

Foreword

Southern Africa Barometer 2015 - Action and Results

By the Executive Director of UN WOMEN, Dr Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka



The year 2015 is a pivotal one. This year we take stock of where we are and position ourselves for transformative change that will shape the next generation. We have already reached two of three important milestones this year - our 20th anniversary review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Third International

Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa - and we are fast approaching the adoption of the new Post-2015 agenda.

UN Women is committed to ensuring that gender is mainstreamed across all levels and policy areas, and that we have better data to measure progress and demand accountability. That is why the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Gender Protocol Barometer 2015 is so timely.

SADC Heads of State have demonstrated encouraging commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment. They have shown foresight in adopting a Protocol on Gender and Development with 28 targets aligned to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that expire this year. SADC is one of the few sub-regions that has taken global and continental commitments to gender equality and wrapped them into one instrument with ambitious, time-bound targets.

Their work, and that of the Southern African Gender Protocol Alliance that produces this annual Barometer, are providing us with vital tools to track progress. It is through such transformative partnerships with governments and civil society networks that we can create real and irreversible change.

I am a firm believer in the dictum that *what is not counted does not count*. Until we start making gender equality *count*, there will be no point in count-downs. I have made counting down to gender equality an indispensable part of my mission at the UN, and committed to a Planet 50:50 by 2030. The SADC Gender Protocol Barometer provides data to measure progress and identify gaps. It highlights in irrefutable detail the losses and the gains between August 2008, when governments adopted the

Protocol, and August 2015, when leaders will gather in Botswana for their annual summit. The 2015 Barometer is unique in its comparative analysis of 2015 data against the 2009 baseline. Each chapter begins with a tracking box that shows where countries started, where they are now, and how far they are from reaching the set target.

The Barometer uses two complementary indicators: the empirical SADC Gender and Development Index (SGDI), based on 23 easily measurable indicators, and the Citizen Score Card, in which citizens rate their governments. At 68 per cent and 67 per cent respectively, the conclusion reached is that, despite considerable progress, we are not where we need to be. The grim realities of poverty, dispossession, harmful practices and gender violence overshadow tantalising glimmers of hope, such as the rate of mother-to-child HIV transmission in many SADC countries, which has fallen to almost zero.

We are on the brink of adopting the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a global blueprint for peace, equality and sustainability that will contain over 30 distinct gender indicators, including a standalone gender equality goal. Realising that there is little room for complacency, the Southern African Gender Protocol Alliance began a campaign in 2014 to review the SADC Gender Protocol targets in line with the SDGs. I am delighted that UN Women and the Alliance have been able to actively participate in shaping the global agenda, while using that same agenda to strengthen national and regional efforts.

SADC Gender Ministers, in agreeing to review the SADC Gender Protocol targets in line with the SDGs, Beijing +20 Review, and Africa 2063 at their meeting in Harare in May 2015, have shown they are ready to work for change. This is highlighted by the ministers' declaration that the updated Protocol be accompanied by a Monitoring, Evaluation and Results Framework. This is indeed the language we need as we count down to gender equality by 2030.

We do not want to have to be making the same promises 15 years from now. Let us break the back of gender discrimination so that the 21st century is regarded as the century that empowered women and empowered humanity. This is an historic opportunity. **Let us grasp it!**