

International Day of the Girl 2019
“GirlForce: Unscripted and Unstoppable”
11 October 2019

THEME

Twenty-five years ago more than 30,000 women from 200 countries arrived in Beijing for the World Conference on Women determined to recognize the rights of women and girls as human rights. What started as global women’s movements campaigning for sexual and reproductive health rights, political participation and equal pay, to name a few, expanded to movements organized by and for adolescent girls.

Today, girls’ movements are stopping child marriage, promoting girls’ education, standing up against gender-based violence, demanding action on climate change, tackling issues of self-esteem, and standing up for girls’ rights to enter temples or public spaces during menstruation. Girls are also engaging with municipalities to advocate for financial investments in their communities and for truly inclusive development that recognize their needs. Girls are proving they are unscripted and unstoppable.

For this year’s International Day of the Girl (October 11), we are working alongside and supporting all girls to amplify their voices and stand up for their rights. Under the theme, **“GirlForce: Unscripted and Unstoppable”**, International Day of the Girl will celebrate achievements by, with and for girls since the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and passage of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Today, girls are moving from dreaming to achieving. More are attending and completing school, fewer are getting married or becoming mothers while still children, and more are gaining the skills they need to excel in the future world of work. Girls are breaking boundaries and barriers posed by stereotypes and exclusion, including those directed at children with disabilities and those living in marginalized communities. As entrepreneurs, innovators and initiators of global movements, girls are leading and fostering a world that is relevant for them and future generations.

International Day of the Girl 2019 marks the continuation of the theme started last year and another year-long effort to bring together partners and stakeholders to equip girls with the power, knowledge and space to continue to voice their passions and concerns. The global community must create more opportunities for girls’ voices to be heard and safe spaces for their participation in decision-making, as leading change for girls is all our responsibility.

IDG will also highlight the need to invest in girls’ most pressing needs and opportunities, because investing in girls is investing in a better future that is equal for all – for girls themselves, for their families and for communities. The progress of the past 25 years is remarkable, but girls around the world—especially those living in rural areas or humanitarian settings and those with disabilities — still need us to stand with them to achieve their full potential.

As we come together to celebrate 25 years of progress, let's work to reinforce girls' rights to a safe childhood, to decide for themselves, and to education and skills – in short, their right to the future they want.

BACKGROUND:

Marking 25 years of progress for girls

In 1995 at the World Conference on Women in Beijing countries unanimously adopted [the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#) – the most progressive blueprint ever for advancing the rights of not only women but girls. Twenty-five years later, the Platform for Action remains a powerful foundation for assessing progress on gender equality. It calls for a world where every girl and woman can realize all her rights, such as to live free from violence, to attend and complete school, to choose when and whom she marries, and to earn equal pay for equal work.

The next two years are pivotal for gender equality as the global community celebrates progress and highlights areas for acceleration to empower girls and women. First, 2019 marks the 25th anniversary of the groundbreaking [International Conference on Population and Development \(ICPD\)](#), where governments recognized that reproductive health, women's empowerment and gender equality are key to sustainable development.

This November, countries will advocate for achieving zero unmet need for family planning, zero preventable maternal deaths, and zero sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices against women and girls.

In 2020, the global community will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration. As a follow-up to the [Convention on the Rights of the Child \(CRC\)](#), the Beijing Declaration is the first to specifically call out girls' rights. Because girls are discriminated against from the earliest states of life, through their childhood and into adulthood, the Platform of Action has one strategic objective with nine indicators specific to advancing girls' rights.

The Platform of Action nine indicators for girls:

1. Eliminate all forms of discrimination against girls
2. Eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls.
3. Promote and protect the rights of girls and increase awareness of their needs and potential.
4. Eliminate discrimination against girls in education, skills development and training.
5. Eliminate discrimination against girls in health and nutrition.
6. Eliminate the economic exploitation of child labour and protect young girls at work.
7. Eradicate violence against girls.
8. Promote girls awareness of and participation in social, economic and political life.
9. Strengthen the role of the family in improving the status of girls

Beyond Beijing+25 2020 marks five-years since the launch of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 5, which calls for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, everywhere by 2030. To achieve the SDGs we will need to include the voices and power of girls.

ICPD and the Beijing Declaration unleashed remarkable political will and worldwide visibility for gender equality. Beijing also connected and reinforced the activism of women’s movements on a global scale. Since then, governments, civil society and the public have translated the Platform for Action’s promises into concrete changes in individual countries. These have ushered in enormous improvements in the lives of women and girls.

CAMPAIGN

As part of a year-long effort with and for girls, UNICEF and partners will bring together programming, advocacy, communication, fundraising, and public engagement elevating progress for and with girls. A communications toolkit and key messages will be available at the end of August.

More information will also be available at: <https://www.unicef.org/gender-equality/international-day-of-the-girl-2019>

Key moments will include:

International Day of the Girl	11 October 2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital movements and events globally, including Working Group on Girls Speak Out event at UN New York, Plan International’s Girls Takeover and a Girl Summit in Geneva. • Release of UNICEF’s report on 25 years of progress for girls. 	
Futurizing Beijing and Europe Regional Beijing+25 Consultation	26-30 October 2019
The Nairobi Summit on ICPD25: Accelerating the promise	12-14 November 2019
World Children’s Day: 30th Anniversary of CRC	20 November 2019
International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women 16 Days of Activism	25 November – 10 December 2019
International Women’s Day	8 March 2020
64th Commission on the Status of Women: 25th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action	9-20 March 2020
UN General Assembly	15-30 September 2020

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

- **Share stories of girls who are “unscripted” and “unstoppable”** in their communities, families or schools. Examples could be girls stopping discrimination and child marriage, girls breaking stereotypes, or girls increasing access to secondary education and skill development.
- **Interview women aged 35-45 years old** who were girls when the Beijing Declaration of Action was adopted in 1995 and ask them what’s changed for them in the past 25 years. What’s a piece of advice they would give to their younger selves or girls today.
- **Profile people in your organization** – especially those who work in protection or humanitarian issues and ask them to retell a story of “the bravest girl they have ever met”. Example this could be a story of a girl who was so stubborn she ran away three times from forced marriages because all she wanted to do was finish school.

KEY CONTACTS:

Kim Chriscaden, kchriscaden@unicef.org and **Joy Lynn Alegarbes**, jlalegarbes@unicef.org
Communications and partnership leads

Sagri Singh, sasingh@unicef.org and **Luzia Zeruneith**, lzeruneith@unicef.org
Adolescent girls empowerment technical leads