Hosted By
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Final Report
Executive Summary
Overview
The Secretary-General’s Challenge
Report of the University Presidents
Report of the Faculty Experts
Final Recommendations and Proposed Outcomes
Next Steps
Endorsements

Appendices
Participants
Keynote Addresses
Background Paper
Participants’ Responses to the Background Paper
Executive Summary

The fifth meeting of the Global Colloquium of University Presidents convened at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia on Monday, April 4 and Tuesday April 5, 2011 to discuss the topic “Empowering Women to Change the World: What Universities and the UN Can Do.” The Colloquium was devoted to turning talk into action, to serving as a catalyst for concrete initiatives that participating universities and the U.N. can undertake. The challenges and opportunities faced in realizing this potential were addressed during the Colloquium in two parallel discussions:

- The university presidents met to discuss the role of universities in empowering women for full participation and leadership in their societies.

- The faculty experts from each participating university discussed what the United Nations can do to advance the empowerment of women.

In the Colloquium’s concluding plenary discussion, the participating university presidents and faculty experts turned to distilling the recommendations from the parallel discussions into a workable and focused action-oriented agenda.

Recommendations

The participating university presidents and faculty experts agreed on six major recommendations for action by UN Women, by universities, and by the wider global community. Proposed outcomes are noted for each recommendation in the body of the report.

Recommendations for UN Women
1. Address the gap between male and female achievement “beyond education,” i.e., following the completion of formal education, especially at the college and professional degree level.

2. Compile, better analyze, and widely share universities’ substantial existing research -- which is today fragmented and underutilized -- on issues affecting women across the socioeconomic spectrum.

Recommendations for Universities
3. Universities need to look at their own work forces and find ways to address existing female/male gender gaps:

4. Expand research on the “beyond education” gap.
Recommendations for UN Women and Universities
5. Increase and enhance links between universities and the UN.

Recommendations for the Wider Global Community
6. Society, at large, needs to change the concept of the economy of care, where women are the primary—and often—the only caretakers in a family. Without addressing this pivotal issue, the situation for most women in the global community will resist change.

Next Steps

Each of the six major recommendations for action by UN Women, by universities, and by the wider global community has been endorsed by the presidents of the five sponsoring universities -- Lee Bollinger (Columbia), Amy Gutmann (Penn), John Sexton (NYU), Richard Levin (Yale), and Shirley Tilghman (Princeton) -- and the other participating presidents listed at the end of the report. They will use these recommendations and the proposed outcomes described in the report as a guide for further work -- independently, collaboratively, and in partnership with UN Women -- to empower women to change the world.

As indicated in its Vision and 100-Day Action Plan, UN Women will partner with the university presidents participating in the Global Colloquium to implement the recommendations within the framework of UN Women’s 2012-2013 Strategic Plan and “with academic networks around the globe to promote women’s and girls’ leadership and empowerment.”
Overview

The fifth meeting of the Global Colloquium of University Presidents convened at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia on Monday, April 4 and Tuesday April 5, 2011 to discuss the topic “Empowering Women to Change the World: What Universities and the UN Can Do.”

The Colloquium is an invitation-only meeting of some 25 university presidents from around the world (each accompanied by a faculty expert on the chosen topic), sponsored by five American institutions (Columbia University, New York University, Princeton University, the University of Pennsylvania, and Yale University) on behalf of and with the participation of the UN Secretary-General.

In response to the United Nations Secretary-General’s request for greater involvement of the global academic community in exploring international public policy concerns, the Colloquium meets annually to discuss a topic of immediate concern to leaders in higher education at universities around the world and of particular and timely interest to the Secretary-General and the international community. Convened by the presidents of the five sponsoring institutions, Lee Bollinger (Columbia), Amy Gutmann (Penn), John Sexton (NYU), Richard Levin (Yale), and Shirley Tilghman (Princeton), previous Colloquia have addressed such important topics as academic freedom, international migration, innovative sources of funding global goods, the social benefits of the research university in the 21st century, sustainability and global climate change, and the role of science in meeting global challenges.

Speaking on the occasion of International Women’s Day 2010 and the 15th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon noted that “gender equality and women’s empowerment are fundamental to the global mission of the United Nations to achieve equal rights and dignity for all…. But equality for women and girls is also an economic and social imperative. Until women and girls are liberated from poverty and injustice, all our goals – peace, security, sustainable development – stand in jeopardy.”

