

# The Full Participation Report



The Full Participation Project  
**NO CEILINGS**



BILL & MELINDA  
GATES foundation

*Women and girls should be able to lead the lives we want, wherever we're born and wherever we live. This simple view is the reason that we collaborated on this report. We hope that the data in it can be used to help get us there.*

Data is knowledge, and knowledge is power—in this case, the power to help women and girls build a better future. Data can tell us where they have made the most progress, and we can use this information to achieve even more in the years to come. Data can also identify areas where progress has been lacking. It's frustrating to see, in the pages of this report, how many of these areas there are—but when we identify the biggest gaps we have what amounts to a blueprint for action. It is time to act, to build on the progress we've made, to finish the job. My hope is that when you finish reading this, you will have a better sense of what you can do to make a difference in the next 20 years.

*Melinda Gates*

Twenty years ago, at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, I was proud to join leaders from 189 nations and representatives from civil society organizations to declare with one voice that “women’s rights are human rights.” Two decades later, we’re taking stock of where women and girls have made gains and where gaps remain. This report shows that progress is possible—and that more work remains. I hope it serves as a wake-up call, and also as a call to action for us all. We now have even more evidence that advancing the full participation of women and girls expands prosperity and stability for entire societies. So unlocking the potential of women and girls around the world is both the right thing to do and it is also the smart thing to do. It is time to renew our effort to address the great unfinished business of the 21st century. Onward!

*Hillary Rodham Clinton*

Ultimately, this report is about the future. The data about the past 20 years are important because they help us understand what has driven progress or impeded progress for women and girls, which importantly, will help us better focus our efforts in the years ahead to ensure more women and girls are able to chart their own lives. We hope this report and data visualization will both motivate today’s global leaders and inspire the next generation of leaders. We need all the creativity, ingenuity and fearlessness possible to help devise innovative solutions to finish the work that remains. Young voices, ideas and leadership are vital if we are to make the full participation of women and girls a reality in the 21st century.

*Chelsea Clinton*

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Unit

WORLD Policy  
Analysis Center

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## The Economist Intelligence Unit

*Lead project team:* Leo Abruzzese, Lucy Hurst, Atefa Shah

*Core project team:* Alice Nawfal, Jimena Serrano, Katherine Stewart

*Data advisory:* James Love, Alex Selby-Boothroyd

*Data management:* East West Systems Inc., Ivy Research Council, Carolina Fonseca, Marcus Krackowizer, Mara Roberts, Meredith Stricker

*Editorial support:* Janet Sullivan

*Layout and design:* Mike Kenny, Jennifer Kiamzon

*Contributing writers and researchers:* Leila Butt, Snigdha Dewal, Jenny Drezin, Marie O'Reilly, Lisa Stewart, Attiya Zaidi

## WORLD Policy Analysis Center

*Lead project team:* Jody Heymann, Amy Raub

*Editorial support:* Aleta R. Sprague

*Core project team:* Megan Arthur, Tina-Marie Assi, Adele Cassola, Nicolas de Guzman Chorny, Alison Earle, Isabel K. Latz, Jessica Looze, Nicholas Perry, Kristen Savage, Parama Sigurdsen, Willetta Waisath, Elise Vaughan Winfrey

## Maternal and Child Health Equity Research Program

*Research team:* Efe Atabay, Magda Barrera, Gabriella Kranz, José M. Mendoza Rodríguez, Gonzalo Moreno, Arijit Nandi, Ilona Vincent

## The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

*Lead project team:* Jenny Lah, Haven Ley, Katelyn Sabochik, Catherine St. Laurent

*Core project team:* Allison Branham, Katy Button, Becky Clifford, Susi Collins, Gargee Ghosh, Heather Hirschy, Teresa Lin, Renee Lueck, Sheila Miller, Jena Raysbrook, Carol Welch

## The Bill, Hillary & Chelsea Clinton Foundation

*No Ceilings Director:* Terri McCullough

*Lead project team:* Jennifer Klein, Rachel Tulchin (lead advisor on data and research), Rachel Vogelstein

*No Ceilings Team:* Kamyl Bazbaz, Katie Dowd, Francesca Ernst, Jane Farrell, Nicole Grunwald, Sarah Henning, Kate Kunzman, Bari Lurie, Capricia Marshall, Terri McCullough, Thomas Moran, Maura Pally, Eleanor Peters, Rosa Po, Emily Young

## Expert panel and additional peer reviewers

*Special Advisor:* Ambassador Melanne Verveer (Georgetown University)

*Expert panel participants and Data2X technical advisory group:* Mayesha Alam (Georgetown University), Shaida Badiee (Open Data Watch), Judith Bruce (Population Council), Victoria Budson (Harvard University), Mayra Buvinic (United Nations Foundation), Kathy Calvin (United Nations Foundation), Beatrice Duncan (UN Women), Gaelle Ferrant (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development), Louise Fox (University of California - Berkeley), Katherine Fritz (International Center for Research on Women), Rebecca Furst-Nichols (United Nations Foundation), Amanda Glassman (Center for Global Development), Caren Grown (World Bank), Masako Hiraga (World Bank), Valerie Hudson (Texas A&M University), Sarah Kambou (International Center for Research on Women), Jeni Klugman (Harvard University), Ruth Levine (Hewlett Foundation), Claudia Garcia Moreno (World Health Organization), Keiko Nowacka (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development), Sonia Palmieri (UN Women), Mario Piacentini (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development), Emily Courey Pryor (United Nations Foundation), Stephanie Psaki (Population Council), Joann Vanek (Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing), Angelic Young (Institute for Inclusive Security), Saadia Zahidi (World Economic Forum)

*Peer consultations:* Sanam Anderlini (International Civil Society Action Network), Iris Bohnet (Harvard University), Ann Mei Chang (USAID), Martha Chen (Harvard University), Riet Groenen (UN Women), Alessandra Guedes (Pan-American Health Organization), Kristiina Kangaspunta (UNODC), Sunita Kishor (Demographic Health Surveys), Carla Koppell (USAID), Zsuzsanna Lippai (Institute for Inclusive Security), Joan Lombardi (Bernard van Leer Foundation), Sarah Macharia (Global Media Monitoring Group), Anju Malhotra (UNICEF), Shobha Ramprasad (Nike Foundation), Papa Seck (UN Women), Alex de Shirbinin (Earth Institute), Rebecca Winthrop (Brookings Institution), Renee Wittemyer (Intel)

*Peer reviewers:* Catherine Bertini (Syracuse University), Mayra Buvinic (United Nations Foundation), Caren Grown (World Bank), Jeni Klugman (Harvard University), Ruth Levine (Hewlett Foundation)

*Research contributors from the University of Washington, Department of Global Health, START Program:* Emily Deichsel, Pam Kohler, Erica Lokken, Lisa Manhart, Jonathan Muir

*Writing and editing:* Kate Childs Graham, Molly Shapiro



# About This Report

*For further information, please contact:*

**Clinton Foundation**

Francesca Ernst, Communications Manager  
[fernst@clintonfoundation.org](mailto:fernst@clintonfoundation.org)

**Gates Foundation**

Katelyn Sabochik, Communications Officer  
[katelyn.sabochik@gatesfoundation.org](mailto:katelyn.sabochik@gatesfoundation.org)

**The Economist Intelligence Unit**

Atefa Shah, Project Manager  
[atefashah@eiu.com](mailto:atefashah@eiu.com)  
Matthew Hanratty, Press Officer  
[matthewhanratty@economist.com](mailto:matthewhanratty@economist.com) / +44 (0)20 7676 8546

**WORLD Policy Analysis Center**

Amy Raub, Principal Research Analyst  
[araub@ph.ucla.edu](mailto:araub@ph.ucla.edu)  
Carla Denly, Director of Communications  
[cdenly@support.ucla.edu](mailto:cdenly@support.ucla.edu)/310-825-6738

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The  
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Intelligence  
Unit

WORLD Policy  
Analysis Center

# Introduction

There has never been a better time to be born female. Women and girls today have a much greater chance to live healthy and secure lives, and their fundamental human rights are now protected by law in many countries throughout the world. Women and girls have access to educational and work opportunities that were previously unimaginable. More and more, their needs and contributions are considered and measured, and more and more they have a seat at the table, able to act as full participants in determining our collective future.

The historic United Nations (UN) Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 was a critical turning point in this progress.<sup>1</sup> In Beijing, delegates from 189 nations agreed to a Platform for Action that called for the “full and equal participation of women in political, civil, economic, social and cultural life.”<sup>2</sup> These leaders agreed to an ambitious action plan spanning 12 areas, including health, education, violence, the economy, and the environment. At that event, the world spoke with one voice to declare: “Women’s rights are human rights, and human rights are women’s rights.”

## We’ve achieved significant gains, but major gaps remain

On the 20th anniversary of that historic event and the eve of the adoption of a new set of global development goals, it is time to assess the gains for women and girls and the gaps in progress over the past two decades.

We have seen significant gains since 1995. Advances have been made in legal rights—through international agreements, groundbreaking UN resolutions, and constitutional and legislative change. Health and education for women and girls have improved significantly. The rate of maternal mortality has nearly halved. The global gender gap in primary school enrollment has virtually closed. These achievements prove that progress is possible.

In other areas, the pace of change has been far too

slow. Security is tenuous for women and girls, even in their own homes. Critical barriers—including legal restrictions and limited access to resources—undermine women’s economic opportunities. And women’s voices are still underrepresented in leadership positions—from legislatures to boardrooms, from peace negotiations to the media.

