

“Gender equality leads to prosperous and sustainable societies”

Statement by Lynn Hastings, United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory on International Women’s Day, Tuesday, 8 March 2022

This year on International Women’s Day, the United Nations is looking at how gender equality impacts sustainability in societies.

It is no secret that gender equality leads to prosperous societies.

By contrast, gender inequality means higher income inequality which undermines the sustainability of growth for everyone.

Let’s take a look at economic prosperity as a key indicator of sustainability:

- i) closing the gender gap has been estimated to increase Gross Domestic Product dramatically, by as much as 30 percent in some countries.
- ii) higher economic participation by women is related to higher expenditure on schooling for children, leading to growth in the long run; and
- iii) gender equality is associated with greater export diversification, which keeps economies strong.

In Palestine, the World Bank and the International Labour Organization estimate that over the past decade the percentage of women participating in the work force has been, on average, just 16%.

For everyone’s sake, this needs to change; not using all of the potential of all Palestinians is just not a sustainable path.

What needs to change?

- i) We need to invest more in *education and health*.

- ii) Women need *their own bank accounts* and *access to loans*.
- iii) We need to promote *equal rights* for women in all areas, including property ownership. In Palestine, the adoption of the Family Protection Bill and publication of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women are two key steps to achieving this goal.
- iv) Women must be able to *participate in political life* and decision-making processes.

The United Nations will continue to work with both women - and men - to make sure Palestine captures its true potential for a more prosperous, sustainable future for everyone.