Together, the global higher education community and the United Nations itself are among the most important potential actors in the emancipation and empowerment of women to change the world.
The Secretary-General’s Challenge

In his keynote address to an overflow audience in Irvine Auditorium on Monday, April 4th, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said that women remain second-class citizens in too many countries, deprived of basic rights or legitimate opportunities, and he challenged the participants in the Colloquium to help in the fight to overcome discrimination and change perceptions about what women can and should do.

Universities can play “a significant role” in promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment, the Secretary-General said. “They can provide the training in critical thinking that a functional democracy needs,” he said. “They provide a foundation for the economic and medical research that is so essential to society’s well-being. And they supply graduates to the workforce.”

“So it is essential that this issue of women’s rights and women’s representation is reflected in your curricula, your appointments, your practices and your partnerships.” The Secretary-General said it was vital to give girls and young women the inspiration and tools so they have the opportunity to achieve.

The Secretary-General said recent events in the Middle East and North Africa, where public protests for greater freedoms have led to the downfall of two governments, highlighted the need for such a body. “In conversation after conversation in Cairo and Tunis,” he said, “women told me that they stood shoulder-to-shoulder with men – standing up for change, for rights, for opportunity. They expect to take their share in making the revolution succeed, having their fair share of power, making decisions, making policy.”

“I told them that women represent half the population, they hold up half the sky, and should have their fair share in making the decisions that affects their lives and their countries.”

The Secretary-General stressed that while the rights of women have come a long way in the past century, women are second-class citizens in too many countries today.

“Although the gender gap in education is closing, far too many girls are still denied schooling, leave prematurely, or complete school with few skills and fewer opportunities. Two-thirds of illiterate adults are female,” he said.

“In the area of decision-making, we see more women, in more countries, taking their rightful seat in parliament,” he noted. “Yet fewer than 10 per cent of countries have female heads of State or government. In just 28 countries are there more than 30 per cent of women in parliament.”

The Secretary-General also called for support of the UN Strategy for Women’s and Children’s Health, one of his and UN Women’s top priorities, designed to facilitate partnerships between actors that have not traditionally worked together.
“Too many women still die giving birth to new life,” he said. “Too many children die from preventable illnesses.”

The Secretary-General concluded by reminding his audience that the long-term success of the advances women are making around the world cannot be taken for granted. “If our new UN entity for women is to produce real change for women,” he said, “they need the committed and coordinated support of us all.”

In their ensuing deliberations, the presidents and faculty experts concluded that the empowerment and true equality of women remains a worthy and urgent goal for all societies, whether in the developing or the developed world. It is a goal that must be reached if we do not want to squander the potential of half the global community, and it is a goal that all of us must work to address.

Research universities, in particular, have an enormous role to play in realizing women’s potential and promise. They enable individual women to succeed and lead through education, and they are centers of research and discovery. The challenge is how to translate what universities have discerned and discovered into action.

The Colloquium was devoted to turning talk into action, to serving as a catalyst for concrete initiatives that participating universities and the U.N. can undertake. The challenges and opportunities faced in realizing this potential were addressed during the Colloquium in two parallel discussions:

- The university presidents met to discuss the role of universities in providing access to education, training, and leadership networks to empower women for full participation and leadership in their societies and recommend concrete steps that universities around the world should take to further this goal.

- Simultaneously, the faculty experts from each participating university discussed what the United Nations can do to advance the empowerment of women in the spirit of the Secretary-General’s passionate commitment.

Reports on the deliberations of each group follow below.
Report of the University Presidents:
“What Universities Can Do” to Empower Women to Change the World

Though the “gap” between women and men pursuing undergraduate or graduate degrees in the universities participating in the Colloquium varies by country and type of institution, women are generally on parity with men—even in the majority in many cases. The real gender gap occurs after leaving universities—in the workforce, including in academia, and the university presidents turned their attention on the needs and realities of professional women.

The cultural, environmental, and systemic factors, which are at the root of this gap, following graduation from college, vary across countries and cultures, but they include less access, lack of networking opportunities, differential cultural expectations, and hostile workplace environments. These are empowerment, not education issues: How do we empower women once they leave university? How can we create an environment in academia to empower women? What goals can universities pursue?