Even in those areas where we have seen progress, too many obstacles limit the full participation of women and girls. Many countries still lack laws safeguarding women’s rights and even where laws are strong, implementation and enforcement often lag. Social norms, an equally important influence on gender equality, are hard to change. And recent gains for women and girls have not been shared by all. Geography, income, age, race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, and cultural norms, among other factors, remain powerful determinants of a woman’s chance at equal rights and opportunities. For example, a girl born in Latin America has a far greater chance of finishing secondary school than a girl born in Sub-Saharan Africa. A woman in the United States may struggle to care for a newborn and keep her job while a woman in Europe is entitled to paid maternity leave. Women and girls who face compounding challenges, like poverty and isolation, are most at risk and may drop out of school, marry young and live in fear of violence. While we have made progress over the past 20 years, not all women and girls have seen these gains in their own lives—and much unfinished business remains.

## We stand at a critical moment

The year 2015 marks the 20th anniversary of the Beijing conference and Platform for Action, as well as the 15th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on the impact of war on women and their role in resolving conflict. Importantly, it is also the year that UN member states will adopt a new set of global sustainable development goals. The experience of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) suggests that setting priorities, identifying goals, and measuring results matter. We have made substantial progress in areas such as maternal mortality, HIV/AIDS, and primary school enrollment—all issues that were measured and tracked

<sup>1</sup> The stage was set 20 years earlier in 1975, at the World Conference on Women in Mexico, where the United Nations (UN) Decade for Women was launched and a Plan of Action was adopted by 133 nations; this was followed by the 1979 adoption of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the 1980 World Conference on Women in Copenhagen, and the 1985 World Conference on Women in Nairobi. <http://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/intergovernmental-support/world-conferences-on-women>

<sup>2</sup> Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/>



by the MDGs. These advances tell us that with commitment, resources, political will, and accountability, progress is possible.

## The opportunities to accelerate progress have never been greater

Movements to support gender equality—from the grassroots to the world stage—are active around the world. A vibrant civil society is advocating for change and holding governments to account. In many countries, leaders are taking action—by speaking out, adopting laws and policies, and increasing financial investment to support gender equality. Institutions such as the UN, World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and regional bodies including the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (APEC) and the African Development Bank, among many others, are working to support progress. Twenty-first century tools, particularly technology, can accelerate change, and the engagement of a diverse range of partners—including the private sector and religious leaders—allows us to leverage more talent and resources. And more men and boys are taking a stand for gender equality.

## When women and girls succeed, everyone benefits

A growing body of evidence demonstrates that gender equality is not only important to women and girls—it is critical to communities, economies, and societies. When women and girls are healthy and educated, their children and families prosper. Research shows that investing in women and girls has multiplier effects: Even one extra year of schooling beyond the average can increase women's wages by about 10 percent, and a World Bank study suggests that raising the share of women with secondary education is linked to increases in economic growth.<sup>3,4</sup> Educating women causes a ripple effect, leading to increased educational attainment across generations among both girls and boys. Women with more education have a lower chance of dying during pregnancy and childbirth and have healthier children; half of the reductions in child mortality between 1970 and 2009 can be attributed to increased educational

attainment in women of reproductive age.<sup>5,6</sup> Women's access to quality health information and services, particularly family planning, is essential to broader economic and health development goals.<sup>7</sup>

The benefits of expanding women's economic opportunities are equally clear. When women participate in the economy, poverty decreases and gross domestic product (GDP) grows. It is estimated that closing the gap in women's labor force participation across OECD countries will lead to average GDP gains of 12 percent by 2030, including about 10 percent in the United States, almost 20 percent in Japan and Korea, and more than 22 percent in Italy.<sup>8</sup> The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) forecasts that if women farmers had the same access to productive resources as men, total agricultural output would rise, and the number of hungry people in the world could be reduced by up to 150 million.<sup>9</sup>

In addition, women's leadership strengthens both public and private institutions by bringing a diversity of perspectives to the table. Women's participation in legislatures, corporate boards, and peace negotiations can affect policy choices and make institutions more representative and inclusive.<sup>10</sup> A study of 31 countries found that a higher female presence in legislatures is correlated with higher perceptions of government legitimacy among both men and women.<sup>11</sup> Research also shows a positive correlation between the number of women on boards and corporate profits.<sup>12</sup> Evidence shows

3 G. Psacharopoulos and H. A. Patrinos, "Returns to Investment in Education: A Further Update," Policy Research Working Paper, World Bank, September 2002. <http://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/pdf/10.1596/1813-9450-2881>.

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6 E. Gakidou et al., "Increased Educational Attainment and Its Effect on Child Mortality in 175 Countries between 1970 and 2009: A Systematic Analysis," *The Lancet* 376, No. 9745 (September 2010): 959–74, doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(10)61257-3; E. Bbaale, "Female Education, Labour-Force Participation and Fertility: Evidence from Uganda," The Centre for the Study of African Economies, 2011. <http://www.csae.ox.ac.uk/conferences/2011-EDiA/papers/847-Bbaale.pdf>

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9 Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, "The State of Food and Agriculture, Women in Agriculture: Closing the Gender Gap for Development," 2011, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i2050e/i2050e00.htm>; Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, "FAO at work 2010–11: Women—Key to Food Security." <http://www.fao.org/docrep/014/am719e/am719e00.pdf>

10 M. Hallward-Driemeier et al., "Women's Legal Rights Over 50 Years: Progress, Stagnation or Regression?," 2013. <http://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/pdf/10.1596/1813-9450-6616>

11 L. A. Schwert-Bayer and W. Mishler, "An Integrated Model of Women's Representation," *The Journal of Politics* 67, No. 02 (2005): 407–28, doi:10.1111/j.1468-2508.2005.00323.x

12 N. Carter and L. Joy, "The Bottom Line: Corporate Performance and Women's Representation on Boards," Catalyst, October 2007. <http://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/bottom-line-corporate-performance-and-womens-representation-boards>



that when women participate in peace processes, they are more likely to raise issues such as human rights, security, justice, employment, and health care, which are fundamental to long-term peace and security.<sup>13</sup> Advancing full participation for women and girls is certainly a matter of human rights, fairness, and justice. But it is also a strategic imperative—one that we cannot afford to overlook in our efforts to promote prosperity and security in the 21st century.

## About this report

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the *No Ceilings* initiative of the Bill, Hillary & Chelsea Clinton Foundation joined forces to assess the evidence on the gains and gaps in progress for women and girls over the past 20 years. We asked: What do women's and girls' lives look like around the world 20 years after the Beijing conference? What barriers remain? What do the numbers tell us? How have laws and policies progressed over the same period? What information do we still need in order to assess the status of women and girls?

The foundations worked with The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) and the WORLD Policy Analysis Center at UCLA (WORLD) to examine the performance of 197 countries and Beijing Platform signatories and develop a picture of how the lives of women and girls have changed since the Beijing conference. The EIU conducted a thorough review of data series from trusted international sources, multilateral institutions, and major survey organizations. WORLD systematically analyzed national constitutions, laws, and policies to develop comparable measures of legal and policy progress in all nations.<sup>14</sup> Wherever possible, data for this report were collected over a complete 20-year time frame, and include regional or country snapshots in some areas. A full description of their methodologies is available in the Appendices.

Our efforts to aggregate data on women and girls made clear that key facts remain missing. While progress on data collection on women and girls has improved since 1995, few data are collected in some areas—for example, on women's earnings in developing countries and on the number of women living in poverty. Women's economic contributions are not fully measured, and their unpaid work at home is not valued in national accounts. Violence against women is chronically under-reported, and information on laws addressing gender-based violence is incomplete as well. Not enough is known

<sup>13</sup> International Crisis Group, "Beyond victimhood: women's peacebuilding in Sudan, Congo and Uganda," Africa Report, 112(28), 2006. <http://www.crisisgroup.org/-/media/Files/africa/horn-of-africa/Beyond%20Victimhood%20Womens%20Peacebuilding%20in%20Sudan%20Congo%20and%20Uganda.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> A complete explanation of methodology is available in Appendices A and B.

about the environmental risks women face. In an era increasingly dominated by the Internet and mobile phones, few facts are available on whether—and how—women can access technology. A fuller assessment of gender data gaps can be found in the Appendices.<sup>15</sup> Even with incomplete information, however, the picture that emerges opens important windows into the lives of half the world's population.

The findings are presented in this report and thanks to Fathom Information Design are available in a visual representation at [www.noceilings.org](http://www.noceilings.org).

This report has three chapters: **Unlocking Potential**, **Ensuring Security**, and **Creating Opportunity**.

**Unlocking Potential** examines the fundamental needs that must be fulfilled to allow women and girls to reach their full potential—including human rights that guarantee autonomy in family and civic life, and building blocks such as health and education. While these issues are important throughout a woman's life, the foundation is laid in childhood and adolescence, so this section also highlights the particular risks to girls that impose lifelong consequences, such as gender-biased sex selection, adolescent pregnancy, and child marriage.

**Ensuring Security** looks at threats to the security of women and girls in three areas. First, it reviews available data on violence that women face at home and in their communities. Second, it highlights conflict, focusing not only on sexual violence, but also on the status of women's participation in resolving conflict. Third, it looks at environmental threats, including climate change and natural disasters, given the role that women play in managing natural resources and the disproportionate effects that environmental challenges have on them, as well as their role in planning and responding to environmental disruption.

**Creating Opportunity** examines women's and girls' ability to participate in economic, political, and social life. In the economic sphere, it considers constraints on participation and the repercussions of those limitations for women and their families, as well as for productivity and growth. It also looks at the ability of women and girls to have a voice in political and civic life—to exercise power and influence to shape society. Finally, it evaluates two areas that have changed markedly since 1995—technology and the media—and considers whether women are able to access these tools, which are critical to full participation in the 21st century.

<sup>15</sup> See Appendix D for a complete list of gender data gaps.

