



Statement by the UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator in Syria, Mr. Imran Riza

International Women's Day

DAMASCUS, 8th March 2020 – Women and girls in Syria and across the world are entitled to live in dignity, in freedom and without discrimination. On the occasion of International Women's Day this year, the theme of which is 'I am Generation Equality: Realizing Women's Rights', I emphasize the crucial role gender equality – a human right – plays in sustainable development, peace and security.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the historic United Nations World Conference on Women that produced the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; the most progressive roadmap for the empowerment of women and girls, everywhere. As we take stock of global progress made for women's rights since then, the clear consensus is that despite some gains, real change has been agonizingly slow for the majority of women and girls in the world.

In Syria, the UN and its partners are focused on working for gender equality and women and girls' empowerment. Women and girls have been disproportionately affected by the crisis, and many have lived experiences of immense suffering and great loss. As the people of Syria rebuild their lives, our commitment to accelerated and meaningful action in support of women and girls will not just help bring gender equality closer to reality, it will also build stronger foundations on which communities can thrive.

With the crisis in its ninth year, women and girls continue to bear an unacceptable cost. I remain hopeful, however, given the needed support, Syrian women and girls can look forward to a brighter, more inclusive future. Their equal participation and contribution to society must be respected and valued, and their resilience and courage during these past difficult years recognized.

In 2020, as we celebrate International Women's Day, the UN will focus on delivering better, more realistic support that will have an enduring impact on Syrian women and girl's lives. Investing in their future is an investment for all. As Rasha, a 19-year-old woman from Aleppo who recently said; "I know the world I want to live in. Help me build it, and I will never stop working."

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