**U N I T E D N A T I O N S**  **N A T I O N S U N I E S**

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**MESSAGE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY**

**8 March 2024**

On International Women’s Day, we celebrate women and girls around the world, and we applaud all they have achieved in the fight for equality.

Women and girls have made great gains – demolishing barriers, dismantling stereotypes and driving progress towards a more just and equal world.

Yet they face immense obstacles. Billions of women and girls face marginalization, injustice and discrimination, while the persistent epidemic of violence against women disgraces humanity.

Our world still reflects millennia of male-dominated power relations.

And progress is under attack, with a fierce backlash against women’s rights.

At our current rate, legal equality is some three hundred years away.

We must move much faster.

On International Women’s Day, we stand with women and girls fighting for their rights, and we commit to accelerating progress.

This year’s theme – invest in women – reminds us that ending the patriarchy requires money on the table.

We must support women’s organisations on the front line.

And we must invest in programmes to end violence against women, and to drive women’s inclusion and leadership in economies, digital technologies, peacebuilding and climate action.

This all depends on unlocking finance for sustainable development so that countries have funds available to invest in women and girls.

We also need to increase the number of women leaders in business, finance, central banks and finance ministries. This can help drive investments in policies and programmes that respond to women and girls’ needs.

Women’s rights are a proven path to fair, peaceful, prosperous societies. It is good for us all.

Together, let’s take urgent action to make it a reality.

Thank you.

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