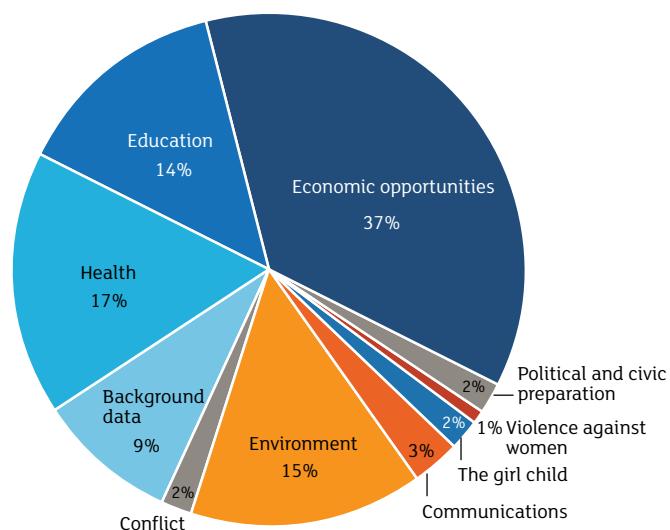


Figure 1

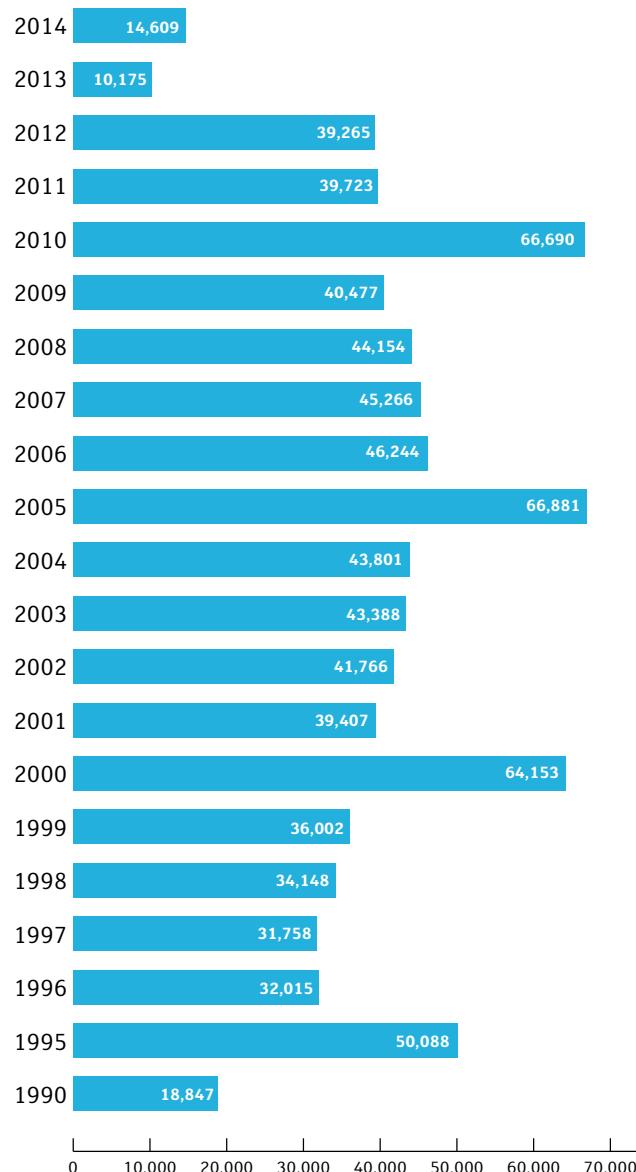
## The No Ceilings database

Includes approximately 850,000 data points on 1,000 indicators across 10 categories from 1995-2014\*

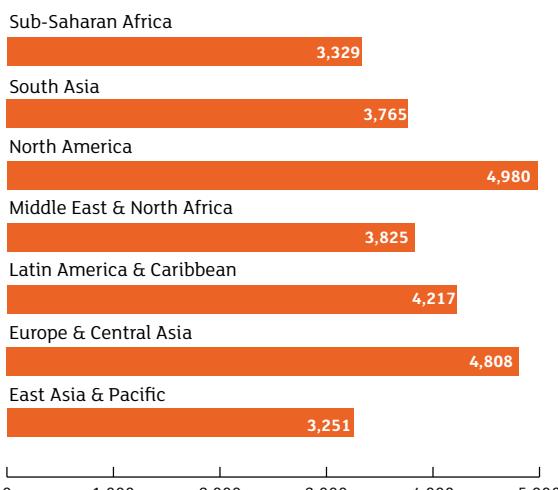
### Distribution of datapoints by thematic category



### Number of datapoints per year



### Average number of datapoints per country in each region (1995-2014)\*\*



\*Indicators show one series of data on a particular topic, e.g. female youth literacy rate. For each indicator, a datapoint is the information on that issue for one country in one year, e.g. female youth literacy rate for Egypt in 2012 was 86 percent. Database includes ~35K datapoints on constitutions, laws and policies from the WORLD Policy Analysis Center and MACHEquity and ~815K datapoints compiled by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).

\*\*Database covers 197 countries and signatories to the Beijing Platform for Action.

## Chapter One

# Unlocking Potential

To unlock the full potential of women and girls, their essential needs must be met—in family and civic life, health, and education. These basic building blocks are critical not only to individual women and girls, but also to their families and communities. We have seen significant progress in these areas over the past 20 years. Maternal mortality has nearly halved. Children are enrolled in primary school in record numbers, and the gender gap has nearly closed globally. But progress has been uneven: Disparities in health and education exist both among and within countries, and obtaining rights on paper does not always mean that women and girls see change in their own lives. This section outlines both the gains and gaps in progress in legal autonomy, health, and education, including unique risks to girls.

## LEGAL RIGHTS AND AUTONOMY

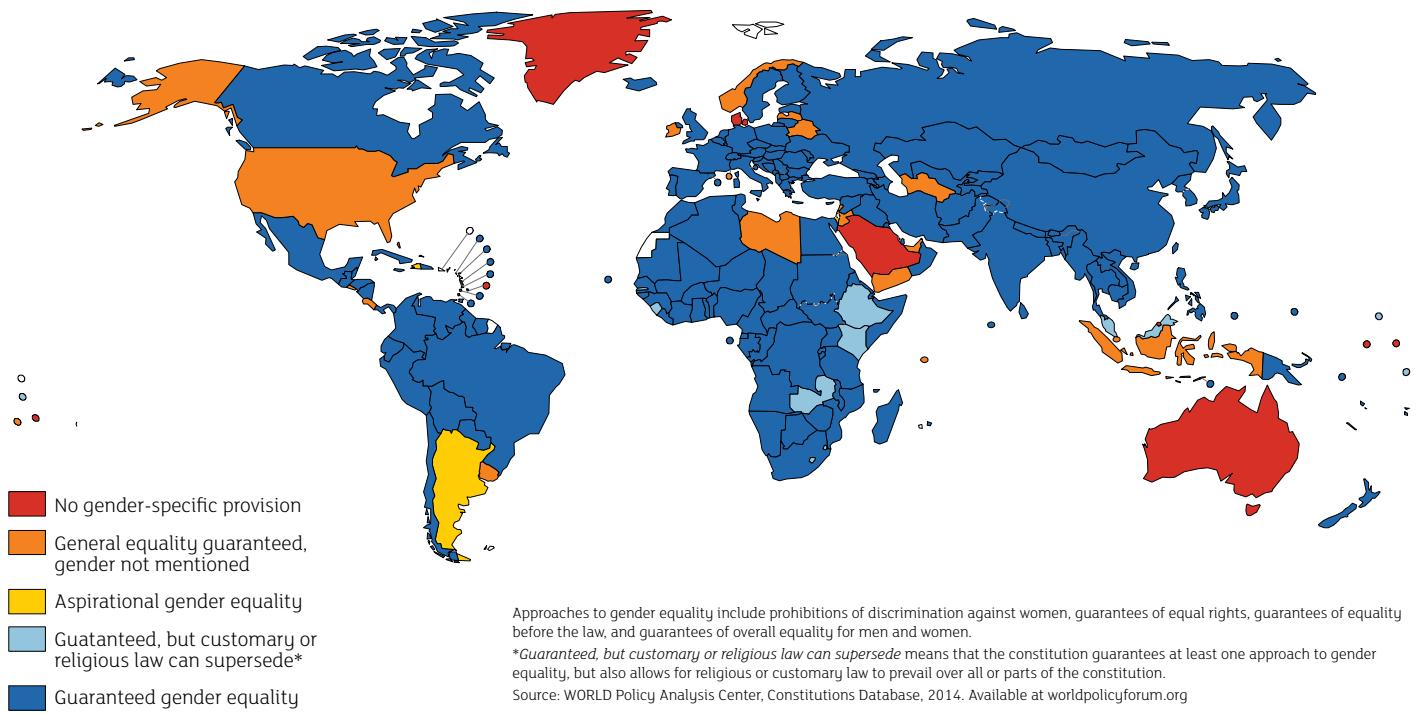
**Legal guarantees of gender equality have expanded over the last two decades—but rights on paper too often go unenforced in practice.**

International agreements—such as the UN’s Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), ratified by all but seven UN member states, and the Beijing Platform for Action, adopted by 189 nations in 1995—have proven powerful tools to establish women’s human rights and promote gender equality.<sup>16</sup> Both agreements call on countries to implement rights in domestic law, which many governments have done. More than 95 percent of the 56 national constitutions that have been adopted since 1995 include guarantees for gender equality, compared

<sup>16</sup> The seven UN member states that have not ratified CEDAW are: Iran, Palau, Tonga, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and the United States.

