

# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY – SECRETARY-GENERAL'S MESSAGE

• MARCH 7, 2021 🔥 97 📖 2 MINUTES READ



MESSAGE FROM

AMBASSADOR IRWIN LAROCQUE,

SECRETARY-GENERAL, CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY,

ON THE OCCASION OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

8 March 2021

On 8 March 2021, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) joins the rest of the world in celebrating International Women's Day, a special observance that was adopted by the United Nations 46 years ago in 1975, during International Women's Year.

The annual celebration affords everyone, especially women and girls, an opportunity to reflect on progress made, to call for change and to celebrate acts of courage and determination by ordinary women who continue to play extraordinary roles in the development of their

communities and countries. It also serves as a platform to engage men and boys as male champions for gender equality, and to raise awareness of the progress being made. The Day also presents the opportunity to call attention to and address the obstacles faced by women to realizing the full complement of their human rights.

The global theme for this year's International Women's Day is: *Women in Leadership: Achieving an Equal Future in a COVID-19 World*. The theme celebrates the tremendous efforts by women and girls around the world to shape a more just future, and highlights the special needs of women to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

A year later, it is evident that women are disproportionately affected by a rising incidence of domestic abuse, unemployment and the burden of care for children affected by protracted school closures. Investments in the provision of quality, affordable child care services is crucial to enabling women who dropped out of the work force at the height of the pandemic, to regain employment. Research by the International Labour Organization shows that failure to do so will further push 47 million women and girls in Latin America and the Caribbean below the poverty line.

Today we celebrate the many women on the frontline of the COVID-19 response and recovery efforts, as health care workers, caregivers, essential workers, innovators, community organizers, and as some of the most exemplary and effective national leaders in combating the pandemic. The crisis has highlighted the tremendous value of their contribution for which we owe them a debt of gratitude.

The future is more promising when women are equally represented alongside men in leadership roles. However, women are still underrepresented in public life and decision-making, as revealed in the UN [Secretary-General's recent report](#) released in 2020. Women are Heads of State or Government in 22 countries, and only 24.9% of national parliamentarians are women. There is much more work to be done to ensure women's equal participation in decision-making in government and in the private sector.

As we observe International Women's Day across the Community, let us take our inspiration from the many women trail blazers who have made a difference in our lives in a diverse field of endeavours, from politics, business and community service, to education, sports, culture, science, technology and engineering. Let us commit to redoubling our efforts to bring about a new post-COVID-19 world based on equality, mutual respect, freedom from violence and social justice.

It is my privilege and pleasure to wish everyone a happy International Women's Day.

 Tags

covid 19