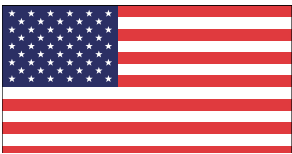


~ REMARKS ~

CELEBRATING OUR ACHIEVEMENTS TO EMPOWER WOMEN

Meeting held on the margins of the UN General Assembly
The Palace Hotel, New York, September 22, 2016

John Kerry, Secretary of State of the United States



Well, good morning, everybody, and good morning, Cathy, and thank you so much for your brilliant stewardship of this initiative. I really appreciate what

you are doing. Everywhere I go around the world, Cathy is there with an army of women that she has helped to organize somewhere in the world, and it's wonderful to see what she is doing.

And I am blessed to work with a President and Vice President, both of whom are married to remarkable women—as am I, I might add and I have two fabulous daughters, both of whom are out in the world doing great things. So I literally cannot go home if I am not a champion of this—just joking.

And here I see the Vice President's sister Valerie is here, who has been a great influence in his life and is a champion of this effort, as is Jill. So we are blessed to have a tremendous team, I want you to know, that is genuinely focused on this. And the Vice President and I worked on these issues in the Senate for years. As you know, he was the champion of the Violence Against Women Act—wrote it and led the efforts on it—and I was privileged to do many things as a prosecutor and otherwise in working for victim-witness and rape counseling and other things going back 30, 35, 40 years—scary.

So I am really happy to be here with all of you and I am so grateful to Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, the president of Croatia, and also a Fulbright. And we are really, really pleased that she is offering her leadership to make sure that women have access to opportunities and to rights, and she is going to take on this fight. And we're so grateful to her for that.

Also want to welcome our four newest partners in this effort: the Republic of Korea, Canada, Colombia, and Montenegro.

Your contributions to this will help us to build on the momentum that was surged, really, five years ago when President Obama challenged the heads of state everywhere to break down gender barriers in health, education, political, and economic inclusion. At our first gathering, 11 nations answered that call, and as Cathy just mentioned, we now are up to 32 members. Most importantly, a host of allies in academia, civil society, the private sector.

So we're here because we know in our gut and in our heart as well as our head that ensuring equal access for women to economic and political power is not just a positive thing to do; it's essential and it has profoundly important impacts to building civil society, to building community, to strengthening whole nation-states. And just as no team in sports—I mean, we all love our sports analogies—no team can win playing at half strength. Well, no country, no community can grow and prosper or ignore if it pushes to one side the energy and the talents of one half of its population.

So the bottom line is simple: When more girls go to school, human capital increases. When more women join the labor force, economies become more sustainable and more diverse. When more women are engaged in public service, governments become literally more accountable and much more likely to meet urgent social needs.

And despite all of this, obviously, we still know that unacceptable barriers to women's participation in politics and in the workforce still exist, even here in my own country. Too many women still lack the access to capital, to credit, and to the training that they need in order to be able to compete fairly. And in some places, women are denied the right to even own land. In others, discriminatory traditions stack the odds against them going to college, against their getting a job, against their starting a business, against their

full participation in society. As a result, women remain underrepresented in every aspect of political and public life. Only one in five of the world's parliamentarians is a woman. Women control just one-fifth of global wealth and only 22 Fortune 500 firms are headed by women. That is less than five percent. In 2016, that is not a great record.

And the good news is that pledges made through Equal Futures Partnership are, in fact, closing the gap—enacting laws that help women get on the ballot, launching action plans against gender-based violence, boosting women's representation in male-dominated industries, creating mentorship programs for ethnic minority women, and, frankly, much, much more. So step by step, we are moving forward and I'm convinced that we're going to continue to do so.

Empowering women and girls is a strategic priority for the United States of America. And no matter which party no matter which party leads our government, we are committed to making sure that women have an equal chance on the boards of corporations, in parliaments, in congresses, and at leadership across the table.