Figure 2

### National constitutional protections of gender equality



with just 79 percent enacted before then. Today, more than four of five constitutions have some mechanism to guarantee gender equality. Eleven countries, however, still allow customary or religious law to supersede some or all constitutional provisions, which can compromise women's rights, and 32 constitutions do not explicitly guarantee protection of equal rights for men and women.<sup>17</sup>

The past two decades have demonstrated the practical importance of constitutional foundations for women's rights. In Turkey, for example, the women's rights movement in 2001 successfully lobbied for the same minimum age of marriage for boys and girls based on gender equality provisions in the national constitution.<sup>18</sup> In Nigeria, in 1997, a court invalidated a customary law banning women from inheriting property, based on the constitution's prohibition on gender discrimination.<sup>19</sup>

Yet in too many places, laws still perpetuate inequality for women and girls in family and civic life, and legal protections that are on the books often go unenforced. Today, nine countries legally restrict women's freedom of movement, and 27 percent treat women's ability to pass citizenship to a child or spouse differently from men's.<sup>20</sup> Even where strong laws exist,

implementation and enforcement often lag behind, particularly in areas where social norms and culture remain difficult to change. For example, in 61 countries representing one fourth of the global population (including most of Sub-Saharan Africa and Middle East and North Africa), nearly 50 percent of men, and 30 percent of women, believed that women should not have the right to initiate a divorce.<sup>21</sup>

## HEALTH

### Women and girls are healthier than they were 20 years ago

Globally, women and men are living longer than ever. Women's life expectancy at birth has risen from an average of 69 years in 1995 to 73 years in 2012.<sup>22</sup> Men's rose slightly more from a lower starting point, from 64 to 69 years over that same period.<sup>23</sup> The increase in female longevity in low-income countries has been even greater, increasing 14 percent from 1995 to 2012.<sup>24</sup> Some countries saw even more striking improvements: In Ethiopia, life expectancy for women rose from 51 to 65

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21 J. Klugman and L. Hanmer, "Expanding Women's Agency: Where Do We Stand?" *Feminist Economics*, unpublished at press time.

22 World Bank; derived from female life expectancy at birth from sources such as: UN Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), statistics on World Population Prospects; UN Statistical Division, "Population and Vital Statistics Report"; Eurostat, demographic statistics; Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Statistics and Demography Programme; U.S. Census Bureau, International Database; and census reports and other statistical publications from national statistical offices. <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.FE.IN>, accessed January 2015.

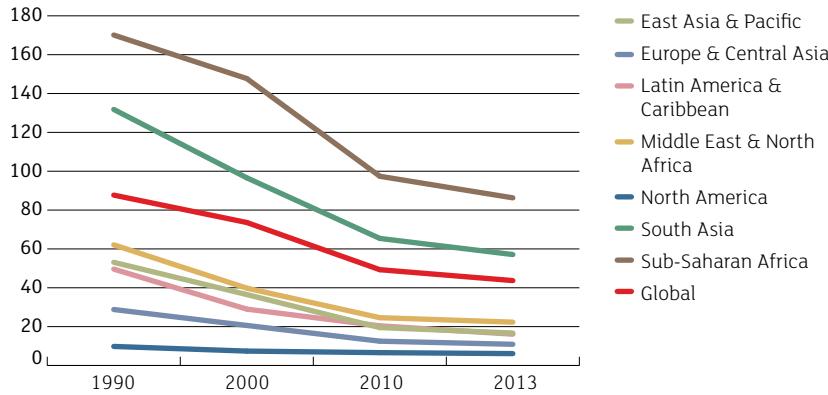
23 See above for description of data. <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.MA.IN>

24 See Appendices for World Bank country income group definitions. See also World Bank; derived from female life expectancy at birth from sources such as: UNFPA, statistics on World Population Prospects; UN Statistical Division, "Population and Vital Statistics Report"; Eurostat, demographic statistics; Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Statistics and Demography Programme; U.S. Census Bureau, International Database; and census reports and other statistical publications from national statistical offices. <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.FE.IN>, accessed January 2015.

Figure 3

### Under 5 mortality rate, female

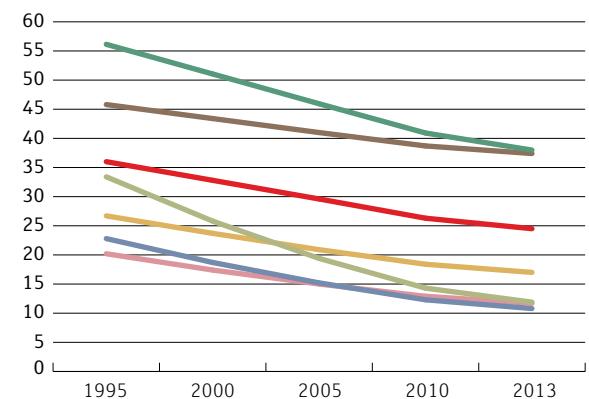
(Deaths per 1,000 births)



Source: World Bank, estimates for "Under 5 mortality rate" developed by the UN Inter-agency for Child Mortality Estimation, estimates for "Malnutrition prevalence" are based on Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates (UNICEF/WHO/World Bank)

### Malnutrition prevalence (height for age)

(% of children under age 5)



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## Improvements in water and sanitation

Much progress has been made in improving access to adequate sanitation and clean drinking water since 1995. The share of the global population with access to improved water sources reached 89 percent in 2012, up from 79 percent in 1995.<sup>1</sup> The percentage of the world's population with access to improved sanitation stood at 64 percent in 2012, a 12-point increase since 1995.<sup>2</sup> Still, an estimated 2.5 billion people worldwide do not use toilets, and a little more than 1 billion continue to defecate outdoors.<sup>3</sup>

Although use of water and sanitation are measured at the community or household level, we know that women and girls are disproportionately affected by a lack of access. They are more likely to bear the burden of gathering water, and they may risk

assault when they have to travel to relieve themselves.

Collectively, women in 25 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa spend at least 16 million hours each day collecting drinking water, while children spend 4 million hours and men spend 6 million hours.<sup>4</sup> Evidence shows that having nearby water sources can help girls go to school: One study in Ghana found that the proportion of girls aged five to 15 who attended school increased by 2 percentage points on average when the time they spent hauling water was cut in half, and another study found that girls' school enrollment rates increased by about 10 percentage points in Yemen and by about 12 percentage points in Pakistan with a one-hour reduction in time spent walking to a water source.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> WHO-UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation, accessed May 2014. See No Ceilings database, [www.noceilings.org](http://www.noceilings.org)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> WHO-UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation, "Progress on Drinking Water and Sanitation, 2014 Update," 2014, p. iv. [http://www.who.int/fileadmin/user\\_upload/resources/JMP\\_report\\_2014\\_webEng.pdf](http://www.who.int/fileadmin/user_upload/resources/JMP_report_2014_webEng.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> UNICEF, WHO, "Progress on Drinking Water and Sanitation: 2012 Update," 2012. [http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2012/9789280646320\\_eng\\_full\\_text.pdf?ua=1](http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2012/9789280646320_eng_full_text.pdf?ua=1) <http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/gender.shtml>

<sup>5</sup> C. Nauges and J. Strand, "Water hauling and girls' school attendance: some new evidence from Ghana," Policy Research Working Paper 6443, World Bank; G. Koolwal and D. van de Walle, "Access to Water, Women's Work, and Child Outcomes," *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 61 (2013): 369-405.

years between 1995 and 2012.<sup>25</sup> Death rates from strokes, heart ailments, and infectious diseases such as tuberculosis have dropped worldwide since 1995, including among women.<sup>26</sup> Now non-communicable diseases are responsible for the majority of female deaths worldwide.<sup>27</sup>

Girls also have a greater chance of survival. The global mortality rate for girls under 5 years old fell by 50 percent from 1990 to 2013, similar to the 49 percent decline for boys.<sup>28</sup> The decline was particularly notable in regions with high child mortality, falling by 57 percent in South Asia and 49 percent in Sub-Saharan Africa. Child health has improved in general, with better nutrition and rates of immunization. Prevalence of stunting of children under 5, a measure of chronic malnutrition, also fell in all regions from 1995 to 2013, with 64 million fewer children stunted, more than half of whom were in East Asia.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> From 1995 to 2010, female deaths globally from cerebrovascular disease, ischemic heart disease and tuberculosis fell by 26.1%, 21.5% and 39.7%, respectively. Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), "Global Burden of Disease 2010," 2013. See No Ceilings database, [www.noceilings.org](http://www.noceilings.org)

<sup>27</sup> World Health Organization (WHO), Global Health Observatory database, accessed January 2015. [www.who.int/gho/en/](http://www.who.int/gho/en/); C. Murray et al., "Global, regional, and national prevalence of overweight and obesity in children and adults during 1980–2013: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2013," *The Lancet* 384, no. 9945 (2014): 766-781.

