

LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND - TACKLING INEQUALITIES, EMPOWERING WOMEN AND GIRLS

Introduction

Gender equality is essential to the new development agenda.

The Commonwealth believes that women's leadership is central to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

That means that women must have equal access to social and economic resources and a voice in governance and political development.

Women in Decision-Making

- Development partners and member states should accelerate actions and address gaps to ensure that progress benefits all, particularly the most marginalised populations, including women and girls.
- In 1996, the Commonwealth promoted a target of 30 per cent women in decision-making positions in the political, public and private sectors. This target was maintained when the Commonwealth acknowledged the need to work harder to achieve it by 2015.
- Women must be encouraged to be more involved in decision making at all levels. This includes indigenous women, women with disabilities, women from rural areas, and women from ethnic, cultural and religious minorities. The reform of electoral systems plays a key role in establishing mechanisms that allow women to participate in decision-making.
- To advance women's economic and political participation, the Commonwealth is partnering with the African Union



and UN Women. At the national level, we strive to stimulate change through national election management bodies.

- Increasing women's participation in decision making ensures that women's priorities and needs are taken into account, especially in shaping development and monitoring policies and programmes. The Commonwealth works with Ministries of Women's Affairs and other national bodies to achieve effective development results.
- The Commonwealth is working to end child marriage, helping to ensure that girls complete school and play more active roles in society.

Conclusion

- The Commonwealth seeks to address inequality, discrimination against women and violence against women and girls. We strongly believe that gender equality and women's empowerment is part of the solution so that no one is left behind.

Thank you

