

## KNOCK OUT ROUND 2 MOTION:

# Significant progress is being made towards achieving gender equality in the 21st century

Gender equality matters because it shapes who has power, safety, opportunity and a voice in society. It affects education, work and health, and when inequality persists, it harms not just individuals but whole communities - fuelling poverty, exclusion and violence.

Today, gender equality is discussed across a wide range of settings, from classrooms, sports pitches and workplaces, to social media, government and on the international stage. Many point to major global milestones in the 21st century: more girls in education, stronger anti-discrimination laws, greater visibility of women in politics and leadership, and a growing conversation about gender identity and rights worldwide.

Supporters of the motion may argue that these changes represent genuine, measurable progress. In many countries, laws have strengthened to protect human rights, and public awareness of gender inequality has grown. Efforts to combat gender-based violence, expand access to education and healthcare, and reduce workplace and economic discrimination have brought long-standing injustices into public debate.

On the other hand, critics argue that progress towards gender equality is uneven, fragile and dependent on context. In many countries, economic inequality and political instability continue to limit progress. Many affirm that women and gender minorities remain disproportionately affected by unpaid care work and limited access to political and economic power, also facing a high risk of violence and discrimination. Furthermore, progress can be reversed by conflict, climate shocks, humanitarian crises or shifts in national leadership. Global averages can mask deeper inequalities based on class, race, disability, sexuality and geography, raising questions about who is truly benefiting from reported progress.

So, is the 21st century striding towards gender equality or are we mistaking increased visibility for victory? Where there has been progress, who has benefited, and who continues to be left behind? Is significant progress being made towards achieving gender equality in the 21st century?

*Debate it!*

