

## **Timeline: Gender Equality, 2012 Year in Review**

From the ratification of a United Nations convention on domestic worker rights to landmark laws on harassment to the conviction of a former president for war crimes, this timeline is a snapshot of some of the gender equality achievements in 2012.

### **January - Implementation begins for Colombia's Victims and Land Restitution Law**

Implementation efforts begin in Colombia for a law that aims to give reparations to some 4 million victims, many internally displaced, of the country's almost 50-year war. The "Victims Law", which was passed last year, includes land restitution privileges as well as psychological care and mandatory court representation for survivors of sexual violence.

### **23 February - UN singles out worst offenders of sexual violence during conflict**

An annual UN report documenting conflict-related sexual violence worldwide for the first time names some of the worst offenders, including the Lord's Resistance Army in the Central African Republic and in South Sudan, armed militia groups and former armed forces in Côte d'Ivoire, and the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

### **14 March - Turkey first to ratify European convention on ending violence against women**

Turkey becomes the first Member State to ratify a landmark Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, adopted by the Council of Europe last year. So far 25 Member States have signed the Convention, but Turkey remains the only one to have ratified it. In order to enter into force, it needs 10 ratifications.

### **23 April - A tweet from Maldives**

A tweet from Maldives President Mohamed Waheed after signing the Prevention of Domestic Violence Bill. Passed in line with international obligations under CEDAW, the much-awaited domestic violence bill provides legal provisions to protect survivors of domestic violence and improved monitoring and preventive mechanisms.

### **10 May - Algeria's women parliamentarians break new ground in Arab world**

Following elections, Algeria becomes the first and only country in the Arab region where women hold more than 30 per cent of its parliamentary seats. Prior to this, women MPs comprised eight per cent of the elected legislators.

#### **14 May - Bolivia adopts landmark harassment law**

Bolivia's Legislative Assembly passes a law that makes it possible to hand down prison sentences to anyone who threatens or harasses women in political or public functions. Not counting unfiled cases, 4,000 harassment complaints were reported in the past eight years with Bolivian authorities. The landmark law was realized through the persistence of women's advocacy groups on the ground. UN Women supported such efforts through its Fund for Gender Equality.

#### **30 May - Former Liberian President convicted for war crimes in Sierra Leone**

The Special Court for Sierra Leone hands down a 50 year-prison sentence to former Liberian President Charles Taylor for aiding and abetting crimes, such as murder, rape and sexual slavery, during Sierra Leone's 1991 to 2002 civil war. The UN hailed the "historic" work of the court in strengthening women's access to justice. Taylor has since appealed the verdict.

#### **20-22 June - Rio+20: 'The Future We Want'**

At the UN Conference for Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro (Rio+20), Heads of State and Government adopt "The Future We Want", a common global vision for a sustainable future. The document calls on and reaffirms a number of gender equality commitments, ranging from women's opportunities for participation and leadership in the economy, society and political decision-making to their right to reproductive health, free from coercion, discrimination and violence.

#### **1 July - Number of women parliamentarians double in Senegal**

Senegal almost reaches gender parity in Parliament, after women are elected in record numbers into the country's National Assembly following its elections. Women now occupy 43 percent of Senegal's 150 seats in Parliament, almost double the number of women MPs in its outgoing Parliament.

#### **27 July-12 August - Gender milestones at the Olympics**

For the first time at the Olympic Games, every sporting event includes both men and women, Saudi Arabia sends female athletes and the US team has more women than men. Following the Olympics, UN Women signs a partnership agreement with the International Olympic Committee to advance gender equality through sports.

#### **1 August - Somalia passes new constitution**

Ending a transitional period that began in 2004, Somalia adopts a new constitution that, among other women's empowerment issues, includes a ban on female genital mutilation. Later in the year, the country appoints its first woman Foreign Minister, Fauzia Yusuf Haji Adan.

### **7 August - International Criminal Court issues reparations for Congolese warlord victims**

The International Criminal Court issues its first reparations for victims in the case against Congolese warlord Thomas Lubanga, who the permanent war crimes tribunal also convicted months earlier to 14 years in jail for recruiting child soldiers in his rebel army in 2002 and 2003. The decision lays out gender- and child-sensitive principles for reparations and prioritizes the needs of vulnerable groups, including children, women and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. Both the verdict and the reparations judgment are under appeal.

### **5 September - International treaty on domestic workers' rights ratified**

Philippines ratifies a United Nations treaty that provides a set of international standards to improve the lives of millions of domestic workers worldwide, allowing the Convention to come into force in 2013. The treaty required two countries to ratify it. Uruguay was the first country to do so in June.

### **24 September - UN General Assembly adopts Declaration on Rule of Law**

At the UN General Assembly's first high-level debate devoted solely to the rule of law, Heads of State and Government adopt a declaration that includes concrete commitments and language on strengthening women's access to justice. This includes establishing legislative frameworks to prevent and address all forms of discrimination and violence against women and equal and full access to justice, including through human rights respecting informal justice systems.

### **First International Day of the Girl Child (11 October)**

"If we can end child marriage, we can change the lives of girls everywhere. We can help them enjoy their childhoods; enrol them in school; protect them from complicated pregnancies and births. We can keep girls safe. And as we do all of this, we help break the cycle of intergenerational poverty."-- Excerpt from a joint UNICEF, UNFPA, and UN Women statement on child marriage, the theme of the first International Day of the Girl Child.

### **12 October - Botswana customary inheritance law struck down**

Botswana's High Court rules against a Ngwaketse customary law that grants inheritance rights of a family home to the youngest son. The ruling, which supports

Botswana's Constitution for the right to equality, comes after three sisters, all above 65, filed suit against their nephew for a family home they have lived and invested in.

### **6 December - Convention to protect internally displaced persons enters into force**

The African Union's Kampala Convention comes into force and is the first of its kind to bind governments to protect internally displaced persons. Among other requirements, the continental bill requires that states take steps to protect female heads of household, expectant mothers and mothers of small children, ensure reproductive and sexual health rights of internally displaced women, and provide appropriate psycho-social support for victims of sexual and other related abuses.

### **8 December - UN Climate Conference adopts decision to enhance gender balance in negotiations**

At the 18th Conference of Parties (COP-18) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Doha, Qatar, a decision is passed to strive towards gender balance in climate negotiations, strengthening a goal established a decade ago by the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol to include women in talks. Set to expire this year, COP-18 concludes by extending the Kyoto Protocol for eight more years, extending the time to reach a universal climate change agreement.

### **10 December - Malala Fund for Girls' Education launched**

On Human Rights Day, UNESCO and Pakistan launch the Malala Fund for Girls' Education. The move comes following an attack on Pakistani education and gender equality advocate Malala Yousafzai, 15, who was seriously wounded when Taliban gunmen shot her in the head and neck while she was on a school bus in October. Pakistan's President Asif Ali Zardari announced that his country would donate the first \$10 million.

### **17 December - Philippine Congress passes reproductive health bill**

Legislators in the Philippines pass a reproductive health bill that aims to benefit the country's poorest women by providing free contraceptives and government-funded sex education. The bill will come into effect once signed by country's President Benigno Aquino III.

### **20 December - UN passes first-ever resolution on female genital mutilation**

The United Nations General Assembly passes five resolutions on advancing women's rights, including one to ban female genital mutilation (FGM). The first of its kind, the landmark resolution aims to mobilize global efforts to end the practice, which currently affects about 100-140 million women and girls worldwide.