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NEW YORK, NY 10007

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** March 1, 2016

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## **MAYOR DE BLASIO APPOINTS AZADEH KHALILI AS FIRST EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF COMMISSION ON GENDER EQUITY**

**NEW YORK**—Today Mayor Bill de Blasio appointed Azadeh Khalili as the first Executive Director of the Commission on Gender Equity. Created last July through an Executive Order by the Mayor, the Commission is an advisory body that works across City agencies to help achieve the Mayor’s commitment to reduce gender-based inequity and build a safer, more inclusive and economically mobile city for women and girls. As Executive Director, Khalili will oversee the City’s first-ever Commission on Gender Equity, leveraging the power of City government to expand and increase opportunity for all New Yorkers regardless of sex, gender, or sexual orientation in order to build a city that is safe and free of discrimination.

“Gender equity is central to the fight against inequality – which is why I created the first-ever Commission on Gender Equity and why I am proud to appoint Azadeh Khalili today as its inaugural Executive Director,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “Azi has connected countless New Yorkers to City services and spent decades in the field of human rights. Her passion and commitment to NYC will serve us well as we work to create a city that is fair, safe and full of opportunity for all – regardless of sex, gender or sexual orientation.”

“I first met Azadeh Khalili more than 15 years ago and was moved by her deep understanding of social justice. Over the years she has developed an incredible set of skills and shown immense dedication to pursuing socioeconomic change. Azi, at the helm of CGE, will bring vigor and focus,” said **First Lady Chirlane McCray, co-Chair of the Commission on Gender Equity**. “Women, girls, transgender and intersex New Yorkers have an advocate who will fight fiercely and effectively for them as we combat gender-based discrimination and injustice.”

“The City Council’s Young Women’s Initiative is proud to work with the Commission on Gender Equity to push equality, opportunity and access for all New Yorkers, regardless of gender and sexual orientation. Newly appointed CGE Executive Director Azadeh Khalili brings decades of policy and advocacy experience to the table and will be an invaluable partner in the fight to dismantle institutional barriers for our young women and girls,” said **Speaker Melissa Mark Viverito, Honorary Commissioner of CGE**.

“I congratulate Azadeh Khalili on her appointment to Executive Director of CGE,” said **Maya Wiley, Counsel to the Mayor and M/WBE Director**. “Every day we make strides toward a city that is more equal and just for all New Yorkers. But far too often we see women, girls, intersex and transgender people face discrimination and barriers to leading full, healthy and productive lives. By establishing the Commission on Gender Equity, we will develop a comprehensive approach to breaking down those barriers across City government.”

“I am honored to lead the City’s first-ever Commission on Gender Equity,” said **Azadeh Khalili, Executive Director of the Commission on Gender Equity**. “The Mayor and First Lady have brought together a powerhouse team to take on a fundamental source of inequality and bias that still haunts our institutions. I am eager to work with Commission members, the Counsel to the Mayor, the First Lady, and leaders from across sectors to find solutions for women, girls, intersex, and transgender people. Together we will move forward.”

“Azadeh’s unwavering service to women’s and human rights throughout the years, her keen insight into government, and her commitment to the people of New York City will make her a strong and effective leader in our mission to deepen respect and equality for all across the five boroughs,” said **Silda Palerm, co-Chair of the Commission on Gender Equity**.

The de Blasio Administration is committed to fighting inequality across the five boroughs, and has placed gender at the center of this mission. The Commission on Gender Equity is charged with supporting City agency initiatives by utilizing a gender lens to review policies and their impact on women, transgender and intersex individuals, and men in order to achieve greater gender fairness in this city. The Executive Director of the Commission on Gender Equity reports to the Counsel to the Mayor Maya Wiley.

