

SA's Standard Bank commits to global #HeForShe movement

 By Leigh Andrews

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Standard Bank has firmed up South Africa's commitment to UN Women's #HeForShe movement. Here's why it's so impactful, especially in Africa, and how you can go beyond clicktivism and get involved, too.



UN Women's #HeForShe solidarity movement, mostly known for global goodwill ambassador for UN Women, Emma Watson's strong speech at the campaign's launch on 20 September 2014 and at numerous events and iterations since then.

The launch was one of the year's most 'catalytic moments on Twitter, and last week saw the [#HeForShe Impact Summit](#), with the likes of Queen Rania of Jordan, fellow global goodwill ambassador Anne Hathaway and activist actor Winston Duke calling for action in achieving gender equality.

Welcoming the solutions, Anne Hathaway said:

“ Today, the men on stage with me are here because they are throwing a huge rock through the glass ceiling. ”

It's on all of us to make that change – male and female, public and private sector. But it's a mammoth task to undertake if you don't know where to begin. To help with this, HeForShe unveiled three specific solutions to achieve gender equality around the world:

1. The HeForShe [Proven Solutions Report](#), on how to achieve parity in global leadership – based on the roadmap set out by PwC Network, which moved from 18% female global leadership representation to 47% in 15 months.
2. The HeForShe [Emerging Solutions for Gender Equality Report](#), offering 34 concrete emerging solutions for closing the gender pay gap, ending gender-based and sexual violence, and achieving parity across society.
3. HeForShe also unveiled its first [Male Allies Guide for Gender Equality](#), based on a programme pioneered by Finland's government to enlist army conscripts and prevent violence against women.

“ During [#UNGA](#), our Global Goodwill Ambassador Anne Hathaway shared a necessary message during the [#HeForShe](#) Summit: pic.twitter.com/Z41y8dVNxy— Phumzile Mlambo (@phumzileunwomen) [September 28, 2018](#) ”

And then, of course, there's the fact that SA's own former deputy president Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka is now the visionary leader of UN Women, the UN entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

SA's involvement and broader continental impact

A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.



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Now, SA has a stronger voice on the platform, with [IOL](#) confirming Standard Bank group chief executive Sim Tshabalala as a thematic champion for gender equality.

Tshabalala joins the likes of Justin Trudeau, prime minister of Canada and Dr Jim Yong Kim, president of the World Bank Group, as fellow thematic champions, dedicated supporters of gender equality and women's empowerment, serving as public champions for change.

More than just ambassadors, they're putting action first and foremost in implementing game-changing policies and concrete actions towards gender parity.



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Tshabalala said:

“ Achieving gender equity is a moral duty, a business imperative and just plain common sense. Women embody half the world's talent, skill and energy – and more than half of its purchasing power. So every sensible business leader must be committed to achieving gender equity in their company and to contributing to gender equity in the societies in which we operate. ”

The good news? Progress *is* being made, slowly but surely. While [Standard Bank](#) confirms that Namibia and South Africa both score in the Top 20 in the WEF global report on gender equality, after closing 78% to 76% of their gender gaps, but sub-Saharan Africa still displays a wider range of gender gap outcomes than practically any other region.



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Looking at how other countries fare, in the first week, at least one man in every single country of the world had made the #HeForShe commitment. Names aside, it's not binary and anyone can add their voice.

Don't just click or like, commit to making a change!

A quick look at the HeForShe site at time of writing showed there are currently 1,946,656 members and 1,303,985,779 actions and counting – my commitment makes me lucky number 1,946,656 – with Rwanda leading the commitment leader pack by country when I clicked through.

But this isn't just a form of clicktivism.



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Instead, joining gives you access to hands-on ideas about what you can do for the equality issues that matter to you, whether that's by supporting victims of online trolling in the realm of [education](#), breaking taboo on topics of [sexual health](#), calling out offensive advertising stereotypes under [identity](#), confronting biased speech at [work](#), asking potential [victims of violence](#) if they need help or speaking out for diverse representation in [politics](#) as well as inspiration in seeing what other HeForShe advocates are doing across the globe.

There's a commitment to telling your own story, as well as calling out and breaking down social norms and barriers to well-being, so that we may all be free to be our true selves.

“ Everything you do sets something in motion. That's why we've joined the UN Women [#HeForShe](#) movement as a global Thematic Champion to accelerate the progress of gender equality. [#MoreThanABank: https://t.co/JvEctdErmi pic.twitter.com/KloBGkKjpo](#)— Standard Bank Group (@SBGroup) [September 27, 2018](#) ”

As a result, Standard Bank has committed as follows:

- Reaching parity in executive positions
- Improving representation of women in executive positions from its current 32% to 40% by 2023
- Lifting representation of women on the board from 22% to 33% by 2021
- Increasing representation of women chief executives in its Africa regions network from 10% to 20% by 2021
- Standard Bank South Africa also aims to improve representation of women in executive positions from the current

35% to 40% by 2021

Watch the quick overview below for more of the [#HeForShe](#) story:

And if you haven't yet done so, make your commitment at [HeForShe.org](https://www.bizcommunity.com/heforshe.org) and follow the [#HeForShe hashtag](#) for all the latest updates.

Read more

- It's up to everyone: [Standard Bank](#)
- Standard Bank stands in solidarity with women: [IOL](#)
- Queen Rania, Anne Hathaway, and Winston Duke make global call to action for gender equality at the HeForShe Impact Summit: [HeForShe](#)

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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