

International Women's Day

Today, March 8, is International Women's Day. In honor of this day, we received messages from UNIC Tokyo and embassies of various countries in Japan.

UNIC Tokyo

International Women's Day (IWD) first emerged from the activities of labour movements at the turn of the twentieth century in North America and across Europe. In 1975, during International Women's Year, the United Nations began celebrating 8 March as IWD. Two years later, in December 1977, the General Assembly adopted a resolution officially recognizing 8 March as IWD.

The various organizations under the United Nations have been working tirelessly to secure gender equality worldwide with great outcomes achieved. In 1995, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a historic roadmap signed by 189 governments, focused on 12 critical areas of concern; As well, Goal 5, which states "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls," was included in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Moreover, gender equality is a cross-cutting element across all the 17 SDGs. The history of fighting for women's rights is a history of progress.

However, as the COVID-19 pandemic, climate crisis, and global cost of living crisis deriving from major conflicts are hitting women and girls hardest, this progress is under threat. At our current speed, full legal equality for women is some 300 years away, along with the end of child marriage. Gender inequality is the biggest human rights challenge affecting half the global population. We are also facing an alarming \$360 billion annual deficit in gender-equality measures by 2030. Putting money for equality is not only the right thing to do, but also makes financial sense. Supporting women to enter formal labour markets grows economies, boosts tax revenues, and expands opportunities for all.

This year, join us on International Women's Day, celebrated under the theme "Invest in women: Accelerate progress." When women thrive, everyone will benefit. Let's unite to transform challenges into opportunities and shape a better future for all!



Embassy of the United Republic of Tanzania
H.E. Mr. Ambassador Baraka Luvanda
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary

On International Women's Day, I extend warm greetings and good wishes to the women around the world. As part of the global village, we reaffirm Tanzania's commitment to promoting gender equality and recognizing women's indispensable role in driving progress and sustainable development. The theme for this year underscores the need to sustain the momentum and intensify our efforts to invest in women, recognizing their progress is intrinsically tied to the progress of our societies and the world at large.

Taking my own country's example, Her Excellency, President Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan, has emphasized the country's inclusive development drive through her *4Rs Philosophy — Reconciliation, Resilience, Reforms, and Rebuilding* — in propelling the country's progress and success. This has proven to be a critical tool in navigating Tanzania's political and socio-economic landscape, creating, as a result, "a nation for all."

Tanzania remains steadfast in her commitment to fostering an environment for women to thrive and calls for continued collaboration from Japanese partners.



Embassy of the Republic of El Salvador in collaboration with the Office of the First Lady

Mrs. Gabriela de Bukele
First Lady of El Salvador

Empowering Women and Children: Gabriela de Bukele's Vision for El Salvador



On the occasion of the International Women's Day, we highlight First Lady Gabriela de Bukele's leadership in transformative initiatives focused on Early Childhood Development and Maternal-Infant Health in the Latin-American nation of El Salvador. Drawing on her background as a psychologist and a prenatal and perinatal educator, she pioneers comprehensive Early Childhood Development programs.

Under her leadership, El Salvador is advancing in enacting laws, policies and initiatives aimed at ensuring every child achieves their maximum developmental potential, regardless of their socioeconomic background.

Mrs. Bukele is at the forefront of groundbreaking legislation, including the "Creer Juntos (Growing Together)" Law for the Comprehensive Protection of Early Childhood, Childhood, and Adolescence; and the "Nacer con Cariño (Born with Love) Law", which guarantees and protects women's rights during pregnancy and childbirth, eradicating distress and trauma suffered by mothers for generations.

Thanks to her work, the national childbirth survival rate has significantly increased.

Mrs. Bukele's advocacy extends to the establishment of Early Childhood Care Centers, facilitating access to childcare and education services. These initiatives contribute to El Salvador's efforts to empower mothers to engage in the workforce and to be economically self-sufficient, while ensuring their children receive quality care and education. This holistic approach harnesses the potential of women in the workforce and enhances their active participation in El Salvador's private sector and policymaking.

