



Statement Minister-President Wever-Croes van Aruba

Madame Chair,

I am deeply honored to deliver the statement of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, together with the Minister of the Netherlands, to the Commission on the Status of the Women as the first female Prime-Minister of Aruba. Our diverse Kingdom comprises the Netherlands and three Caribbean islands.

Without the progress made in gender equality, I am certain that I would not be here with you today, in fact globally only close to 1/3 of countries have had female heads of governments. I am very much aware that if current rates were to be maintained in the future, the overall gender gap for Latin America and the Caribbean is projected to close in 74 years.

We need to see women as equals and equally valued in their contributions to our society. Women are an essential part of all advancements in our community. In line with this, my government has committed to implementing the SDGs as a dynamic and comprehensive framework, in line with our vision and the principle of leaving no one behind; which includes a specific focus on our women and girls.

For my own country Aruba, the SDG framework helps us ensure that the principles of equality, enhancing opportunities for women and ending gender based violence, which are the three main tenets of my gender policy, receive the necessary attention.

As is the case with our peers in the region and across the world, economic growth on our small island remains a challenge, in this context I am therefore focusing on achieving higher levels of productivity, through diversification, through entrepreneurship and innovation as important pillars for our economic development, and the inclusion of women and girls, including in the spheres of science and technology.

My government is launching a project providing a dedicated space for girls in technology “girls lounge” and the creation of the STEM faculty at the University of Aruba that will also encourage participation of women in these fields at the local level.

Statement Minister van Engelshoven

Each of the countries of our Kingdom has its very distinct characteristics, and it’s just that diversity that defines and unites us.

In a similar way, every woman or girl is unique..

Migrant women, single mothers, lesbian and trans women, women with a disability or a minister from Aruba or the Netherlands, for example:

we are all different. Our experiences are our own and it is important to recognize, acknowledge and embrace these differences.

They are an essential part of who we are, we should value them. Even celebrate them.

Because they define and unite us.



I quote our champion of feminism Audre Lorde: 'It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences'

But... there are forces in this world that try to use our differences against us, in order to weaken us,

Forces that aim to challenge our solidarity.

This worries me greatly.

We must not allow this to happen.

Not only because it's wrong,

but also because diversity is a huge benefit to society:

- it makes corporations more profitable,
- organisations more creative and
- societies more cohesive and just.

Honourable delegates,

We cannot allow others to weaken our cause. Let our diversity unite us instead, and make us strong!

We have shown the world that it's possible: with the Women's Marches, the MeToo-movement, and also at this year's CSW, we see so many women bringing about change.

To take our fight for gender equality to the next level we must join forces and include all women and girls, men and boys.

So I would like to conclude with an appeal to all of you: Let us move forward in unity and combine our efforts, to ensure progress, and finally close the gender gap altogether.

Thank you!