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A strong world needs strong women

March 8 is International Women's Day. It is a special day to celebrate the achievements of women in Ontario and all over the world.

It's a day to reflect on the many successes we've had on the road towards women's equality and prosperity — and on the work that still needs to be done.

Women have made great strides in acting as role models in boardrooms, community centres, academia, and politics.

But we need to do more.



We know that there is injustice when there is a gender wage gap. We know there is inequality when women continue to live with the threat of violence.

Our government is making systemic changes to break down barriers and create opportunity.

Through our Domestic Violence Action Plan, we've created programs aimed at increasing public awareness of woman abuse and improving supports to victims.

Our Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign focuses on recognizing the warning signs of abuse so we all know what to do to help. It is now in over 140 communities across Ontario. And we've launched similar campaigns in francophone and Aboriginal communities.





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Our communities need to see strong women in leadership roles. Women who are making a difference. Women who act as role models for our young people.

Role-models make a big difference. Our government launched the Leading Girls and Leading Women / Building Communities awards to celebrate Ontario's women leaders and achievers.

I encourage you to contact your local MPP about future nominations.

All of us have women in our lives who have made us who we are – women who have inspired us to do better, to speak out, or to advocate for change.

This International Women's Day, let's celebrate these women.

Take a moment to send a letter to a woman who has made a lasting contribution in your community – or a woman who has touched your life in a special way.

It could be a teacher, a parent, or perhaps it's someone you've never even met but that you have always thought of as a strong leader and mentor. Someone who's made a difference – and inspired you to make a difference too.

Let's take this International Women's Day to thank a woman for the lasting contribution she's made.

Happy International Women's Day.

Deb Matthews is Ontario minister responsible for women's issues.