. This is a clear indication of the resolve of the Government to advance women's rights and gender equality.

While there have been many achievements since Beijing, serious gaps remain in many areas, and the achievements have not been even across the globe. In Somalia, the review of the Beijing Platform for Action reveals major gaps in all 12 critical areas of concerns. While progress is noted, in particular in the area of policy formulation, in reality change in the lives of women and girls has been insignificant. From access to education to participation in politics, from economic opportunities to protection of human rights and dignity, Somali women and girls experience a life different than that of men and boys.

As we observe International Women's Day today, which this year is dedicated to "Empowering Women, Empowering Humanity: Picture It," we must work hard to bring about tangible change in the lives of women and girls in Somalia. Clearly, empowerment of women and narrowing gender gaps hold a key to full realization of Vision 2016 and securing peace and stability in Somalia. I urge all UN staff in Somalia to join me in fulfilling this call and redouble our efforts to empower women and advance gender equality in Somalia.

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