Gabriela de Bukele's visionary leadership embodies the spirit of Women's Day, inspiring women and girls to pursue their aspirations, and contributing to a more equitable and prosperous society. As she aptly notes, "Everything begins in the Early Years," emphasizing the crucial role of Early Childhood investment in shaping the future of El Salvador.



Embassy of the Republic of Madagascar Ms. RANDRIANJAFY Tsilavo Maherizo

Chargée d'Affaires a.i. - Head of Mission



On International Women's Day, we celebrate the achievements of women and girls around the globe, but we also recognize the obstacles to realize their full participation and autonomy, and the need to address gender-based discrimination.

This year's theme on inspiring inclusion stresses the urgency to address the exclusion of women from political and economic decision-making, and the need for a transformational leadership to recognize the necessity of the inclusion of women and girls in decision-making.

International Women's Day is a call to action to further advance women's and girls' fundamental rights. While advocating for inclusion, we also recognize the utmost importance of the support from men and boys to stand for our rights, adding leverage to our advocacy for greater equality, justice and inclusion.

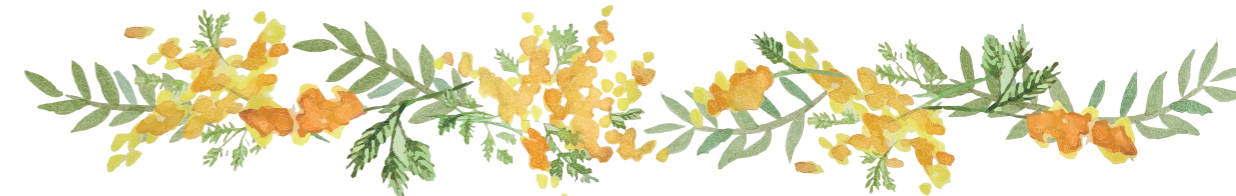
Indeed, feminist advocacy is a response to exclusion as a society, and makes a difference to achieve a more inclusive world. Men and boys advocating for women and girls exert the necessary positive change in mindset in societies where limiting beliefs and practices prevent advancement of women's and girls' full participation.

A powerful lever for social change, feminist advocacy also creates positive ripple effects on political and economic leadership, institutions and legislation to become even more inclusive.

Also, more men in spheres of political and economic influence continuously supporting women's full participation and autonomy insures the achievement of greater inclusion.

Though slow, the progress of feminist advocacy in Japanese corporations has resulted in fixing the target to appoint 30% of female in leadership and executive functions to wards 2030. In seven decades of operations, Japan Airlines appoints Ms. Tottori Mitsuko as its first female president this coming April.

Slow progress is still progress, provided we continue the progress. Let us governments, the private sector and civil society inspire inclusion and work together to support feminist advocacy.



Embassy of the Republic of Ghana H.E. Mrs. Genevieve Edna APALOO

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary



As the cherry blossoms begin to bloom, signalling the advent of spring in Japan, we also witness a convergence of two significant events: International Women's Day and the Independence Day of Ghana. This dual celebration offers a unique opportunity to reflect on the themes of freedom, empowerment, and the enduring bonds between Japan and Ghana.

Women's Empowerment - A Common Goal

Both Ghana and Japan recognize the pivotal role of women in society. In Ghana, women have been instrumental in the struggle for independence and continue to be key players in national development. Japan's strides towards gender equality, though challenging, are noteworthy. Policies focusing on women's economic empowerment, addressing workplace inequality, and promoting women in leadership are steps in the right direction.

The International Women's Day, observed globally on 8th March, celebrates the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. Both Ghana and Japan prioritize

women's economic empowerment, and the current administration in the two countries continue to work to address employment challenges faced by women, by improving systems for childcare leave, and strengthening efforts against spousal violence and sex offenses in the two countries.

The marking of the International Women's Day in Ghana continues to highlight the under-representation of women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields, while the occasion has been used as platform to raise awareness about gender equality. Some of the key issues which have been continuously brought to the fore include cyberbullying, sextortion, and the need to create a comfortable space for women in technology.

As we celebrate International Women's Day today, there is the need to stress the importance of supporting women and girls in developing innovative solutions for community improvement, and to remain focus on breaking gender biases and empowering women and adolescent girls, especially at the local communities.



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