

United Nations, Sept 20 (AP) - The United Nations agency promoting equality for women is launching a global campaign to get 100,000 men and boys involved in the fight to achieve gender equality.

UN Women said the campaign, spurred by the unfulfilled U.N. goal of achieving gender equality by 2015, will begin Saturday when Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon activates an online map to track the progress of countries in promoting equality of the sexes. Ban will be accompanied by British actress Emma Watson, a goodwill ambassador for the agency who played Hermione Granger in the "Harry Potter" films.

According to UN Women, the "HeForShe" campaign hopes to get each of the 100,000 initial supporters to bring at least 100 other men and boys into the campaign to end the persistent inequalities faced by women and girls globally.

"Our main goal is to increase the involvement of men and boys in the struggle to achieve gender equality," Phumzile Mlambo Ngcuka, head of UN Women, said in an interview with The Associated Press.

"It cannot be that women will do this alone," she said. "It remains an important women's issue that requires the whole of society, men and women, to be involved."

Mlambo Ngcuka, who announced the "HeForShe" campaign in March, called on the world's fathers, sons, husbands and brothers to stand up and support equality for women in all areas of life.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union says less than 22 percent of parliamentarians are women. There are also still 100 countries with laws that prevent women's meaningful involvement in the economy, Mlambo Ngcuka said.

She said projections indicate that if things don't change it will take 95 years to achieve gender equality, and by 2020 and some 140,000 girls will be forced into child marriage.

UN Women said supporters of the HeForShe campaign include actors Matt Damon, Patrick Stewart, Antonio Banderas and Kiefer Sutherland, and South African Nobel peace laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu.