

Women Deliver 2016: Investing in Girls and Women Pays – and Data Can Prove It

Plan International Launches New Tool to Measure the State of the World's Girls and Women

New Data from The Guttmacher Institute and The Lancet Featured at Conference

Copenhagen, Denmark (18 May 2016) – On the third day of the Women Deliver 2016 Conference, Her Majesty Queen Máxima of the Netherlands, the UN Secretary- General's Special Advocate for Inclusive Finance for Development (UNSGSA), Her Royal Highness Princess Mabel van Oranje, Chair of Girls Not Brides, and other luminaries such as Jim Young Kim, President of the World Bank Group, emphasized the importance of investing in girls and women and the critical role data plays in establishing gender equity. Across a series of plenaries, global leaders argued that investments in women and girls are essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ending poverty and building a better world for future generations.

“The fact is that when you invest in women and girls, everybody wins. Data can prove it and has the power to build accountability, create effective policies and help us meet our long-term development goals,” said **Katja Iversen**, CEO of Women Deliver. “Women count. It’s time for us to start counting them and counting them in.”

During the morning plenary, Plan International, a child rights organization working with communities globally to combat child poverty, announced a [new data and research partnership](#) to monitor the progress on gender targets in the Sustainable Development Goals. The aim of the initiative, launched in partnership with leading rights, development and private sector organizations, is to ensure decision-makers are doing all they can to achieve equality for women and girls during the SDG era.

“In many countries, the data we need on girls and women doesn’t exist yet, is incomplete or is not being compiled effectively,” said **Anne-Birgitte Albrechtsen**, CEO of Plan International. “Millions of girls are left invisible so we don’t have the information to persuade governments to take steps to end abuse, child marriage and the early pregnancies that lead to thousands of maternal deaths.”

The Plan International launch followed on the heels of recent data announcements by two leading health organizations: the Guttmacher Institute and *The Lancet*.

The new Guttmacher Institute report, [Adding It Up: Costs and Benefits of Meeting the Contraceptive Needs of Adolescents](#), presents a comprehensive global and regional analysis of the need for sexual and reproductive health services for adolescents in the developing world and the potential impact new investments in these essential services would have on the health and lives of adolescents.

“Our findings make clear that helping adolescent women avoid unintended pregnancy and childbearing has a profound impact on their lives, enabling them to achieve greater educational attainment, better economic opportunities and healthier lives,” said **Ann Starrs**, President and CEO of the Guttmacher Institute. “Meeting adolescents’ contraceptive needs is not only affordable, but the payback is enormous, improving the lives of millions of young women around the world.”

In addition, *The Lancet* discussed a recently released a publication, [Our Future: A Lancet Commission on Adolescent Health and Wellbeing](#), bringing together perspectives from public health, economics, political and social science, behavioral science and neuroscience to consider strategies to advance adolescent health and wellbeing. The report includes new data about the health of adolescents aged 10-24 and indicates that investing in adolescent health and wellbeing will yield a triple dividend of benefits – today, into adulthood, and for the next generation of children.

“We need to see youth not as a problem but a resource for global health. They are essential partners in the promotion of their own health and wellbeing,” said **Dakshitha Wikremarathne**, Women Deliver Young Leader and Youth Commissioner for *The Lancet* Commission for Adolescent Health and Wellbeing. “It is time to use this untapped resource of youth for global health by giving them the opportunities, support and resources to do so.”

The day’s events complemented an award ceremony hosted last night by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW). ICRW honored **Melinda Gates**, co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and **Jill Sheffield**, president and founder of Women Deliver, with their [Champions for Change Award](#). The annual award honors the leaders and visionaries who are working to create a gender equitable world. Her Royal Highness **Crown Princess Mary of Denmark** presented the awards to Gates and Sheffield.

A full archive of partner press releases and news announcements coming out of the Women Deliver 2016 Conference can be found [here](#).

The Women Deliver 2016 Conference will close on **Thursday, 19 May**, with the final sessions focusing on:

- **Look to the Future, Part 1: Transformation, Innovation and Partnership:** This plenary will focus on the need to change as the world changes and present innovative strategies for social transformation through communications, as well as government, private and NGO partnerships.
- **Look to the Future, Part 2: The State of Philanthropy:** This session will feature an in-depth discussion about the role philanthropy can play in ensuring that resources are available to implement the SDGs in ways that benefit girls and women.
- **Men with Power: Delivering for Girls and Women:** On this panel, men who have committed themselves to women’s empowerment, health and wellbeing will discuss how they see men’s role in driving progress for women.
- **Be the Change You Want to See:** Global leaders and celebrities advocates have been invited to speak on what they commit to change and how they model that change in their own lives.

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About Women Deliver: Women Deliver believes that when the world invests in girls and women, everybody wins. As a leading global advocate for girls’ and women’s health, rights and wellbeing, [Women Deliver](#) brings together diverse voices and interests to drive progress, particularly in maternal, sexual and reproductive health and rights. It builds capacity, shares solutions and forges partnerships, together creating coalitions, communication and action that spark political commitment and investment in girls and women.

Social Media: To learn more about Women Deliver, follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#). Follow the hashtags: #WD2016 and #WDLive

Women Deliver Live: Register [here](#) to tune into [Women Deliver Live](#) – our online hub for downloadable footage of all Conference plenaries, select concurrent sessions, press conferences, and much more.

Media Resources: Online media resources – including the press program, press releases and 2016 b-roll – are available in the [Women Deliver Virtual Press Room](#). Official photographs can be found on [Flickr](#).

More about Deliver for Good: www.deliverforgood.org

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