<sup>28</sup> World Bank, based on estimates developed by the UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN Children's Fund [UNICEF], WHO, World Bank, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs [UNDESA] Population Division), accessed January 2015. [www.childmortality.org](http://www.childmortality.org)

<sup>29</sup> World Bank, Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates (UNICEF, WHO, World Bank), accessed January 2015. <http://data.worldbank.org/child-malnutrition/regional-burdens-and-shares-of-total-burden>

## Maternal mortality rates have dropped dramatically

Improved health and survival for pregnant women and mothers has been one of the great success stories of the last two decades. The rate of women who die in childbirth has plunged by at least 40 percent in 76 countries and by almost 60 percent in South Asia from 1995 to 2013.<sup>30</sup> The top causes of these deaths include hemorrhaging, hypertension, sepsis, and complications from unsafe abortion.<sup>31</sup> Increased use of health services and improvements in those services in part explains the decline. In developing countries, the share of births assisted by skilled attendants rose from 60 percent of all births in 2000 to 67 percent in 2010, and there was an even greater increase in antenatal coverage.<sup>32</sup> A range of other factors has helped lower maternal mortality, from investments in health systems to an overall decline in poverty.<sup>33</sup>

Access to family planning has expanded, enabling more women to determine the timing and spacing of

<sup>30</sup> World Bank, WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, "Trends in Maternal Mortality: 1990 to 2013," WHO, 2014. <http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/monitoring/maternal-mortality-2013/en/>

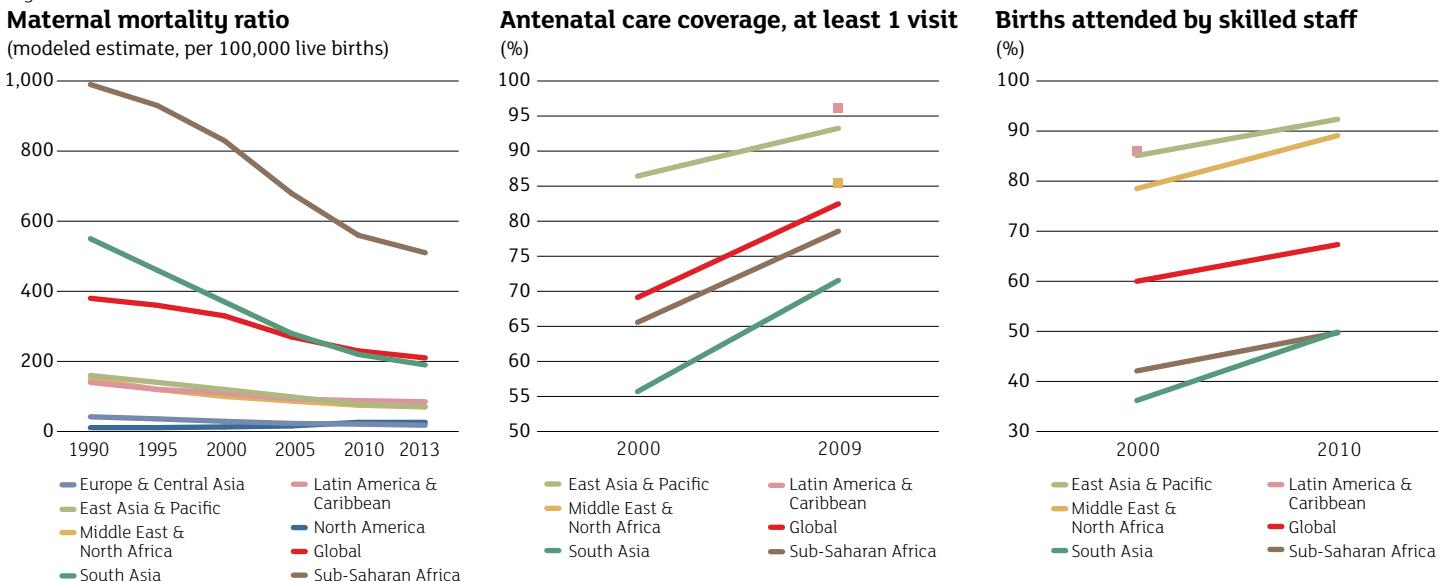
<sup>31</sup> K.S. Khan, D. Wojdyla, L. Say, A.M. Gülmezoglu, and P. Van Look, "WHO analysis of causes of maternal death: a systematic review," *The Lancet* 367, No. 9516 (2006): 1066-1074; M.T. Mbizvo and L. Say, "Global progress and potentially effective policy responses to reduce maternal mortality," *International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics* 119 (2012): S9-S12; WHO, "Maternal Mortality," last modified May 2014. <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs348/en/>

<sup>32</sup> World Bank, UNICEF, State of the World's Children, Childinfo, and Demographic and Health Surveys by ICF International, accessed January 2015. <http://www.unicef.org/sowc/>

<sup>33</sup> C. Ronsmans, M.D., and W.J. Graham, D.Phil, "Maternal mortality: who, when, where, and why," *The Lancet* 368 (2006), <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S014067360669380X>; M.E. Chowdhury, R. Botlero, M. Koblinsky, S.K. Saha, G. Dieltiens, and C. Ronsmans, "Determinants of reduction in maternal mortality in Matlab, Bangladesh: a 30-year cohort study," *The Lancet* 370 (2007): 1320-1328.



Figure 4



Sources: World Bank; WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, The World Bank, and the United Nations Population Division. Trends in Maternal Mortality: 1990 to 2013. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2014; UNICEF, State of the World's Children, Childinfo, and Demographic and Health Surveys by ICF International.

their pregnancies and reducing maternal mortality. The use of modern contraception has increased from 53 to 58 percent globally.<sup>34</sup> Some regions have seen even greater increases: Modern contraceptive prevalence in East Asia increased from 34 to 50 percent between 1995 and 2015, and doubled in Sub-Saharan Africa, rising from 11 to 23 percent.<sup>35</sup> Momentum has increased recently; more than 8 million more women in developing countries used a modern method of contraception in 2013 than in 2012.<sup>36</sup> Demand for family planning also tracks a fall in fertility rates. In low-income countries, births per woman dropped by more than 20 percent over 20 years.<sup>37</sup>

### Despite important health gains, progress has been uneven—particularly among the poor, rural, and marginalized

Although life expectancy for women increased in most parts of the world, several Sub-Saharan African countries saw a fall in women's life expectancy due to the HIV/AIDS crisis.<sup>38</sup> For example, life expectancy at birth for women

in Botswana fell from 60 in 1995 to 46 in 2012.<sup>39</sup> Although new HIV infections are declining, females aged 15 to 24 have infection rates twice as high as young men, and now comprise the majority of youth living with HIV.<sup>40</sup> Global HIV prevalence rates have been growing at a higher rate for women than men, with more than 16 million women infected today—almost twice as many as in 1995.<sup>41</sup>

While the decline in maternal mortality is a milestone achievement, unfinished business remains. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), about 800 women die every day from largely preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth, and 99 percent of these deaths occur in developing countries.<sup>42</sup> In 2013, ten countries accounted for approximately 60 percent of maternal deaths, including China, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Tanzania, and Uganda.<sup>43</sup> The rate remains

<sup>34</sup> All data on modern contraceptive prevalence are drawn from the United Nations Population Division, Estimates and Projections of Family Planning Indicators 2014, accessed January 2015, [http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/theme/family-planning/cp\\_model.shtml](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/theme/family-planning/cp_model.shtml). These prevalence rates are given for women aged 15 to 49 who are married or in a union.

<sup>35</sup> UNDESA, Population Division, "Model-based Estimates and Projections of Family Planning Indicators 2014," 2014. [http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/theme/family-planning/cp\\_model.shtml](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/theme/family-planning/cp_model.shtml)

<sup>36</sup> Track20, FP2020 Core Indicator Data, 2013 estimates, accessed February 2015. [http://www.track20.org/pages/data/core\\_indicators?ind=2&sort=1](http://www.track20.org/pages/data/core_indicators?ind=2&sort=1)

<sup>37</sup> World Bank, fertility rate, total, accessed January 2015. <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFR.IN>

<sup>38</sup> Global Health Observatory, WHO, life expectancy commentary. [http://www.who.int/gho/mortality\\_burden\\_disease/life\\_tables/situation\\_trends\\_text/en/](http://www.who.int/gho/mortality_burden_disease/life_tables/situation_trends_text/en/)

<sup>39</sup> World Bank; derived from female life expectancy at birth from sources such as: UNFPA, statistics on World Population Prospects; UN Statistical Division, "Population and Vital Statistics Report"; Eurostat, demographic statistics; Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Statistics and Demography Programme; U.S. Census Bureau, International Database; and census reports and other statistical publications from national statistical offices. <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.FE.IN>, accessed January 2015.

<sup>40</sup> P. Idele, A. Gillespie, T. Porth, C. Suzuki, M. Mahy, S. Kasedde, and C. Luo, "Epidemiology of HIV and AIDS among adolescents: current status, inequities, and data gaps," Lippincott Williams & Wilkins 2014, using data from UNICEF analysis of unpublished 2012 HIV and AIDS estimates from the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). [http://data.unicef.org/corecode/uploads/document6/uploaded\\_pdfs/corecode/Epidemiology\\_of\\_HIV\\_and\\_AIDS\\_Among\\_Adolescents\\_169.pdf](http://data.unicef.org/corecode/uploads/document6/uploaded_pdfs/corecode/Epidemiology_of_HIV_and_AIDS_Among_Adolescents_169.pdf); UNAIDS, "UNAIDS World AIDS Day Report 2011," 2011. [http://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media/unaiids/contentassets/documents/unaidspublication/2011/JC2216\\_WorldAIDSday\\_report\\_2011\\_en.pdf](http://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media/unaiids/contentassets/documents/unaidspublication/2011/JC2216_WorldAIDSday_report_2011_en.pdf)

<sup>41</sup> UNAIDS Spectrum Estimates data measuring the total number of people living with HIV. <http://www.unaids.org/en/dataanalysis/datatools/spectrumep2013>

<sup>42</sup> World Bank, WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA. "Trends in Maternal Mortality: 1990 to 2013," WHO, 2014. <http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/monitoring/maternal-mortality-2013/en/>

