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## **The Breaking News English.com Resource Book**

“1,000 Ideas & Activities For Language Teachers”

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/book.html>

## **UN boss not doing enough for women**

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**8 March, 2006**

## **THE ARTICLE**

### **UN boss not doing enough for women**

Women from around the world reminded United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan yesterday that he is not doing enough for them. A global coalition of women's groups wrote a letter of complaint to the UN boss. In it, they scolded him for his lack of progress in moving towards equality. They said they were "disappointed" that he had paid little more than "lip service" to forwarding women's rights. They used a good example that even in the UN, very few women have high-level posts. The letter stated that despite a lot of talk, the issue equality "still hasn't made it on to the big agenda of UN reform".

Very little progress has been made in the ten years since the 1995 Beijing conference on women's rights. There is still only "token representation" of women on important committees in the UN. Many women have highlighted the need for change at the top of the UN itself. They said: "We need new and innovative leadership and the way to get that is by ensuring we reach fifty-fifty women and men in all decision-making positions." A sign that things are not moving in this direction is that a man replaced Ms. Louise Frechette last week as the UN deputy secretary general.

## WARM-UPS

**1. STRENGTHS:** Write down the names of five women who are or have been important in your life. In pairs / groups, talk about the strengths of these women. What have you learned from them? What would you like to thank them for?

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

*United Nations / Kofi Annan / coalitions / women's groups / letters / progress / women at the top / women's rights / change / innovation / leadership / men*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

**3. WORKING WOMEN:** With your partner(s), talk about who can do these jobs best – men or women:

- Leader of a country
- Soldier
- Chef
- F1 racing car driver
- Teacher
- Comedian
- CEO
- Religious leader
- Nurse
- Clown

**4. WORLD WOMEN:** In pairs / groups, write a score of 1 (very bad) to 10 (wonderful) based on what you think it is like to be a woman in these countries:

_____ USA	_____ Saudi Arabia
_____ China	_____ Russia
_____ India	_____ Thailand
_____ Brazil	_____ Japan

**5. TWO-MINUTE DEBATES:** Have these following fun debates with your partners. Students A agree with the first argument; students B, the second. Change partners and topics every two minutes.

- a. Women are smarter than men. Vs. Men are more intelligent.
- b. Women belong in the home. Vs. Women should work outside the home.
- c. Women have a more comfortable life. Vs. Men have a more comfortable life.
- d. It's better to be born a man. Vs. It's better to be born a woman.
- e. Women can do everything men can do. Vs. Men can do much more than women.
- f. Men should campaign for men's rights. Vs. Men already have too many rights.
- g. The world's best leaders are men. Vs. Rubbish.
- h. Women will never be happy. Vs. Women are happier than men.

**6. EQUALITY:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "equality". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

## BEFORE READING / LISTENING

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| a. UN boss Kofi Annan is not doing enough to help women.               | T / F |
| b. A global coalition of women's groups complained about his inaction. | T / F |
| c. Women said Mr. Annan only paid "ear service" to women's rights.     | T / F |
| d. The rate of women taking high-level UN posts has increased.         | T / F |
| e. Much progress has been made on women's rights in the past decade.   | T / F |
| f. A campaigner called for more innovative leadership at the UN.       | T / F |
| g. Mr. Annan said another 50 women were needed for key UN positions.   | T / F |
| h. The new UN deputy secretary general, named last week, is a woman.   | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |                |             |
|----------------|-------------|
| a. global      | advancing   |
| b. coalition   | underlined  |
| c. forwarding  | question    |
| d. posts       | making sure |
| e. issue       | positions   |
| f. token       | worldwide   |
| g. highlighted | minor       |
| h. innovative  | heading     |
| i. ensuring    | partnership |
| j. moving      | original    |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- |                                    |                       |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| a. A global coalition of           | progress              |
| b. a letter                        | in this direction     |
| c. lack of                         | has been made         |
| d. the issue                       | women's groups        |
| e. the big agenda of UN            | for change at the top |
| f. Very little progress            | of equality           |
| g. "token                          | reform                |
| h. women have highlighted the need | leadership            |
| i. We need new and innovative      | of complaint          |
| j. things are not moving           | representation"       |

## WHILE READING / LISTENING

**GAP FILL:** Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

### UN boss not doing enough for women

Women from around the world \_\_\_\_\_ United Nations General Secretary Kofi Annan yesterday that he is not doing \_\_\_\_\_ for them. A global coalition of women's groups wrote a letter of \_\_\_\_\_ to the UN boss. In it, they \_\_\_\_\_ him for his lack of progress in moving \_\_\_\_\_ equality. They said they were "disappointed" that he had paid little more than "lip service" to \_\_\_\_\_ women's rights. They used a good example that even in the UN, very few women have high-level posts. The letter \_\_\_\_\_ that despite a lot of talk, the issue of equality "still hasn't made it on to the big \_\_\_\_\_ of UN reform".

*complaint*  
*scolded*  
*reminded*  
*stated*  
*agenda*  
*towards*  
*enough*  
*forwarding*

Very little \_\_\_\_\_ has been made in the ten years since the 1995 Beijing conference on women's rights. There is still only "\_\_\_\_\_ representation" of women on \_\_\_\_\_ committees in the UN. Many women have highlighted the \_\_\_\_\_ for change at the top of the UN itself. They said: "We need new and innovative leadership and the \_\_\_\_\_ to get that is by ensuring we reach fifty-fifty women and men in \_\_\_\_\_ decision-making positions." A \_\_\_\_\_ that things are not moving in this direction is that a man \_\_\_\_\_ Ms. Louise Frechette last week as the UN deputy secretary general.

