

Press release: International Women's Day

The last few years have seen a lot of progress for women and girls.

We have seen the gender pay gap in the UK fall to its lowest level, and got more women sitting on the boards of Britain's top businesses than ever before. We have pledged to eliminate all violence against women and girls, backed by £80m funding across Government. And in 2014, as the then Development Secretary, I held the first ever Girls Summit to push for an end to the brutal practices of female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

The Westminster political scene has seen progress on gender equality. We have our second female Prime Minister. Women now make up an unprecedented third of the House of Commons, as well as a third of the Cabinet. And there are a number of cross-party campaigns encouraging women to get into politics so that, increasingly, women can directly shape the policies affecting our country.

This International Women's Day there is much to celebrate – but we have to continue to be bold if we are to deliver real change for women around the world.

The UK's role as a world leader on gender equality is a personal priority for me and I am very proud to be a founding member of the United Nations' first High Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment.

Economic empowerment for women is not just about pursuing gender equality. It is also actually in everyone's long term economic interests. A report by McKinsey Global Institute report estimated that if women in every country played an identical role in markets to men, \$28 TRILLION could be added to the global economy by 2025.

That figure represents millions of potential female entrepreneurs, inventors and business leaders who are currently being airbrushed out of the picture. No woman should be held back from fulfilling their ambitions in life.

So we can't just wait for equality to happen – we need to keep pushing for it.

That is why I am also proud that the UK is leading by example, and becoming one of the first countries to introduce gender pay gap reporting requirements. This law will mean all large employers have to publish their GPG figure, shining a light on where women are being held back.

This extra transparency on data will mean employers can take action to address their pay gap. That could mean helping women return to work after they have started a family, or traditionally male-dominated industries doing more to attract women into their professions.

I am confident that British employers will embrace gender pay gap reporting and, more importantly, will deliver positive change for their female employees as a result.

So there is a lot to be proud of, but there is still a lot of work left to do. We need to pick up the pace as we approach this year's International Women's Day, but I remain convinced we can rise to the challenge, and create a world where women and girls can achieve anything.

This message from Secretary of State for Education and Minister for Women and Equalities Justine Greening first appeared in [Politics Home](#).