We know also that gaining full equality for women still is a challenge, but it's an easy choice. I mean, it's really not something you have to wrestle with that hard to figure out, particularly as the planet gets closer and closer and communications have opened up opportunities for everybody everywhere to know what other people are thinking and able to do everywhere else in the world, which also illuminates what people are not able to do in the places that they live.

So accomplishing this goal of full equality, if you read all of the studies, look at all of the analysis—and there's a lot more of it nowadays than ever before—it all documents the benefits that flow to countries, to corporations, to entities, to local governments, to anybody who does this actually winds up benefiting significantly from it.

And so I can tell you unequivocally that we will not rest until we can say with confidence that all the barriers to justice have been removed, that all the examples of discrimination have been exposed, that all glass ceilings have been shattered, and all perpetrators of abuse and bigotry are held to account. And in that effort, we invite people everywhere in the world to join us and we caution all: nobody's going to stop this from happening. Thank you.

Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, President of the Republic of Croatia



Thank you Secretary Kerry and Ambassador Russell for your hard work and leadership.

Allow me to welcome you all, our members and partners, and those who are yet to join us, as the Equal Futures Partnership is growing stronger by the year. Your presence here today is a sign of recognition that political leadership is crucial in ensuring positive trends and providing support to women's full participation in politics and business, around the world.

In four short years, our Partnership grew into a strong global initiative; with each and every member and partner strongly committed to ensuring gender equality as a human right.

I would like to thank the members for your endorsement of Croatia's bid to chair the Partnership in 2016, the responsibility that Croatia assumed in March of this year. We have so far held three very constructive expert meetings on topics that were recognized as paramount by our members.

Together with the United States, we have launched a website that will serve as a platform for direct exchanges between partners and for the promotion of our actions.

Today, we also proudly welcome four new members that joined our Partnership this year—Canada, Colombia, Montenegro, and the Republic of Korea.

This "enlargement" is a sign of recognition that despite global efforts, gender inequalities are still deeply rooted in our societies. Women continue to earn considerably less, have fewer assets, and bear the burden of unpaid work and care. Violence against women continues to affect one in three women, making it one of the widest spread human rights violations. However, your interest is also a clear indication of our Partnership's value in closing the gender gap and of the benefits realized through cooperation and the exchange of ideas, practices, and experiences, both positive and negative.

We encourage our members to cooperate regardless of geographic boundaries to find the most appropriate

solutions to our common problems. We promote and support pairings on very specific issues—from the economic empowerment of survivors of gender-based violence, through the empowerment of women in managerial positions in trade, to the promotion of girls and women in the IT sector.

In September last year, we adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the ambitious sustainable development goals. In seeking to realise human rights of every single individual, we defined gender equality not only as a stand-alone goal, but a key indicator in the achievement of all other goals.

This is where the Equal Futures Partnership steps in. Through our specific commitments, we can address the structural causes of gender-based inequalities, by enacting laws, enabling solid institutional infrastructure and adequate financial resources. We can educate, change attitudes, and gender norms. Together and through concrete projects we can support each other in creating a favourable environment for gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

As a member of the Equal Futures Partnership, Croatia remains strongly committed to achieving our shared goal

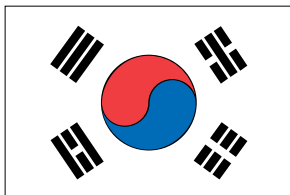
of women's political and economic empowerment and of permanently putting an end to all forms of sexual and gender based violence. We are currently drafting a new - fifth in a row - National Policy for Gender Equality for the period of 2016-2020.

We are aware that there is still a lot of room for improvement. A sobering sign of how far we still need to go to achieve equality are the 19 women elected to the parliament during the last parliamentary elections in Croatia that took place only 10 days ago. Women will now take 12.5 percent of seats in the parliament, compared to an already devastating 15 percent after the previous elections. This is well below the 40 percent gender quota for each party's electoral lists.

No community, no country, no region can prosper if the rights of women—half of the world's population—are denied. So let us continue our fight against gender-based discrimination and violence, our fight for equal rights and equal opportunities for women and girls around the world. As leaders, we have the responsibility to ensure that the empowerment of women and girls and the protection of their human rights is a national priority.

