



International Women's Day Statement: Leaving No Glass Ceiling Unbroken

WE are observing International Women's Day in a time when there is unprecedented advancement in women's equality and rights. There has been much global gains in the drive towards gender parity and much of this is reflected locally among our women. Women continue to be increasingly vocal on the issues that affect them and are making strides in penetrating spaces that traditionally have excluded them.

There is a noted upsurge in the number of women in STEM fields, management positions, leading businesses, NGOs and government duties. Efforts across the public, private and third sectors show a willingness to engage discussions and advocates around gender-parity. NGOs, corporate entities and government have bolstered their efforts, working in silos and through partnerships, to underscore the importance and realize the benefits of operating in a gender-inclusive society.

While observations and celebrations of these milestones in women's equality are welcome, it is important that we not lose sight of the collective struggle – there are still have many hurdles to overcome including institutionalized inequalities, sexism, sexual violence and limited access to higher-end wages and/or jobs. The Government has much more work to do to meet their national, regional and international obligations to reduce inequalities between men and women.

Jamaica is still without sexual harassment legislation that is needed to combat the scourge of sexual deviance that has been normalised in the country. The long-stalled Sexual Offenses Act review continues to delay comprehensive justice to victims and survivors of sexual violence. Archaic abortion laws which increase the mortality rate of women and girls at risks need to be amended to allow for them to fully actualize to their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

It is important that we celebrate the gains we have made so far but it is equally important that we continue to #PressforProgress in various areas of life including education, sports, politics, business and society.