

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Kind



March 08, 2015

“Empowering Women means Empowering World”

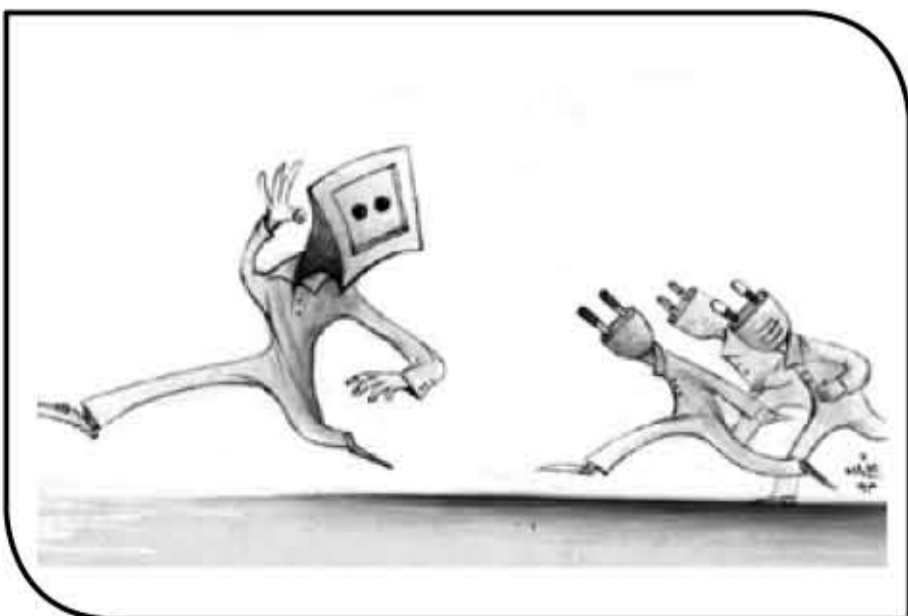
It is one of the most unfortunate facts that the discriminatory behavior against women has always been there through most part of human history. Though women's existence is of utmost importance and their role is really vital, their position is not what they deserve and the attitude towards them has been really negative. Since the very beginning of human civilization, during the age of slavery, human suffered violence and dominance by the opposite sex. They were discriminated both by superstitious rituals and religious practices. As the civilization evolved and human beings entered the age of agriculture, the circumstances did not change much for women. They were then considered as the personal property of the landlords (Many countries where there is agricultural system, still women are treated in similar fashion). With the beginning of modern era – the rise of capitalism and democracy though there have been important changes, there are still myriads of concerns regarding the position of women in the society. And, the world cannot claim to be democratic or civilized in the true sense unless the rights of women are properly guarded and they are given the position they really deserve. And this is not the responsibility of the women alone, not of certain feminist or human rights organizations but of all the human beings.

Today is 8th March, the world is celebrating “International Women’s Day” and it is the perfect time to revise our commitments and to ensure that we will be able to make some practical efforts to move towards a world with more gender justice and equal rights for women. The Theme for this year’s Women’s Day is “Empowering women – Empowering World: Picture it! This is really important to realize that empowering women does not only mean that women are empowered but it supports in empowering the world as whole. As they form half of the population of the world, they have the capacity to perform miracles for the world as a whole and support it towards better destinations. United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has said, “To be truly transformative, the post-2015 development agenda must prioritize gender equality and women’s empowerment. The world will never realize 100 percent of its goals if 50 percent of its people cannot realize their full potential”.

Afghanistan is also one of the countries that have to make that commitment as women in this country have not been empowered as much as they should be. Women in Afghanistan have been undergoing discriminatory behavior for decades now. The religious extremism and obsolete tribal values have been vehemently responsible for violation and violence against them. Even though, they have been echoing their concerns, they do not seem to get as much attention as possible in the patriarchal Afghan society. As a matter of fact, the male-chauvinistic ears are not ready to hear them though they feel their vibrations clearly. Nevertheless, the efforts in this regard must never be given up and they should continue in every possible way. One of the ways to rise up and be counted in the social and political life is to strive participating in the social and political institutions and processes. And, this is not the responsibility of a particular faction of society, not a particular stratum, not even a particular gender but of all those human beings have some concern and some love for human rights, the ones who believe in dignity of human beings and their existence without any differentiation of gender.

Particularly, men can play an imperative role. Though they have been mostly responsible for the discrimination, modern men can now change their attitude and commit themselves to make the difference. Fighting the discrimination and violence does not necessarily mean that women alone should shoulder the responsibility. There should be efforts to bring about changes in the attitude of men towards women; otherwise, fighting for the rights of women would be very difficult.

