



Women Deliver: A Conference that Delivers on Girls' and Women's Rights

By Kasey Robinson, GenderHopes

From 16th to 19th May 2016, Women Deliver (WD) hosted their fourth global conference in Copenhagen, Denmark. Following previous successes, including Women Deliver's launching conference in 2007, Washington DC in 2010 and Malaysia in 2013 [this year's conference did not disappoint](#). For readers less familiar with this organisation, Women Deliver is 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 rights.

While GenderHopes representatives could not attend this auspicious event, we followed all the latest updates and news through the WD Live Virtual Conference and various social media sources.

One of the most exciting moments of the conference was [the announcement by the Gates Foundation to commit \\$80 million over the next three years to close the data gap on gender](#). This is an extraordinary development for the future of gender equality. The desire and new initiatives for gender equality become however limited when we consider that women are barely represented in statistics. How can a society move forward when it doesn't know what its girls and women are doing? Only with investments such as the one by the Gates Foundation can we begin to tackle some of the major issues facing girls and women in the developing world. With such projects firmly in place, governments will be able to take action and create policies that will improve and benefit the lives of women. Such measures, as illustrated during the conference, will reap unprecedented social and economic rewards in numerous nations across the globe.

As Melissa Gates said, ["We know women and girls do count. And they are counting on us"](#), GenderHopes is a strong supporter of such initiatives and is confident about the positive impact this investment will have on local and national policies.

Another highlight from the conference was the interview with [Helen Clark](#), Administrator of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Clark discussed the importance of governments and laws in the process of change for gender equality and female advancement. Of specific interest was her focus on a 'bottom up movement' in making women agents for change. Clark described young women and girls as ["people who can make the most positive contribution to society"](#). Her comments are particularly noteworthy in the context of this conference. Women

Deliver is unique in the sense that it recognises and includes the entire spectrum of participants that will make female empowerment a reality. While there is a huge responsibility for governments and lawmakers to address the challenges facing women in the modern world, Clark expressed a sentiment often overlooked: that women at every level of society can contribute to this movement. Only when women recognise their potential and feel empowered, will we witness a widespread change to a brighter future.

There were other significant interviews conducted during the conference, from Hollywood superstar Jessica Biel discussing her thoughts on women's bodies to messages from the Youth Pre Conference. Dot Youth Organisation founder [Yemurai Nyoni](#) expressed how he believes young people can really inspire change.

Nyoni's captivating words, "[my strength doesn't depend on the weakness of others](#)" exploded on social media, as for so many this simple statement concludes the entire message and importance of the fight towards gender equality.

Hillary Clinton in her closing speech re-emphasised her now famous statement that women's rights are human rights, and each level of society has a responsibility to protect that. While many often get the feminist message distorted, it is not about a rearrangement of power, but a goal that allows all members of society to access the same power. It is a message that gives young boys and girls the same hopes and aspirations for the future and the same opportunities to reach them.

Women Deliver is fearlessly leading the way towards more gender equality and empowered women and girls. At GenderHopes, we firmly believe that after the inspiring conference in Copenhagen, many will be glad to follow.

About the author

Kasey is a University of Birmingham graduate. She has a BA Hons Degree in English and American and Canadian Studies. She has been working in Monaco for the past three years on various projects, and will move to London to begin her MSc Gender course at LSE in October 2016.