

# CALL TO ACTION: WOMEN - AGENTS OF CHANGE!



*Recognising the transformative impact that educating women has on society;*

*With the aim of changing societal forms and values towards patterns that reflect and respect the genius, needs and interests of both genders;*

*Recognising the progress that has been made, but regretting the cost to society and the blight on individual lives resulting from continuing educational inequality;*

*We the undersigned call on Commonwealth Governments to:*

- *Close the gender gap in access to education that leaves 121 million children, most of them girls, out of school and 500 million women unable to read or write – twice as many as men.*
- *Provide women with equal access to complete secondary education, recognising that the longer women remain in education, the greater, cumulative intergenerational benefits for their children as well as the economy and wider society.*
- *Ensure all sectors of education have trained teaching and support staff.*
- *Support pastoral policies that prevent girls and women from dropping out of education due to early marriage, domestic and childcare responsibilities, economic activity, including marginal employment and subsistence agriculture.*
- *Ensure education programmes in all sectors, including higher, adult, vocational and continuing education, reject cultural stereotyping of women to provide equal access in all subjects, including science and sport, and provide for the specific needs of girls and women, including childcare, sanitation, accommodation and remission of fees reflecting women's smaller financial resources.*
- *Introduce employment legislation to ensure women's economic rewards reflect their academic achievements and abilities, and to end the discrimination that still holds back women at work.*

*And to ensure equality in decision-making on education, to commit to achieving equal representation of women in Commonwealth Parliaments, Governments and inter-governmental agencies.*

Signed

House of Commons Commonwealth Day March 14<sup>th</sup> 2011