

#BalanceforBetter beyond Women's Day 2019 as the global gender pay gap widens

By Leigh Andrews

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International Women's Day was celebrated on Friday, 8 March with the 2019 campaign theme of #BalanceforBetter. With reports that the global gender pay gap is actually widening despite increased awareness of the issue, we need to go beyond giving working women flowers and cupcakes in recognition of their contributions on the day.



UN Women's 2019 International Women's Day image, as created by [Kelly Bjork](#).

Last year, International Women's Day saw social media newsfeeds turning purple – literally – as that's the colour for equality and justice.



#FairnessFirst: Why social media went purple for International #WomensDay

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Taking that a step further this year, Standard Bank [changed the colour of its logos](#) on the majority of its digital platforms from blue to magenta, the colour of the UN Women's HeForShe brand.

Think 'gender equality' every day, not just on International Women's Day

Unfortunately, true gender equality in the workplace is still a long way off, despite increased awareness of the need for better balanced, diverse teams as well as the need to decrease the wage pay gap.

Because awareness is nothing without action.



#FairnessFirst: SA's Standard Bank commits to global #HeForShe movement

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SA's only #HeForShe thematic leader, Standard Bank Group chief executive Sim Tshabalala adds: "Achieving gender equity is not only a fundamental human right but a business imperative."

"Women embody half the world's talent, skill and energy - and more than half of its purchasing power. Every sensible business leader must be committed to achieving gender equity in their company and to contribute to this cause in the societies in which they operate."



#FairnessFirst: Addressing that gender equality pay gap, day by day

Leigh Andrews 16 Apr 2018



Hopefully, this is the year we will see drastic action taken in this regard, because as the [International Women's Day website](#) says:

“ From grassroots activism to worldwide action, we are entering an exciting period of history where the world expects balance. We notice its absence and celebrate its presence. Balance drives a better working world. Let's all help create a #BalanceforBetter. ”

Why we need to #BalanceforBetter

In this light, just last week saw the launch of Ad-women.com, a global register of female talent linked to the advertising industry.



Global register of female talent in ad industry launches

7 Mar 2019



Co-founder Lina Franzon explains:

“ Women always have been a minority amongst the creatives at the agencies we've worked at, and female CEOs were something rare as we entered the industry. Today it's finally beginning to change in Sweden but looking at it from a global perspective, men still dominated the highest paid positions. ”

In this light, *AdWeek* reports that the launch comes on the heels of [WPP's 2018 gender wage gap report](#) in the UK, which revealed that its median pay gap actually increased to 14.9% last year from 14.5% in 2017.

[UN Women](#) confirms that while a little more than a decade remains to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 5 on gender equality, all indications show that at the current pace of change, closing the global gender gap will take a staggering 108 years, and 202 years for economic gender parity.

So it'll take more than just a day of renewed focus to get this right.

“ Here we go again...!! [#HappyWhatever @MsTakenFashion pic.twitter.com/G3oP9cvk7L](#)— Kriti Sanon (@kritisanon) [March 8, 2017](#) ”

Locally, [Standard Bank](#) shares a promising angle, as Namibia and South Africa both score in the Top 20 in the [WEF global report on gender equality](#) at the moment, having closed 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.

True state of the 'equal rights, equal pay' movement

But did you know that only six countries, all outside Africa, currently give women and men equal rights, according to the World Bank's 'Women, Business and the Law 2019' report?

Hence the launch of the [W-Suite platform](#) for advocacy and action, particularly aimed at bringing woman into key leadership and operational roles, particularly in the C-Suite across organisations, markets and governments, with an explicit goal of increasing the number of female CEOs of firms listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) by 10% before 2025.

That's a firm step in the right direction as we need not just better representation but better pay, and to make an effort not just on [#InternationalWomensDay](#), but every day – that's what [#BalanceforBetter](#) is all about.

[Click here](#) to download the WEF's Global Gender Gap Report 2018, as published in December 2018, and follow the W-Suite movement on [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#) for the latest updates.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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