Thank you.

CHOI Jong-moon, Deputy Minister for Multilateral and Global Affairs of the Republic of Korea



President Grabar-Kitarović, Ambassador Russell, Lakshmi Puri, Deputy Executive Director of UN Women,

It is my honour and pleasure to be a part of this auspicious occasion this morning and say a few words on behalf of new members joining this year, namely the Republic of Korea, Canada, Columbia, and Montenegro.

The membership of the Equal Futures Partnership has sharply increased over the past years, which is the testimony of the valuable role that it has played in advancing women's political participation and economic empowerment.

Today's meeting is especially timely and appropriate as it is being held in the very first year of implementing the SDGs, which include not only a stand-alone goal, goal five for women and girls, but also cross-cutting gender-respective targets and indicators.

Since the designation of 1975 as International Women's Year, the international community has continued to invigorate the discussions on gender equality and women's empowerment, holding a World Conference on Women in Mexico City, Copenhagen, Nairobi and Beijing, to name a few. Indeed, it has come a long way and progress has been made. And one notable achievement has been the creation of UN Women as a global champion and standard setter for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

As for the Republic of Korea, there have been great advances in the status of women. I don't have to look far for an example. When I joined the foreign services in 1983, in the 20 batches there was not one woman. However, today, there are more female diplomats joining the Ministry than male diplomats.

However, we are well aware that we still have a long way to go before we sleep. Korea, in particular, is now facing challenges such as discontinuation of women's careers due to pregnancy, childbirth and childbearing.

In this regard, Korea looks forward to the different experiences, policies, and assets of the EFP member countries contributing greatly to the full realization of

gender equality and women's empowerment not only in my country but also across the world. Thank you.

Lakshmi Puri, Deputy Executive Director of UN Women



Women's economic empowerment is intrinsic to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, which is why earlier this year

the UN Secretary-General established the High-level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment. Mention the Panel's interim report to the Secretary-General is being released today (22 Sept). It is based on extensive global consultations with stakeholders in government business and civil society.

Gender equality in leadership and decision-making is well-situated in the 2030 Agenda: SDG Target 5.5 seeks to "ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life." Special focus on the most marginalized women is critical to ensure equal future partnerships.

It is imperative to address women's economic and political participation in all settings, including during conflict and crisis. Indeed, the commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit and reflected in UNSCR 2242, the Security Council Resolution adopted on the 15th anniversary of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, advance our collective efforts towards this.

Equal Futures Partnership is a testament to the power of strategic partnership, political will and innovative solutions in advancing women's electoral and political participation and access to senior decision-making posts at all levels.

Demonstrated leadership by example among the Equal Futures 31 member countries sends strong messages that politics is a viable, legitimate career path that should be aspired to by girls everywhere.

The promotion of women's political empowerment and leadership is widely regarded as a strength for the UN Women, with 86 of its country offices working in this area. UN Women is uniquely positioned to work across the political spectrum to build individual and institutional capacities of electoral officials, MPs and governmental bodies, civil society organizations, women's movements and women leaders and aspiring candidates. UN Women has also driven

high-level advocacy to advance the normative agenda on gender equality at the intergovernmental level, resulting in resolutions, high profile events, and commitments to invest in, and accelerate, women's full and equal participation in politics.

We need to invest in young women and their leadership as part of succession planning and "en-youthing" democracy. This is core to UN Women's recently launched youth Strategy. This also calls for innovation and effective use of social media in creating a culture of democratic participation, transparency and accountability.

Partner countries are encouraged to open global community for women's economic empowerment on the web portal www.empowerwomen.org. This Knowledge Gateway provides opportunities for its members to find and share resources and learning tools; connect with peers and experts; and to discuss, generate new ideas and advocate for women's economic empowerment. It brings together a diverse range of partners, networks and members from international organizations, private sector, governments, academia and civil society.

This is a great opportunity to strengthen the ties with the existing members and to welcome new members to the partnership as we work to achieve women's empowerment and foster an equal and just society for all.