In similar fashion, the different institutions, functioning in the society must also fulfill their responsibilities and they must ensure that there should not be biased policies and attitude against the women. Their policies and practices must never be inclined towards discrimination and injustice on the basis of gender. Not only the women rights organization but different other social, political and administrative organizations can have a part in making sure that women are properly compensated within the system and are not neglected on the basis of prejudice. In the countries like Afghanistan, the religious and tribal institutions can also play tremendous role in uplifting the position of women and giving them the status they deserve. As most of the people are religious and tribal, they can easily be motivated by such institutions for better and higher purposes. And, 8th of March is the best day for all those institutions. Let’s make sure that this Women’s Day does not end only in conferences and celebrations by certain organizations and individuals but in resolute commitments that there will be practical efforts for the rights and position of women.



It’s Time to Step It Up for Gender Equality

By Plumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka

If we look at the headlines or the latest horrifying YouTube clip, today – International Women’s Day – may seem a bad time to celebrate equality for women. But alongside the stories of extraordinary atrocity and everyday violence lies another reality, one where more girls are in school and more are earning qualifications than ever before; where maternal mortality is at an all-time low; where more women are in leadership positions, and where women are increasingly standing up, speaking out and demanding action.

Twenty years ago this September, thousands of delegates left the historic Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing on a high. The overwhelming feeling was that women had won a great victory. We had indeed – 189 world leaders had committed their countries to an extraordinary Platform for Action, with ambitious but realistic promises in key areas and a roadmap for getting there.

If countries had lived up to all those promises, we would be seeing a lot more progress in equality today than the modest gains in some areas we are currently celebrating. We would be talking about equality for women across the board – and we might be talking about a saner, more evenly prosperous, more sustainably peaceful world.

Looking today at the slow and patchy progress towards equality, it seems that we were madly ambitious to expect to wipe out in 20 years a regime of gender inequality and outright oppression that had lasted in some cases for thousands of years.

Then again – was it really so much to ask? What sort of world is it that condemns half its population to second-class status at best and outright slavery at worst? How much would it really cost to unlock the potential of the world’s women? And how much could have been gained! If world leaders really saw the Beijing Platform for Action as an investment in their countries’ future, why didn’t they follow through?

Some women are taking a seat at the top table. There were 12 female Heads of State or Government in 1990, and 19 in 2015. But the rest are men. Eight out of every 10 parliamentarians worldwide are still men.

Maternal mortality has fallen by 45 per cent; but the goal for 2015 was 75 per cent. There are still 140 million women with no access to modern family planning; the goal for 2015 was universal coverage. More girls are starting school and more are completing their education; countries have largely closed the “gender gap” in primary education. Many more girls are entering secondary school too, but there is a wide gap between girls’ and boys’ attainments. More women are working: Twenty years ago, 40 per cent of women were in waged and salaried employment. Today that proportion has grown to some 50 per cent. But at this rate, it would take more than 80 years to achieve gender parity in employment, and more than 75 years to reach equal pay.

This year marks a great opportunity for the world’s leaders, and



a great challenge. When they meet at the United Nations in New York in September, they will have the opportunity to revisit and re-commit to the goals of Beijing.

Today, we call on those leaders to join women in a great partnership for human rights, peace and development. We call on them to show an example in their own lives of how equality benefits everyone: man, woman and child. And we call on them to lead and invest in change at a national level to address the gender equality gaps that we know still persist.

We must have an end point in sight. Our aim is substantial action now, urgently frontloaded for the first five years, and equality before 2030.

There is an urgent need to change the current trajectories. The poor representation of women in political and economic decision-making poses a threat to women’s empowerment and gender equality that men can and must be part of addressing.

If the world’s leaders join the world’s women this September; if they genuinely step up their action for equality, building on the foundation laid in the last 20 years; if they can make the necessary investments, build partnerships with business and civil society, and hold themselves accountable for results, it could be sooner.

Women will get to equality in the end. The only question is, why should we wait? So we’re celebrating today, International Women’s Day; confident in the expectation that we will have still more to celebrate next year, and the years to come.

In this op-ed for International Women’s Day, UN Women Executive Director Plumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka takes a look at the mixed progress since the 1995 Beijing Conference and asks for bold steps to accelerate change in the lives of women and girls. She underlines the urgent need to recommit to the promises made in 1995 by world leaders, and an end point to achieving gender equality. Calling for substantial change, she stresses the need to frontload actions for the next five years to achieve full equality before 2030.

