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25 FOR 25 SERIES

## PHUMZILE MLAMBO-NGCUKA

*25 for 25 is an original content series by Gucci and CHIME FOR CHANGE to mark the historic milestone of Beijing +25 in March, as well as Women's History Month. The series will highlight activists, CHIME Advisory Board members, partners and supporters who represent the progress made on gender equality over the past 25 years, and the emerging next generation continuing this critical work.*



Next in the 25 for 25 series, CHIME is proud to feature **Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka**, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of UN Women who also serves on the CHIME FOR CHANGE Advisory Board. As the convening force mobilizing governments and civil societies to keep the promises of the Beijing Platform for Action to all of society as well as the #GenerationEquality movement, UN Women, led by Executive Director Mlambo-Ngcuka, challenge all of us to speak up and demand equal pay, equal sharing of unpaid care and domestic work, an end to sexual harassment and all forms of violence against women and girls, health-care services, and equal participation in political life and decision-making in all areas of life. Read Executive Director Mlambo-Ngcuka's vision for reaching this goal and become a part of #GenerationEquality.

### **What are your hopes and expectations for gender equality in the next 25 years?**

We're planning ways to substantially accelerate progress towards equality in ways that are irreversible. Our **Generation Equality** campaign is a multigenerational, multisectoral effort that is led by feminists across the world, with the support of the Governments of Mexico and France. We will hold the Generation Equality Forum in Mexico City from 7 to 8 May, and in Paris from 7 to 10 July 2020. The Forum will launch a set of six Action Coalitions to drive investment and transformative results on gender equality. Our hope is that during the **UN Decade of Action (2020-2030) to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals** and into the next 25 years we will have together tackled the remaining challenges to gender equality, and achieved a world where women and girls enjoy equal rights, opportunities and representation.

### **What does gender equality mean to you?**

Gender equality to me means a world where women occupy an equal amount of space as men – in parliaments, boardrooms and peace negotiations; when educated women and girls decide what happens to their own bodies; when they are shaping technology and leading

climate action; when unpaid care and domestic work is shared equally with men; when gender-based violence is no longer a global epidemic. Getting there means lifting up other women, acting as role models to girls, disrupting the status quo and making change a reality; not just today, but for generations to come.

### **What keeps you energized and committed as a leader for gender equality?**

I am energized by the women and girls I meet on my travels for UN Women who are showing incredible resilience and leadership, as well as women who break the glass ceiling. In Afghanistan, I have spent time with women leaders who are determined to defend the rights of Afghan women to lead. They are also working to unite women across the country, including by reaching out to those in Taliban-dominated areas. In Ethiopia, I have seen how women entrepreneurs from humble beginnings are exporting to competitive markets in Europe, while remaining committed to lift up their sisters and incubate their businesses. In Bosnia, I met women who are fighting gender-based violence, including children born out of rape who are battling discrimination and supporting one another. Their strength continues to inspire me and act as a reminder of why our work is so important.

### **What advice would you give younger generations on how to advocate / work for gender equality as they get older?**

We don't have to wait for young people to get older for their advocacy to create change; they are already leading us. To those young people, I say: your generation has an unprecedented opportunity to reduce poverty, to protect our planet and to achieve equality between women and men. You are the generation that will change the world. You have the power, the technology and the numbers. Go out now and fulfill the mission of your generation.

## Who do you look to as an example / role model in the fight for gender equality?

Some of the most inspiring role models for gender equality are the young women out there leading the charge every day. Women like Jaha Dukureh (UN Women's Regional Goodwill Ambassador for Africa) from the Gambia, a survivor of child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM) who has stepped out to protect other women from these harmful practices. Women like Malala Yousafzai, who survived gunshots from extremists and became a fighter for girls' education. And women like Marta Vieira da Silva (UN Women's Goodwill Ambassador for Gender Equality and Sport), widely regarded as the best female football player of all time, who is working to inspire women and girls to challenge stereotypes, overcome barriers and follow their ambitions.