New York City has made significant strides towards gender parity over the last two years, including:

- [Establishing](#) a historic partnership with UN Women and becoming the first American city to join the United Nation’s Safe Cities Initiative
- [Creating](#) first-ever maternal mental health services through ThriveNYC, a mental health initiative led by First Lady Chirlane McCray
- [The historic](#) roll-out of Universal Pre-K
- [Expanding](#) paid sick leave to many of the lowest paid industries that employ disproportionate amounts of women
- [Making](#) unprecedented investments in domestic violence response and education through the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence
- [Signing](#) legislation to provide six weeks of fully paid parental leave to City employees
- [Establishing](#) the City’s Commission on Human Rights as the first human rights agency in any major U.S. city to certify U and T visas for immigrant victims of crime and human trafficking
- Appointing and promoting an unprecedented number of women to leadership positions in agencies and City Hall

"Equal pay for equal work must become a reality in every corner of our country, starting right here in New York City. I am excited about the appointment of Azadah Kalili to lead the Commission on Gender Equity. I look forward to working with Azadah and the de Blasio administration to advance progress for women in the workforce and make our city stronger and more fair for all," said **Public Advocate Tish James**.

“New York has always led the way towards ensuring equality for all Americans – no matter gender, sex, or sexual orientation – but we still have work to do,” said **Representative Sean Patrick Maloney**, New York’s first openly gay member of Congress. “Creating the Commission on Gender Equity, and appointing Azi Khalili as the first Executive Director is a substantial step towards combatting gender discrimination in New York City. Working together with Mayor de Blasio and the Commission on Gender Equity we can make sure my two daughters, and the millions of women and girls in New York, grow up in a community safe from inequality and injustice.”

"Gender equity is essential for NYC's growth and wellbeing. As a legislator and a mother, I am pleased to see City resources directed towards combating sexism and transphobia. I am proud to support every member of my community and to live in a city that prioritizes gender equity," said **State Assembly Member Michele Titus**.

"Establishing the Commission on Gender Equity is a reflection of the City's commitment to provide equal opportunity and prosperity for all New Yorkers. I want to congratulate the inaugural Executive Director and I look forward to the work ahead," said **State Assembly Member Nily Rozic**.

"Ending discrimination and inequity is government's highest purpose," said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer**. "New York State has a crucial place in the history of the women's equality movement, and as our state's largest city, we must keep finding new ways to advance the cause of gender equity. I look forward to working with Ms. Khalili and the Commission to do just that."

"It is no secret that inequality disproportionately affects women, transgender, and intersex individuals. We applaud Mayor de Blasio for creating the City's first-ever Commission on Gender Equity, and we look forward to working with Executive Director Azadeh Khalili to give all New Yorkers equal treatment regardless of their gender or gender identity," said **Council Members Helen Rosenthal and Laurie A. Cumbo, co-Chairs of the Women's Caucus of the New York City Council**.

### **About Azadeh Khalili**

Azadeh Khalili is an innovative manager and policy maker with extensive experience in government, philanthropy and the non-profit sector. She has worked for over 20 years to advance progressive policies and to create better conditions for marginalized communities, including in the field of human rights, sexual and reproductive rights, and the rights of low-wage workers.

Since 2014, Khalil has served as the City's Executive Director of Language Access Initiatives at the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs. Khalili was instrumental in strengthening language access initiatives, expanding We Are New York (WANY) conversation groups, designing and directing the first ever Immigrant Women's Fellowship at the Mayor's Office, and building the Ethnic and Community Media Directory. Previously, Khalili was the Deputy Commissioner for the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs. Prior to joining the Mayor's Office, Khalili was a Fellow with the Annie E. Casey Foundation and spent nearly a decade as founding CEO of Youthbase, an agency that provided technical assistance to all New York City public high schools on youth-centered HIV/AIDS education. Prior to founding Youthbase, she worked on behalf of justice-involved individuals at the Fortune Society.

Khalili has been on the Board of Directors of numerous organizations including Adhikaar and the NY Community Media Alliance, and is the recipient of dozens of awards recognizing her commitment to human rights. Throughout her decades in the field, Khalili has conducted numerous leadership development and women's empowerment workshops and fellowships domestically and internationally. Born in Iran, Khalili holds a B.A. from the New School University and an M.P.H. from Columbia University. She was a Charles H. Revson Fellow at Columbia University. Khalili lives in Brooklyn with her husband and seven year old daughter.

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