



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC

The United Nations bears a special responsibility for defending human rights globally. UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on women, peace and security are important tools in ensuring the human rights of women in conflict situations and including women in peace efforts. Experiences around the world have shown us that participation of women in peace processes and in the development of post-conflict societies enhances sustainable solutions.

We must continue supporting adaptation of these Resolutions in all international contexts. This was also the message at the International Colloquium on Women's Empowerment which was held in Monrovia, Liberia in March. We need concrete actions to make a real difference in the lives of many women and girls who suffer violations, including sexual violence, that cannot go unpunished. Systematic rape in armed conflict should be classified as an illegal weapon of war.

I hope that you will have a very successful meeting. It is important that we – the international community – work together to prevent and act in response to the cruel crimes and ensure that women do play a prominent role in promoting peace and stability around the world.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tarja Halonen".

Tarja Halonen  
President of the Republic of Finland