Statement for Administrator for International Women’s Day 2016

This International Women’s Day, the world stands well positioned to move forward on gender equality. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the UN General Assembly last year, asserts that gender equality is not only as a human right, but also a necessary foundation for a peaceful and inclusive world. Gender equality is the sole focus of one of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals, and is also integrated in the other goals, reflecting the growing consensus that gender equality is not just a worthy goal in its own right, but also a driver of progress across all development goals.

By closing gender gaps in labor markets, education, health, and other areas, we can reduce poverty and hunger, improve the nutrition and education of children, and drive inclusive growth. It’s not a choice, but an imperative: failing to address gender inequalities and discrimination against women will make it impossible to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

This is why we must heed the theme of this year’s International Women’s Day: Planet 50-50 by 2030: Step it Up for Gender Equality.
Getting to *Planet 50-50* requires realizing the foundation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is to "leave no one behind." Women and girls must not be left behind when it comes to education, decent work, equitable wages, and decision-making at all levels of government. They must not be left behind when it comes to legal rights and access to services - including to safe water and sanitation, and to protection from gender-based violence.

Next week, the 60th Commission on the Status of Women will convene in New York. Its discussions will focus on women’s empowerment and its link to sustainable development. With the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the roadmap for achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment is clear.

Let’s mark this International Women’s Day by stepping up our commitment to make sustainable development a reality and leave no woman or girl behind.