*need*  
*token*  
*replaced*  
*way*  
*sign*  
*progress*  
*important*  
*all*

## **LISTENING**

Listen and fill in the spaces.

### **UN boss not doing enough for women**

Women from around the world \_\_\_\_\_ United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan yesterday that he is not doing enough for them. A global \_\_\_\_\_ of women's groups wrote a letter of complaint to the UN boss. In it, they \_\_\_\_\_ him for his lack of progress in moving towards equality. They said they were "disappointed" that he had paid little more than "lip service" to \_\_\_\_\_ women's rights. They used a good example that even in the UN, very few women have high-level posts. The letter stated that \_\_\_\_\_ a lot of talk, the issue equality "still hasn't made it on to the big \_\_\_\_\_ of UN reform".

Very little \_\_\_\_\_ has been made in the ten years since the 1995 Beijing conference on women's rights. There is still only "\_\_\_\_\_ representation" of women on important committees in the UN. Many women have \_\_\_\_\_ the need for change at the top of the UN itself. They said: "We need new and innovative leadership and the way to get that is by \_\_\_\_\_ we reach fifty-fifty women and men in all \_\_\_\_\_ -making positions." A sign that things are not moving in this \_\_\_\_\_ is that a man \_\_\_\_\_ Ms. Louise Frechette last week as the UN deputy secretary general.

## AFTER READING / LISTENING

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words '**lack**' and '**progress**'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. STUDENT "WOMEN'S RIGHTS" SURVEY:** In pairs / groups, write down questions about women's rights.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

**6. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- |             |               |
|-------------|---------------|
| • reminded  | • ten years   |
| • coalition | • token       |
| • progress  | • committees  |
| • lip       | • top         |
| • example   | • fifty-fifty |
| • agenda    | • sign        |

## **DISCUSSION**

### STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. Do you think Kofi Annan does enough for women?
- c. Do you think the UN is a good place to work for women?
- d. What do you think the United Nations should do about women's issues?
- e. What do you know about International Women's Day?
- f. Do you think there should also be an International Men's Day?
- g. What do you think should happen on International Women's Day?
- h. What would you do for women's rights if you were head of the UN?
- i. Do you think the world is moving towards greater equality between the sexes?
- j. What do you think Kofi Annan will say about the letter from the coalition of women's groups?

### STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. How would the world be different if there was perfect equality between men and women?
- d. How would your life be different if there was perfect equality between men and women?
- e. What do you do for women's rights?
- f. What responsibility does the UN have to be a role model of equality?
- g. Is there sexual equality in your country?
- h. Are you surprised the UN is accused of paying "lip service" to women?
- i. What question would you like to ask Kofi Annan and what do you think his answer would be?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

**AFTER DISCUSSION:** Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?



## SPEAKING

**EQUALITY:** In pairs / groups, write down the things that need to change in your country for women to be equal. Use the points in the left hand column to help you. In the right hand column, write down the barriers to these changes happening.

	Changes needed	Barriers to change
Image of women		
Education		
Language		
Workplace		
Children's upbringing		
Family roles		
Other _____		

Change partners and talk about what you wrote to your previous partner(s).

Discuss the likelihood of the barriers to change disappearing in your country.

## **HOMEWORK**

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find information about International Women's Day (March 8<sup>th</sup>). Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

**3. HERO:** Make a poster about a woman you admire. Show your poster to your classmates in the next lesson. Which poster(s) did you like most and why?

**4. ROLE REVERSAL:** Yesterday you changed roles and became a member of the opposite sex for the day. Write about your experience. What did you do? What differences did you enjoy or dislike? Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did everyone have similar experiences?

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

- a. T      b. T      c. F      d. F      e. F      f. T      g. F      h. F

### SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                |             |
|----------------|-------------|
| a. global      | worldwide   |
| b. coalition   | partnership |
| c. forwarding  | advancing   |
| d. posts       | positions   |
| e. issue       | question    |
| f. token       | minor       |
| g. highlighted | underlined  |
| h. innovative  | original    |
| i. ensuring    | making sure |
| j. moving      | heading     |

### PHRASE MATCH:

- |                                    |                       |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| a. A global coalition of           | women's groups        |
| b. a letter                        | of complaint          |
| c. lack of                         | progress              |
| d. the issue                       | of equality           |
| e. the big agenda of UN            | reform                |
| f. Very little progress            | has been made         |
| g. "token                          | representation"       |
| h. women have highlighted the need | for change at the top |
| i. We need new and innovative      | leadership            |
| j. things are not moving           | in this direction     |

### GAP FILL:

#### UN boss not doing enough for women

Women from around the world **reminded** United Nations General Secretary Kofi Annan yesterday that he is not doing **enough** for them. A global coalition of women's groups wrote a letter of **complaint** to the UN boss. In it, they **scolded** him for his lack of progress in moving **towards** equality. They said they were "disappointed" that he had paid little more than "lip service" to **forwarding** women's rights. They used a good example that even in the UN, very few women have high-level posts. The letter **stated** that despite a lot of talk, the issue of equality "still hasn't made it on to the big **agenda** of UN reform".

Very little **progress** has been made in the ten years since the 1995 Beijing conference on women's rights. There is still only "**token** representation" of women on **important** committees in the UN. Many women have highlighted the **need** for change at the top of the UN itself. They said: "We need new and innovative leadership and the **way** to get that is by ensuring we reach fifty-fifty women and men in **all** decision-making positions." A **sign** that things are not moving in this direction is that a man **replaced** Ms. Louise Frechette last week as the UN deputy secretary general.