

MESSAGE OF SOLIDARITY

INTO THE ERA OF GENERATION EQUALITY:

All in for a gender-equal future and a world of work without gender-based violence

I join women and unions around the region and elsewhere in solidarity to honour those who came before us and other women in our lives who inspired us and persevered to secure the rights and freedoms we enjoy today.

As I read through the quotes of [Kathy](#), [Elly](#), [Smritee](#), [Afsana](#), [Christine](#), [Avital](#), [Kazuyo](#), along with many others, I thought about this: What is it about this day that makes these union women determined and renewed with optimism about the future? What keeps them going? Because they know and understand those long, challenging, and difficult sacrifices and efforts that went into securing every last one of these rights. They will rise above their circumstances, gather others, and together, do whatever it takes to reach for something better and bigger, again.

Indeed, our work on gender equality will remain crucial; it even demands extra strength to stop the rollback of legal protection for women and working people. To fight the pushback from entrenched patriarchy and misogyny that continues to denigrate and silence women, in the workplace, at home, in the community, in society, including in the guise of needed response for the COVID-19 pandemic.

This takes multiple forms. Informal economy workers harassed and burdened with more requirements to ply their trade. Women working from home, trapped with their abusers, or facing grave danger, violence, and harassment when they fight back or speak for others. The persistent notion that they have no role outside the home or that they or their experiences are not legitimate and worthy to be heard. And all those horrifying stories and experiences of women continuing to be restricted in society and being punished for challenging it.

Despite all these and the daily realities facing women and girls, we can still celebrate. In the midst of these are remarkable achievements and successes on women's rights and leadership, including within our ranks, [made by women and young people](#), for their peers and working families. It is encouraging that our efforts speak directly to the theme of this year's International Women's Day: "Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world." The women and youth representatives have shown that we can do and be more, even in the most trying times.

And we do and we should, because we are the generation equality. We will not accept a world that tells our children that equality can wait another 100 years. [We simply cannot afford to just wait for these fundamental principles and rights to happen](#). We need to reimagine and rebuild NOW the future that works for and protects everyone and to transform the systems that prevent women from achieving their full potential. We need everyone on board, including governments, employers, and other institutions – and your relentless drive to hold them to account and make sure they deliver on their promise.

Make no mistake about it. Investing in women in all their diversity and respecting their human rights are the surest way to bring us closer to this new era of equality, democracy, and prosperity. One where everyone can genuinely contribute to all the world's and societies' success. Where their voices are equally heard and heeded.

We have a lot of work left to do. Your actions today, big and small, and in the months and years to come, will lead the way for better things, whether it is campaigning for the ratification of the new ILO instrument on violence and harassment in the world of work (#RatifyC190). Or pushing for enterprise-based mechanisms that beat violence and harassment. Or elevating more women into positions of power and influence. To continue our struggle for equal pay and better working conditions and against inequities of unpaid care work, and so much more.

ITUC-AP will work with you, and in partnership with others, to make this vision real and lasting for everyone. To harness our collective energy, ideas, and experiences to take out the boundaries which bar a gender-equal future and obstruct a world of work without gender-based violence.

Thank you for everything you have done and other exciting things we will continue to do together. Along with changemakers of all ages, all genders, all generations, and all persuasions, let's make this happen beyond this virtual space, not just today, but every day of the year.

On this note, we wish you a successful and inspiring International Women's Day.

In solidarity,

Shoya Yoshida
General Secretary
ITUC-Asia Pacific

IWD 2021
8 MARCH