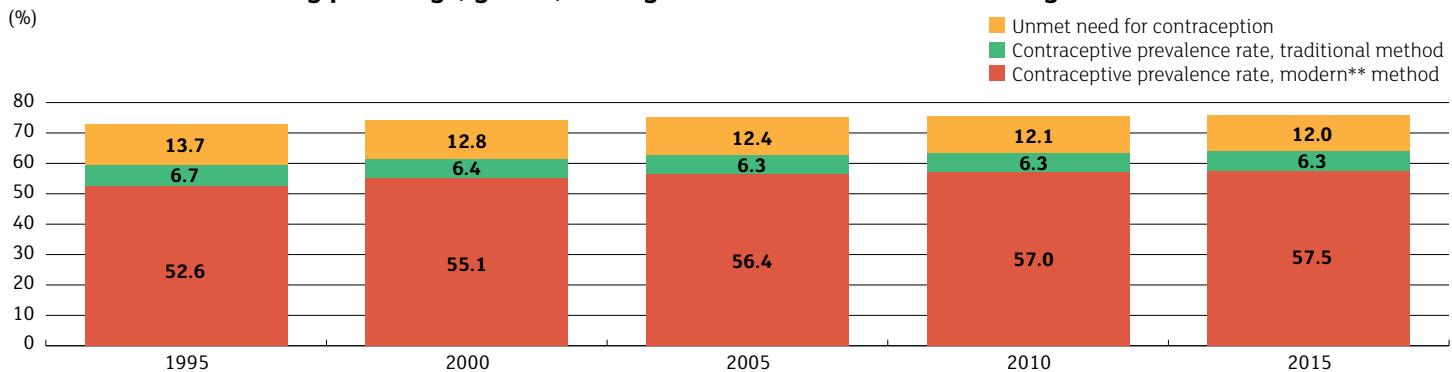
<sup>43</sup> Ibid.



Figure 5

**Total demand for family planning\*, global, among married or in-union women aged 15 to 49**

(%)



\*Note that total demand for family planning is equal to the sum of contraceptive prevalence and unmet need for family planning.

\*\*Modern methods of contraception include female and male sterilization, oral hormonal pills, the intra-uterine device (IUD), the male condom, injectables, the implant (including Norplant), vaginal barrier methods, the female condom and emergency contraception. Traditional methods of contraception include the rhythm (periodic abstinence), withdrawal, lactational amenorrhea method (LAM) and folk methods.

Sources: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2014). Model-based Estimates and Projections of Family Planning Indicators 2014.

**Cookstoves and environmental health**

Nearly 3 billion people each day cook on open fires or rudimentary stoves fueled by biomass (wood, animal dung, and crop waste) or coal. The use of solid fuels and methane from leaky or inadequate stoves is damaging both to the environment and human health. Exposure to household air pollution from dangerous, inefficient, and polluting cooking practices kills more than 4 million people annually, while millions more suffer from associated cancer, pneumonia, heart and lung disease, blindness, and burns. Women and girls are often disproportionately affected, because they are typically responsible for cooking. Low adoption rates in many regions have been a challenge because of high fuel costs for new stove types.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves, <http://www.cleancookstoves.org/impact-areas/women/index.html>; World Bank, Energy Sector Management Assistance Program (ESMAP), "Cleaner Hearths, Better Homes: New Stoves for India and the Developing World," 2012, [http://cleancookstoves.org/resources\\_files/cleaner-hearths-better.pdf](http://cleancookstoves.org/resources_files/cleaner-hearths-better.pdf); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN Peace Building Support Office (UN-PBSO), UN Women, and UN Environment Programme (UNEP), "Women and Natural Resources: Unlocking the Peacebuilding Potential," 2013, [http://www.static.reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNEP\\_UN-Women\\_PBSO\\_UNDP\\_gender\\_NRM\\_peacebuilding\\_report%20pdf.pdf](http://www.static.reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNEP_UN-Women_PBSO_UNDP_gender_NRM_peacebuilding_report%20pdf.pdf)

highest in Sub-Saharan Africa, where 510 women die per 100,000 births, followed by South Asia, where 190 women die.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, women in the wealthiest 20 percent of the population are as much as 20 times more likely than a poor woman to be attended by a skilled health worker during childbirth.<sup>45</sup> The prevalence of obstetric fistula, a hole in the birth canal caused by obstructed labor, is an example of a still all-too-common consequence of lack of health care access, particularly among adolescents in the developing world, who are at

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> WHO, World Health Report, "Health Systems Financing: The Path to Universal Coverage," 2010.

higher risk of child marriage and early child bearing.<sup>46</sup>

While maternal mortality is comparatively low in the developed world, rates in the United States have actually worsened since 1995, with an increase from 11 deaths per 100,000 births to 28 deaths per 100,000 in 2013.<sup>47</sup>

Despite some progress in access to family planning, more than 220 million women in developing countries still want to delay or prevent pregnancy but are not using a modern method of contraception, in part due to lack of access.<sup>48</sup> Less than one in four married women in Sub-Saharan Africa uses modern contraceptives, compared to 50 percent in South Asia and 67 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean.<sup>49</sup> Although demand for contraception has increased, the global unmet need for family planning has barely changed, only falling from 14 to 12 percent between 1995 and 2012.<sup>50</sup> And while fertility rates have been falling, in some countries rates remain high, with Niger topping the list at 7.6 per woman.<sup>51</sup>

In the developed world, data also show that the poorest and most marginalized women and girls are the least likely to use health care services.<sup>52</sup> This compounds the increased risks these women and girls face from other factors for chronic diseases, such as unhealthy

<sup>46</sup> UN General Assembly, "Supporting efforts to end obstetric fistula, Report of the Secretary-General," Sixty-seventh session, August 2012.

<sup>47</sup> World Bank, WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, "Trends in Maternal Mortality: 1990 to 2013," WHO, 2014, <http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/monitoring/maternal-mortality-2013/en/>

<sup>48</sup> WHO Fact Sheet: "Family Planning," 2013, <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs351/en/>

<sup>49</sup> UNDESA, Population Division, "Model-based Estimates and Projections of Family Planning Indicators 2014," 2014, [http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/theme/family-planning/cp\\_model.shtml](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/theme/family-planning/cp_model.shtml)

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> World Bank, fertility rate, total, accessed January 2015, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFR.TIN>

<sup>52</sup> D. Carr, "Improving the Health of the World's Poorest People," Population Reference Bureau (PRB), 2004, [http://www.prb.org/pdf/improvingthehealthworld\\_eng.pdf](http://www.prb.org/pdf/improvingthehealthworld_eng.pdf)



diets.<sup>53</sup> A recent report on European Union (EU) countries found that low-income people were more likely to have unmet health needs than high-income groups.<sup>54</sup> The United States also has disparities, including by region: Between the early 1990s and the early 2000s, women's life expectancy went down in 43 percent of counties in the United States, while the male life expectancy decreased in only 3 percent of counties.<sup>55</sup> In addition, health investments have not always benefited men and women equally.<sup>56</sup>

## EDUCATION

### The gender gap in primary education has nearly closed globally

Twenty years after Beijing, the world has made considerable strides in improving access to education for girls. Today, girls and boys enroll in primary school at nearly equal rates globally, and the gender gap has closed in all regions except Sub-Saharan Africa, where it has narrowed from 85 girls for every 100 boys in 1995 to 93 in 2012.<sup>57</sup> About three out of four girls in Sub-Saharan Africa enroll in primary school today, compared to only half in 1995.<sup>58</sup> The average number of years of schooling that girls receive has also increased, especially in developing countries. Today, girls and women aged 15 and over spend an average of 7.3 years in school, compared to 5.6 years in 1990.<sup>59</sup> However, while progress in narrowing the gender gap in enrollment is important, too many children—both girls and boys—are not completing school.

Laws and policies to improve girls' access to education have also increased. National constitutions adopted since Beijing are more likely to guarantee girls' equality in education than those adopted before—86 percent versus 50 percent. Two-thirds of constitutions adopted after

Beijing also guarantee free primary education, compared with about half previously.<sup>60</sup> Over the past two decades, most countries have made primary education more financially accessible. Eighty-nine percent of low-income countries, 97 percent of middle-income countries, and all high-income countries have made primary education tuition-free.<sup>61</sup> Only seven countries worldwide continue to charge tuition fees for primary education.<sup>62</sup> These changes matter because girls are more likely than boys to be kept out of school when families face economic hardship.<sup>63</sup>

### Gaps remain and the poorest and most marginalized girls lag behind

Despite the improvements in girls' primary education at the global level, large gaps persist within countries. Household surveys in the 30 countries accounting for 34 million of the 61 million children worldwide who are out of school found that among primary-school age children, 43 percent of those out of school are girls from the poorest household quintile, and only nine percent are boys from the richest household quintile.<sup>64</sup> There are also marked differences by income in expected years of schooling. In 2010, the poorest women in rural areas in both low- and lower-middle-income countries had spent less than three years in school, compared with the richest urban young men, who spent 9.5 and 12 years, respectively.<sup>65</sup> While the greatest gaps are between wealthy boys and poor girls, there are also substantial gaps between high-income and low-income women within countries, in part because wealthier women often go on to college. For example, the gaps between the wealthiest and poorest women in Egypt and India exceed 10 years.<sup>66</sup>

### Although the gender gap in secondary education has narrowed, many girls remain out of school

While more girls are attending secondary school on a

<sup>53</sup> NCD Alliance, *Non-Communicable Diseases: A Priority for Women's Health and Development*, 6.

<sup>54</sup> OECD/European Union, *Health at a Glance: Europe 2014* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2014). [http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/health-at-a-glance-europe\\_23056088](http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/health-at-a-glance-europe_23056088)

<sup>55</sup> D.A. Kindig and E.R. Cheng, "Even as Mortality Fell in Most US Counties, Female Mortality Nonetheless Rose in 42.8 percent of Counties from 1992 to 2006," *Health Affairs* 32, No. 3 (2013). <http://www.womenspolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Kindig-and-Cheng-March-2013.pdf>

<sup>56</sup> D. Barthold, A. Nandi, J.M. Mendoza Rodríguez, and J. Heymann, "Analyzing whether countries are equally efficient at improving longevity for men and women," *American Journal of Public Health* 104, No. 11 (2014): 2163-2169.

