

# *Women's Rights Advocates Meet in Mexico to Empower Women*

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Mexico City, January 26 (RHC-Xinhua) -- Women's rights specialists and activists from around the world gathered at a forum Monday in Merida, the capital of Mexico's state of Yucatan, to discuss the roles of women, especially in the knowledge and innovation economy.

When inaugurating the forum, Mexican Foreign Minister Claudia Ruiz-Massieu said that "women are at the forefront of social change. There can be no sustainable development or justice, without real gender equality."

Ruiz-Massieu said that the creative and transformational power that women could bring to the economy was an often unused resource, noting it would be impossible to achieve sustainable development without fully unlocking the capacity of women and girls.

While promoting gender equality, Ruiz-Massieu also focused on the important role that communications and information technology can play in giving rise to real opportunities for women and their communities.

Yucatan State Governor Rolando Zapata Bello paid homage to women's contributions to knowledge and innovation, praising their entrepreneurial spirit, scientific talent and cultural creativity.

"There can be no economic wealth, no added value and no social progress, if these are not built on the bedrock of equality," he said.

Ana Guezmes, head of UN Women in Mexico, also spoke of the importance of equality for women. "We are convinced that, if we work together, we will be capable of creating a truly 50/50 planet, where women have fully equal opportunities," she said.

Some NGO representatives said that governments, NGOs, the private sector and academia needed to find common public policies that would allow women to access the crucial environments of the knowledge economy, while creating job opportunities for women.

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