The presidents concluded that among the concrete steps needed to address this gap, universities can and should undertake the following:

- **Create professional advancement opportunities within universities and work towards parity in professorships and leadership roles.**

  **Examples:**
  - Increase the percentage of full-time female professors.
  - Provide opportunities for women and men to balance their families and careers.

- **Increase research at universities on empowering women.**

  **Examples:**
  - Research how women progress from undergraduate and graduate programs into the workplace.
  - Broaden research and statistics on the gender gap in income, type of profession, and workforce retention.
  - Target professional faculties to research this correlation.
  - Gain a better understanding of how workplaces are conducive to female empowerment, and the needs of women, and where there is room for change.
• Prepare both women and men for the world as it is today so they can better understand how to succeed.

Examples
  o Provide leadership training that builds self-confidence and targets understanding the world as it is, while investigating how to change it.
    o Create more networking opportunities between men and women to help build capacity and to avoid segregating the issue of gender equity and empowerment as “a women’s problem.”

• The President’s session also endorsed a proposal put forward by UN Women to establish a UN Women’s Internship Program for Master’s Degree students, focused on empowering women to return to their communities prepared to share and disseminate their leadership knowledge to other women in all socioeconomic groups.
Report of the Faculty Experts:  
“What the UN Can Do” to Empower Women to Change the World

The faculty experts participating in the Fifth Global Colloquium of University Presidents concluded that despite the wide differences across cultures and countries, the issues affecting women are universal and affect all of us. Women have the potential to be the world’s most powerful catalysts for change -- so without their engagement, empowerment, and contributions, we will not be able to tackle universal challenges such as climate change, food insecurity, violent conflict, poverty, and lack of education and healthcare.

To achieve these collective goals for the empowerment of women, the faculty experts recommended that the United Nations should:

- **Use innovative communications strategies to advance the empowerment of women.**

  **Examples:**
  
  o Use strategies and technologies such as social media and networks (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) to create awareness of women’s empowerment issues and to achieve, on a massive scale, the dissemination of ideas, strategies, success stories and “victories” for gender equality, producing a global social movement to support the empowerment of women and girls.

  o Publish small, portable handbooks to inform women and men of the rights women have in their various national communities.

  o Incorporate pop culture into this movement to reach a broad mass audience, targeting both men and women. This would be a simple and pragmatic way to communicate, persuade, and motivate. E.g.:

    - Follow the example of Actress Geena Davis in working with film producers to not always show women as weak in commercial films.

    - Follow the example of the current campaign to change the image of nursing as a strictly women’s profession through use of photos and illustrations of male nurses.

- **Form partnerships and connections to facilitate the empowerment of women.**

  **Examples:**
  
  o Partner with NGOs and grassroots organizations to mobilize communities and generate momentum, including by designating local leaders who will play an important role in “championing” the movement for women’s empowerment, facilitating ideas and working to translate these ideas into concrete actions.
o Partner with local universities and research centers to generate research and disseminate evidence-based research findings that will accelerate progress towards women empowerment and gender equity.

o Act as a connector to facilitate dialogue between governments and civil society.

o Form multi-country consortia to work on a common agenda.

o Facilitate south-to-south knowledge exchanges. E.g.:
  - Provide exchange opportunities for women from the Middle East and Asia to come together to share their common problems and generate solutions.

- **Develop indicators and encourage research on the status, progress, and empowerment of women.**

  **Examples:**
  - Facilitate a data base to integrate all research on the status and empowerment of women, so we can understand more clearly and readily what other countries are doing for the global empowerment of women.

  - Encourage in depth research on women’s empowerment to be better contextualized, avoiding “a one size fits all” mentality lest we lose the qualitative and contextual significance of women’s voices and stories.

  - Drawing on existing global goals and targets, develop a set of universal, multidimensional indicators to measure progress and focus advocacy in support of efforts to advance women’s empowerment and equity. This framework must allow for flexibility and local contextualization in order to highlight the differing experiences of various communities and to plan effective national strategies.

