



## Milestones

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### For a better world

The 65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) of the United Nations took place from 15 to 26 March 2021. The theme of the session was: “Women’s full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.” At this session, the 193 member states pledged to ramp up efforts to fully implement one of the most visionary blueprints of gender equality - the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995 (the Beijing Platform for Action). It attempted to take stock of the status of women, including examining current and future challenges as well as the obstacles to implementing the Beijing Platform for Action.

The discussions at the session included in-depth assessment of current challenges that affect the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women. It recognized that while the status of women has improved in some important respects in the past decade, progress has been uneven; inequalities between women and men have persisted, with serious consequences for the well-being of all people. It observed that equality between women and men is a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice; equality is also a necessary prerequisite for development and peace.

The UN Women’s Executive Director, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, said: “2020 has to be the year where change is intensified. In addition to the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, this year marks 20 years of implementing Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and

Security. It is also UN Women’s 10th birthday and the start of the UN Decade of Action. We will continue to work hard to achieve the aspirations of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with the support of a variety of stakeholders whom we continue to mobilise”.

The Secretary General’s report (<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3850087?ln=en>) drew on 170 National Reports, contributions from civil society and youth organizations to both national and regional reviews, as well as available global data. The report affirmed the positive news of the change in 274 discriminatory legal and regulatory reforms in 131 countries.

Over the past 25 years, women’s representation in national parliaments has doubled, from 12 per cent in 1995 to an average of 24.3 globally in 2019, with the global median representation of women at 21 per cent. Nearly 80 countries introduced legislated gender quotas, thus raising women’s participation. In 2019, women gained 30 per cent of parliamentary seats in countries with quotas, compared to 18 per cent in countries without quotas. Some countries had moved towards a target of 40–60 per cent. By the year 2018, 192 countries had one or more dedicated gender equality mechanisms or focal points. While in 1995, only Sweden provided for paternity leave, by 2015, this had grown to 94 countries. The global maternal mortality ratio fell from 342 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 2000 to 211 per 100,000 in 2017. This, it can be said, is the positive legacy of the Beijing Platform for Action.

The agreed conclusions are available at: <https://undocs.org/en/E/CN.6/2021/L.3> 📄