<sup>57</sup> Globally, the adjusted net enrollment rate in primary schools for boys in 2012 was 91.9% compared with 90.3% for girls. The gap was 7.4 percentage points in 1995. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the enrollment rates for boys and girls are 80.6% and 75.2%, respectively. See No Ceilings database, [www.noceilings.org](http://www.noceilings.org); original source was the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics, accessed May 2014.

<sup>58</sup> Adjusted net enrollment in primary school (used here) is the number of pupils of the school-age group for primary education, enrolled either in primary or secondary education, expressed as a percentage of the total population in that age group. See *No Ceilings* database, [www.noceilings.org](http://www.noceilings.org); original source was UNESCO Institute for Statistics, accessed May 2014.

<sup>59</sup> R.J. Barro and J.W. Lee, "A New Data Set of Educational Attainment in the World, 1950–2010," National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper, April 2010.

<sup>60</sup> WORLD Policy Analysis Center, "Equal Rights for Women and Girls in the World's Constitutions," WORLD Constitutions Database, 2015. <http://www.worldpolicyforum.org>

<sup>61</sup> WORLD Policy Analysis Center, "Facilitating Girls' Access to Quality Education: Global Findings on Tuition-Free and Compulsory Education," WORLD Education Database, 2015. <http://www.worldpolicyforum.org>

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Plan International Working Paper, "Because I Am a Girl," Africa Report: Progress and Obstacles to Girls' Education in Africa, 2012. [http://plan-international.org/girls/pdfs/Progress%20and%20obstacles%20to%20girls%20education%20in%20Africa\\_ENG.pdf](http://plan-international.org/girls/pdfs/Progress%20and%20obstacles%20to%20girls%20education%20in%20Africa_ENG.pdf); UNESCO, Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report 2003-2004, Chapter 3: "Why Are Girls Still Held Back?" [http://www.unesco.org/education/efa\\_report/chapter3.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/education/efa_report/chapter3.pdf)

<sup>64</sup> UNESCO, EFA Monitoring Report, Policy Paper 04, "Reaching out-of-school children is crucial for development," June 2012. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002165/216519E.pdf>

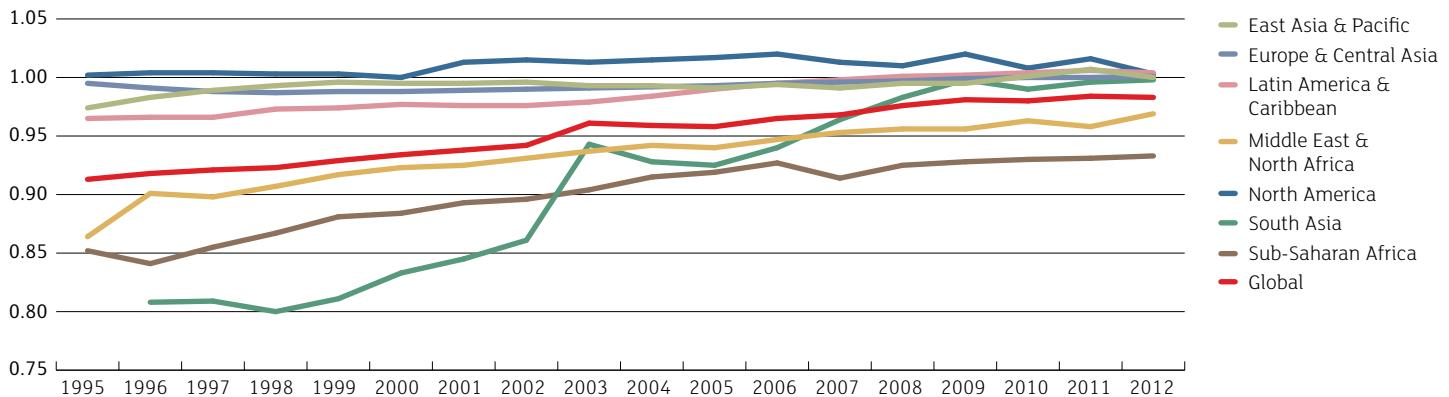
<sup>65</sup> EFA Global Monitoring Report, "Teaching and Learning: Achieving equality for all," 2014. <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/efareport/reports/2013/>

<sup>66</sup> UNESCO World Inequality Database on Education, accessed September 2014. These data are used in the EFA Global Monitoring Report series. See *No Ceilings* database, [www.noceilings.org](http://www.noceilings.org)



Figure 6

## Adjusted net enrollment ratio in primary school (gender parity index\*)



\*Gender parity index is the ratio of female to male enrollment

Source: World Bank, UNESCO Institute for Statistics

global level—the transition rate from primary to secondary education has increased from 83 percent in 1995 to 91 percent in 2011<sup>67</sup>—a gender gap persists at the secondary level, and girls in several regions continue to lag behind.<sup>68</sup> Twenty years after Beijing, less than one in three girls in Sub-Saharan Africa and fewer than half in South Asia are enrolled in secondary school.<sup>69</sup> Girls'

67 UNESCO Institute for Statistics, accessed May 2014. See *No Ceilings* database, [www.noceilings.org](http://www.noceilings.org)

68 The secondary school enrollment gap in favor of boys narrowed to 2.7 percentage points in 2012 from 4.4 percentage points in 1998; data from UNESCO Institute for Statistics, accessed May 2014. See *No Ceilings* database: [www.noceilings.org](http://www.noceilings.org)

69 Net enrollment rate in lower and upper secondary school (used here) is the ratio of children of the official secondary school age who are enrolled in secondary school to the population of the official secondary school age; data from UNESCO Institute for Statistics, accessed May 2014. See *No Ceilings* database, [www.noceilings.org](http://www.noceilings.org)

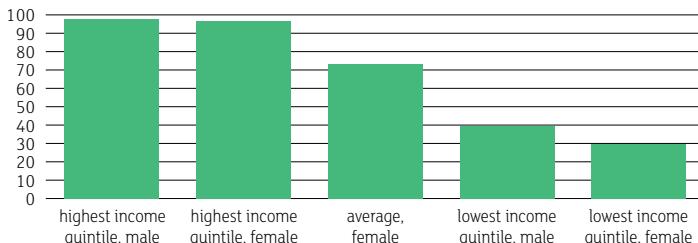
completion rates are even lower—less than 25 percent in many Sub-Saharan African countries and less than 10 percent in Burkina Faso, Mozambique, and Niger.<sup>70</sup> Large variations exist within countries, with girls from the lowest-income families less likely to complete secondary school. For adolescent girls, failure to transition from primary to secondary school poses significant risks—including child marriage and adolescent pregnancy—and negatively affects their earning potential, health, and well-being, as well as the health and education of

70 UNESCO World Inequality Database on Education, accessed September 2014. These data are used in the EFA Global Monitoring Report series. See *No Ceilings* database, [www.noceilings.org](http://www.noceilings.org)

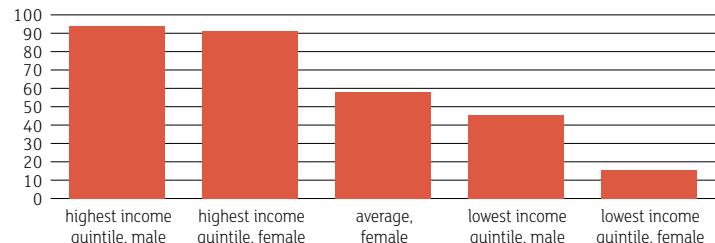
Figure 7

## Completion rates, primary and lower secondary schools, Nepal and Nigeria (%, 2011)

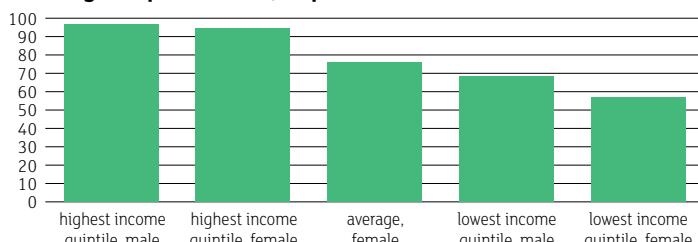
### Primary completion rate, Nigeria



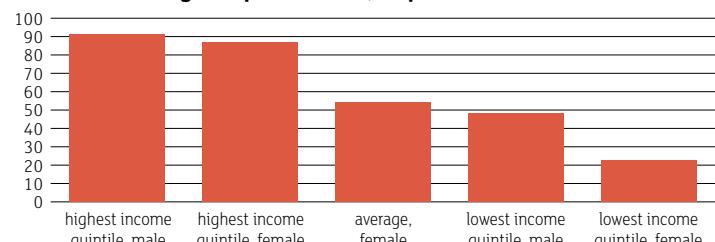
### Lower secondary completion rate, Nigeria



### Primary completion rate, Nepal



### Lower secondary completion rate, Nepal



Sources: UNESCO World Inequality Database on Education, accessed September 2014. This data is used in the EFA Global Monitoring Report series.