- **Develop and stimulate programs focusing on all aspects of the empowerment of women, including vulnerable women and girls, and men as part of the solution.**

  **Examples:**
  - Develop programs with universities that help preachers, rabbis, or imams in mosques, synagogues, and churches to focus on the empowerment and equality of women from within their respective religious traditions.

  - Serve as a catalyst to stimulate innovative programs for vulnerable women and girls (domestic workers, immigrants, the caregivers and the trafficked people) to end violence, improve universal access to healthcare and education, eliminate gendered poverty, and improve employment opportunities of women.

  - Create programs that educate and engage men to become more involved in women’s empowerment and gender equity issues. Don’t leave men out of the solution. They need to be a part of the process of change.
Final Recommendations and Proposed Outcomes

In the Colloquium’s concluding plenary discussion, the participating university presidents and faculty experts turned to distilling the recommendations above into a workable and focused action-oriented agenda. It was agreed that six major action items need to be addressed:

Recommendations for UN Women
1. **Address the gap between male and female achievement “beyond education,” i.e., following the completion of formal education, especially at the college and professional degree level.**

   **Proposed Outcomes:**
   - The creation of a UN Women Internship Program would be helpful in achieving these goals to the extent that they provide leadership training and help improve self-confidence. (This proposal from UN Women was specifically endorsed by the university presidents.)
   - Consider facilitating the creation of a network of global mentors to cultivate women leaders and champions who will play an important role in influencing policies, facilitating ideas, and translating these ideas into concrete actions that empower women.

2. **Compile, better analyze, and widely share universities’ substantial existing research -- which is today fragmented and underutilized -- on issues affecting women across the socioeconomic spectrum.**

   **Proposed Outcomes:**
   - Examine the possibility of creating a shared UN website, supported by a consortium of universities, which would post and update relevant research on the progress of women.
   - Use innovative communications strategies to advance the empowerment of women.
   - Develop indicators and encourage research on the status, progress, and empowerment of women.
   - Leverage the development and integration of contextualized in-depth research on the determinants of disempowerment and strategies for empowerment.
   - Disseminate accessible strategies for empowerment to key vulnerable populations.
Recommendations for Universities

3. Universities need to look at their own work forces and find ways to address existing female/male gender gaps.

Proposed Outcomes:
- Increase the percentage of female leaders:
  - Create executive training programs for women.
  - Create professional advancement opportunities within universities and work towards parity in professorships and leadership roles.
  - Offer leadership training that prepares students for the world as it is today, so women, as well as men, understand how to succeed.

4. Work to expand research on the “beyond education” gap.

Proposed Outcomes:
- Create a data consortium on specific fields/specialties.
- Convert the research into usable data that will engage local communities and reflect local values.

Recommendations for UN Women and Universities

5. Increase and enhance links between universities and the UN.

Proposed Outcomes:
- Universities could endow UN Chairs for faculty.
- Universities can organize activities in support of UN action items:
  - Develop and stimulate programs focusing on all aspects of the empowerment of women, including vulnerable women and girls, and men as part of the solution.
  - Form partnerships and connections to facilitate the empowerment of women.

Recommendations for the Wider Global Community

6. Society, at large, needs to change the concept of the economy of care, where women are the primary—and often—the only caretakers in a family. Without addressing this pivotal issue, the situation for most women in the global community will never change.

Proposed Outcomes:
- The UN, universities, and other organizations could disseminate into their networks information on the issue, and other issues related to the empowerment of women, in order to show that women’s empowerment is not simply a “women’s issue.”
Next Steps

Each of the six major recommendations for action by UN Women, by universities, and by the wider global community has been endorsed by the presidents of the five sponsoring universities -- Lee Bollinger (Columbia), Amy Gutmann (Penn), John Sexton (NYU), Richard Levin (Yale), and Shirley Tilghman (Princeton) -- and the other participating presidents listed below. They will use these recommendations and the proposed outcomes described in the report as a guide for further work -- independently, collaboratively, and in partnership with UN Women -- to empower women to change the world.

As indicated in its *Vision and 100-Day Action Plan*, UN Women will partner with the university presidents participating in the Global Colloquium to implement the recommendations within the framework of UN Women’s *2012-2013 Strategic Plan* and “with academic networks around the globe to promote women’s and girls’ leadership and empowerment.”

Endorsements
*(as of October 24, 2011)*

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