A New ERA for GIRLS

"Now more than ever, we must renew our commitment to work together so that girls enjoy and exercise their rights and can play a full and equal part in their communities and societies. Investing in girls is investing in our common future." ~ UN Secretary-General António Guterres

"I am glad to be a girl because when girls are given the chance, we will fight for our rights and pass on what we have learned to other girls who are facing the same situations." ~ Zaharah, age 16, from Uganda

Back in 1995, the world adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action – the most comprehensive policy agenda for gender equality – with the vision of ending discrimination against women and girls. (Four SSNDs were present – including Ethel Howley – at this significant event.) But today, 28 years later, discrimination and limiting stereotypes remain too wide spread. Girls' life expectancy has extended by eight years, yet for many the quality of that life is still far from what was envisioned. Girls have the right to expect more. The realities they face today, in contexts of technological change and humanitarian emergencies, are both remarkably different from 1995 and more of the same: with violence, institutionalized biases, poor learning and life opportunities, and multiple inequalities unresolved. There are major breakthroughs still to be made.



My family's situation and the challenges I face every day to attend school will not stop me from continuing to fight for my dreams. I worry that some of my friends are not studying due to lack of money or because they are not interested in education or because their family does not support them. I always advise them to return to school if they want to have a better future." ~ Timotea, age 14, from Guatemala

With adversity, however, comes resourcefulness, creativity, tenacity, and resilience. The world's 600 million adolescent girls have shown time and time again that given the skills and

the opportunities, they can be the change makers driving progress in their communities, building back stronger for all, including women, boys and men.

Girls are ready for a decade of acceleration forward. It is time for us all to stand accountable – with and for girls – and to invest in a future that believes in their agency, leadership and potential.

Learn more:

- Read the report: A new era for girls: Taking stock of 25 years of progress (2020)