



# Socialist International Women

## SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL WOMEN

08 March 2015

### International Women's Day

#### STATEMENT

The Socialist International Women (SIW) strongly supports International Women's Day (IWD) and the essential core principles it represents of upholding women's rights, promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. IWD is an opportunity to honour all women past and present who have worked tirelessly for the rights of women and to celebrate women's vital contributions to their families, communities and countries. It is also an occasion to re-focus on current challenges women are experiencing and recommit to taking urgent action to implement improvements to gender equality as well as the health, education, personal safety and human rights of women and girls.

The first specific Women's Day was organised by the Socialist Party of America and held in New York on 28 February 1909. This day honoured the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union strike of 1908 when 15,000 women marched through New York protesting against long working hours and low pay and demanding voting rights. From that starting point international support for the women's movement grew. The United Nations (UN) began celebrating IWD on 8th March during UN International Women's Year 1975. Today, IWD is celebrated around the world and is an official holiday in a number of Member States.

IWD 2015 is particularly significant as Member States will commemorate the 20th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and in September will evaluate the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action will also be the keynote theme for the 59th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. This iconic document has provided a definitive framework for the implementation of radical improvements in the rights of women and is as relevant today as it was 20 years ago.

SIW declares its support for the UN theme for IWD 2015 of 'Empowering Women – Empowering Humanity: Picture it!'. This theme aligns with the SIW core belief that empowering women is a vital step towards true gender equality to the benefit of all.

SIW also passionately believes that the solidarity of both men and women is a vital factor in driving forward changes in gender perception, behavioural norms and legislation for the protection and support of the rights of women and girls. Fully utilising the power of solidarity can transform hopes and dreams into realities of gender equality and the honouring of human rights which enrich and empower not just women, but all of humanity.