Violence Begets Violence

By Asmatyari

The flawed comprehension “Violence begets an outcome” is driving narrative behind every deed executed in most if not all Muslim countries. Being born and raised in such a country we all have witnessed children being subjected to severe corporal punishment to get them learn etiquettes, moralities and discipline by parents. A similar stratagem is widely applied in community mosques and Madrasa education system, considered inevitable, where children are taught religious extremism education. Being raised in the environment of aggression, every students not only ingest enormous violence but also bear the brunt of in-depth humiliation and character assassination, are bound to reciprocate identically. Unfortunately such acts receive wide appreciation by minimally educated parents who finds that serving the interests of their children, and the society that keeps mum over very such sensitive issues.

The tale of endless violence doesn’t end here; even the children in families are put to punishment given they turn down an illogical dictate of parent or elder sibling. Father deems repression his due right to get every member of the family surrender to his very commandments. The same dominance of violence is reflected in the society where every influential and powerful person considers subjugating the ordinary people their inherent right. Seeing the unproductive circumstances the person is left with sole option of exercising utter obedience or revolt against irrational dictates and bear the consequences.

Seeing all these, what do you think; the promotion of violence isn’t self driven phenomenon in these societies? Don’t, such societies provide itself a rich ground to masses to carry forth violence? Don’t people respond violence with the violence? And doesn’t violence beget violence? If the responses are yes, then they have to restrain their ill-findings that give rise to a motivation for unacceptable deeds such as bloodshed, murders and cruelty against fellowman on religious, racial and sectarian or etc, ground.

Life is sacred, is an ideal that the majority of people can agree upon to a certain extent. For this reason taking the life of another has always been considered the most deplorable of crimes, one worthy of the harshest available punishment. Thus arises one of the great moral dilemmas of our time. Should taking the life of one who has taken the life of others be considered an available punishment? Is a murderer’s life any less sacred than the victim’s is? Can capital punishment, the death penalty, execution, legal murder, or whatever a society wishes to call it, be morally justifiable?

Capital punishment is immoral is the idea that it creates a climate of violence. If a society punishes a murderer by murdering them

what do we say about violence and crime? Our society teaches its children that crime and violence does not solve anything, and yet our highest form of punishment is no different than the crime it punishes. The underlying question in this issue is if any kind of killing, regardless of reason, can be accepted.

We shouldn’t be amazed that many Muslim countries practice such blind laws that promote and encourage the violence in some forms which are discussed below to support my standing. The Islamic countries undeniably posture committing such deeds to uphold the rule of biased and irrational law. The ordinary masses getting accustomed to aggression seek to find solution of every problem in severe corporal punishment. This is the reason many account holders of social media supporting ISIS cause.

Nonetheless, the biggest economy and oil rich African Muslim state Nigeria suffers at the hands of terrorist of Boko Haram who has become the main security threat to the stability of Nigeria with increasingly threats to its neighbors.

The group has killed thousands of people, many of them civilians, and kidnapped hundreds while the government has struggled to forge an effective response.

Here in Afghanistan and Pakistan the masses suffer at the hand of Taliban, Al-Qaida and their affiliates who are driven mad by the motive of revival of caliphate system across Muslim world, only solve the giant problems of Islamic world. The interesting and common about all of them is; they share same ideology and similar tactics to enforce their stately law and rule of business. Henceforth, the rationalization of teachings and interpretation and execution of laws for common good must be celebrated.

Previously, the Islamic State group released a video purportedly showing the beheading of Japanese hostage Kenji Goto. In it, Goto is seen kneeling, dressed in an orange outfit, as a masked man standing beside him with a knife blames the Japanese government for his slaughter. There are countless tales of atrocities executed by terrorists of ISIS in the drive of maintenance of so-called Islamic values and teachings, they interpret. Irrespective of condemnation of the world such blind and illogical practices can’t get the miseries of masses away.

We have to reach to the very point that “violence breeds violence” is depicted from all the religiously motivated terror groups whether Taliban, Al-Qaida, ISIS, Boko Haram etc. are the product of extreme portrayal of violence and Jihad aided by lawlessness, corruption and dictatorial regimes. Decades of promotion of repression, widespread lawlessness and corruption have seen violent Islamic terrorist groups fill the power vacuum in this region and continue to turn out an alarming number of religiously motivated terrorists.

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