



Glenda Jackson MP

International Women's Day
5th March 2007

Thursday March 8th is not just another Thursday. It is International Women's day. There will be a debate in the House of Commons, as there will be in many (if not all) legislative assemblies around the world. I will be attending an event in my constituency, marking this world-wide acknowledgement of the importance of our gender to the development of well-being, not only for our own families, communities and countries, but the whole of Planet Earth. That importance is a resource which is, far too often, taken for granted or not even recognised.

A woman's lot, certainly in the UK, has undoubtedly improved. We can train to be doctors, lawyers, air-traffic controllers, bus drivers, and we can join the police, fire-brigade, the armed forces – none of these choices of career were open to us until comparatively recently, except in times of national emergencies perhaps.

And, most important of all, we have the right to vote. We've seen the present Government introduce practical measures to enable us to fulfil not only all professional ambitions but also our family obligations. We still have some way to go, however, before women enjoy real equality from cradle to grave. Indeed, the title of Thursday's debate "Women Justice and Gender Equality in the UK" is a clear indication of how far we have yet to travel. And the situation for millions of women world-wide suffering from HIV, AIDS, poverty, war, lack of education, even the most basic of healthcare or clean water, will not improve without help from the rest of us. There is much for us to do, both at home and abroad, but as I firmly believe that if you need something done, give it to a busy woman, and the world will be, eventually, a real decent home for all of us.