

PRIME MINISTER
ICELAND

Reykjavik, 4 January 2016

Excellency,

As you are aware, September 2015 saw the adoption of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, one of which is focused solely on "Gender Equality" and the empowerment of women. In 2015 we furthermore celebrated the 20th anniversary year of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. These are opportunities to renew our efforts and commitment towards a full realization of the advancement of women and their rights.

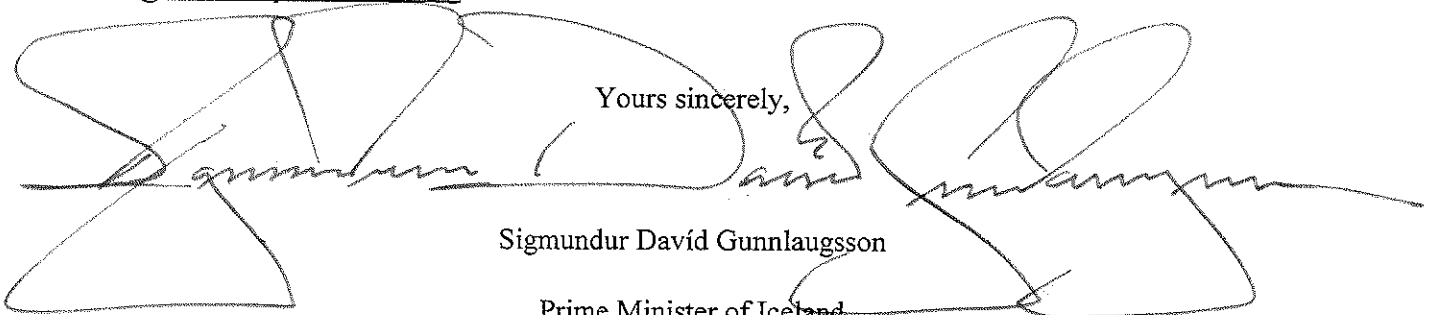
Iceland currently has a proven track-record in advancing gender equality and this has been instrumental in the progressive development of our society. Strong, independent and courageous women and a culture of equality are mostly to thank for this success. Recently, I have had the pleasure of contributing to a global campaign of great significance towards furthering gender equality in politics. I am honoured to be part of a group of leaders that have contributed to the Women in Parliaments (WIP) Global Forum's campaign "**We need more women in Parliaments and as political leaders because...**". The campaign involves inviting male world leaders to share their contributions on why it is important to have more women in parliaments and as political leaders. It is in this context that **I invite you to join me in supporting this campaign**, by providing a short statement which can be included in a collection of testimonials from male Heads of State and Government, for the empowerment of women in politics. This statement would take the form of your completion of the sentence: "**We need more Women in Parliaments and as political leaders because...**". Your contribution would then be added to the WIP campaign brochure and exhibitions alongside other esteemed world leaders.

With this letter you will find the preliminary draft of the first collection of testimonials that has been put together to be distributed at various high-level events in order to support a greater gender balance in politics. This first collection was displayed in the form of an exhibition, in the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Mexico** (7-9 October). The updated collection will be displayed in January 2016 in the context of the **World Economic Forum in Davos**, and at the **Summit of the African Union**, also taking place in January 2016. Space has been reserved for a display in March 2016 at the **UN Headquarters during the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York**.

WIP recognizes the value of the voices of the leading men in politics, in promoting and advancing the political empowerment of women. For these reasons, it would be an important testimony of your commitment to add your statement to the already impressive collection of testimonials from Heads of State and Government. This campaign reminds us that gender equality matters greatly to all of us – women and men.

The WIP Secretariat remains at your disposal for further information and can be reached via mail@womeninparliaments.org

Yours sincerely,



Sigmundur Davíð Gunnlaugsson

Prime Minister of Iceland