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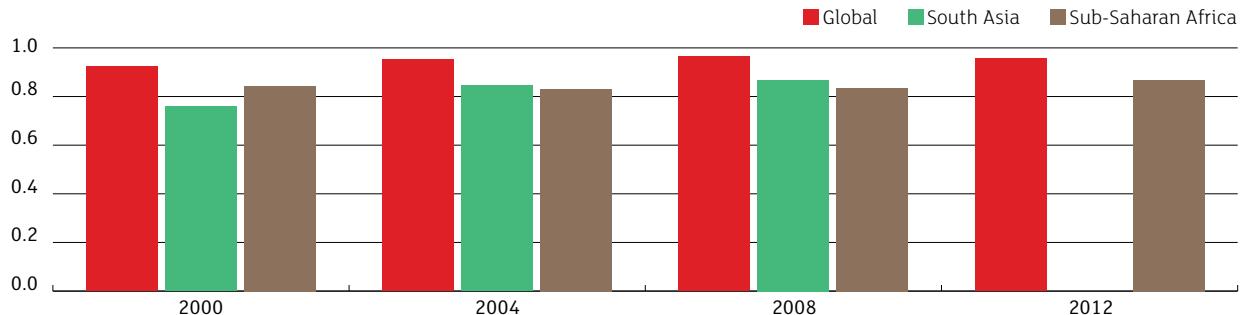
The Economist

Intelligence Unit

WORLD Policy Analysis Center

Figure 8

### Net enrollment ratio in secondary school, global and select regions where girls lag behind (gender parity index\*)



\*Gender parity index is the ratio of female to male enrollment.

Middle East and North Africa region not included due to insufficient data. Data for South Asia, 2012 not available.

Source: World Bank

their future children.

Laws and policies to support secondary education are weaker than those supporting primary education. Today, only 22 percent of national constitutions guarantee the right to free secondary education, which is largely unchanged since 1995.<sup>71</sup> School fees also remain a barrier at the secondary level. Fourteen percent of countries report charging tuition fees in the first year of secondary school, and this figure rises to 24 percent by the end of secondary school. The regions with the lowest completion rates for girls are also those most likely to charge tuition fees. Only around a third of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and half of countries in South Asia have made secondary education tuition-free through completion, and both regions face gender disparities in girls' education.<sup>72</sup>

#### Safety and quality of education are significant challenges

Both girls and boys face challenges—including lack of safety and quality—that inhibit school attendance and acquisition of skills needed for higher education or the workforce. Safety in and on the way to school is a significant and growing concern. According to the UN, attacks on schools occurred in at least 70 countries from 2009 to 2014, and many of the attacks were specifically directed at girls, parents, and teachers advocating for gender equality in education. More than 3,600 attacks on schools, teachers, or students were documented in 2012

alone.<sup>73</sup> The brutal attack on Pakistani student and education activist Malala Yousafzai in 2012 and the abduction of almost 300 girls by Boko Haram in northern Nigeria in 2014 are two recent examples of the severe threats that schoolgirls face.

The quality of education is another challenge facing both girls and boys. Despite increases in school enrollment and completion, far too many children leave school without basic literacy or numeracy skills, leading to what some experts have termed a “learning crisis.”<sup>74</sup> While poor quality in education is pervasive in developing countries, gender exacerbates the challenges of poverty and geography, affecting both attendance at school and learning once girls are in school. In Benin, for example, only 6 percent of impoverished girls acquire basic numeracy skills, compared to 60 percent of wealthy boys.<sup>75</sup>

#### Female literacy is improving, but two-thirds of the world's illiterate are women

Overall literacy rates for women have been rising steadily since 1995, reaching 80 percent in 2012, although the pace of progress has slowed.<sup>76</sup> While female literacy increased by 3 percentage points between 1995 and 2012, it had increased 8 percentage points during the

<sup>71</sup> WORLD Policy Analysis Center, “Equal Rights for Women and Girls in the World’s Constitutions,” WORLD Constitutions Database, 2015. <http://www.worldpolicyforum.org>

<sup>72</sup> WORLD Policy Analysis Center, “Facilitating Girls’ Access to Quality Education: Global Findings on Tuition-Free and Compulsory Education,” WORLD Education Database, 2015. <http://www.worldpolicyforum.org>

<sup>73</sup> “Background Paper 1 on Attacks Against Girls Seeking to Access Education,” prepared for the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination of Violence Against Women, 2015. [http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CEDAW/Report\\_attacks\\_on\\_girls\\_Feb2015.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CEDAW/Report_attacks_on_girls_Feb2015.pdf)

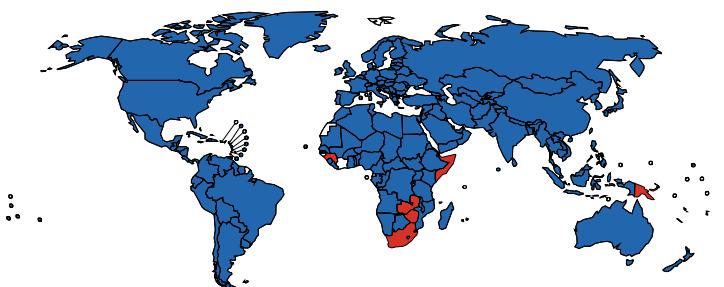
<sup>74</sup> R. Winthrop and E. McGivney, “Raising the Global Ambition for Girls’ Education,” The Brookings Institution, Policy Paper 2014-05, December 2014. <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Research/Files/Papers/2014/12/global%20ambition%20girls%20education%20winthrop%20mcgivney/Winthrop%20NextGenGirls%20v3.pdf>

<sup>75</sup> UNESCO, EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2013/14, “Teaching and learning: Achieving quality for all,” 2014. <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/efareport/reports/2013/>

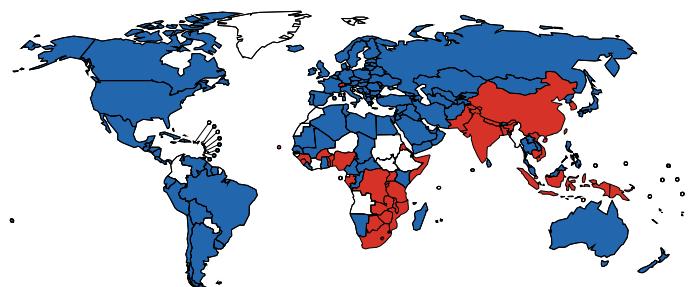
<sup>76</sup> Adult literacy rates are for the population aged 15 years and older; youth literacy rates provide information on the population aged 15–24 years of age; data from UNESCO Institute for Statistics, accessed May 2014. See *No Ceilings* database, [www.noceilings.org](http://www.noceilings.org)



Figure 9

**Is primary education tuition-free?**

■ Tuition reported  
■ Tuition-free\*

**Is completing secondary education tuition-free?**

\*Tuition-free includes cases where no tuition is charged. Other fees may be charged. Global data to compare additional fees across countries are not available.  
Source: WORLD Policy Analysis Center, Education Database, 2014. Available at [worldpolicyforum.org](http://worldpolicyforum.org)

prior decade.<sup>77</sup> Despite continuing gains, however, women today still account for nearly two-thirds of the 781 million adults who cannot read or write.<sup>78</sup> Female literacy rates are especially low in developing countries: About half of women in low-income countries and more than one-third of women in lower-middle-income countries are illiterate, and female literacy rates in Niger and Guinea are below 20 percent.<sup>79</sup> Illiteracy is particularly a problem among older women: On average, 58 percent of women over the age of 65 in low- and middle-income countries cannot read or write.<sup>80</sup>

### **Women outnumber men in tertiary education, but significant disparities persist in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM)**

A key shift has taken place since 1995 at the university level. In some regions, such as Europe, North America, and Latin America, women participate in higher education in greater numbers than men. However, in Sub-Saharan Africa, where tertiary enrollment rates are much lower overall, only about six women for every 10 men are enrolled in universities.<sup>81</sup>

However, women remain dramatically underrepresented in STEM education—training that is critical for jobs that in many places are the best-paying. Gender stereotypes, cultural barriers, and poor-quality education have contributed to low participation rates for women in STEM

education at all levels.<sup>82</sup> Men dominate engineering studies in every country, and even when women do well in male-dominated courses, they are less likely than men to obtain a job in that field. In Qatar, as in many other MENA countries, girls consistently outperform boys in math and science Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) assessments, but they constitute only 27 percent of total engineering graduates.<sup>83</sup> Twenty years after Beijing, the gender gap is worsening in some countries: In 2010, women in the U.S. earned approximately 18 percent of computer science bachelor degrees, down from a high of 37 percent in 1984.<sup>84</sup>

## RISKS FOR GIRLS

### **Girls are at risk for sex selection before birth, adolescent pregnancy, and child marriage**

Although women and girls have made gains in securing legal rights, health, and education, in many countries harmful traditional practices continue to undermine their potential. This is particularly true for girls, who face unique risks—even before birth—that in some cases have actually worsened over time.

One harmful practice that has grown over the past two decades is gender-biased sex selection before birth. According to the World Bank, between 1990 and 2008, the number of girls “missing” at birth has increased by more than 200,000 and now totals approximately 1.4

77 UNESCO Institute for Statistics, accessed May 2014. See *No Ceilings* database, [www.noceilings.org](http://www.noceilings.org)

78 UNESCO Institute for Statistics, International Literacy Data, 2014. <http://www.uis.unesco.org/literacy/Pages/literacy-data-release-2014.aspx>

79 UNESCO Institute for Statistics, accessed May 2014. See *No Ceilings* database, [www.noceilings.org](http://www.noceilings.org)

80 UNDESA, Follow-up to Second World Assembly on Aging, Report of the Secretary General, 2009. <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/reports/Ageing.pdf>

81 Gross enrollment rate, female, tertiary education (used here) is the ratio of women enrolled in tertiary education regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the total population of the five-year age group following on to tertiary school from secondary school. Gross enrollment rate, female, tertiary education data, sourced from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (accessed May 2014), can be found in the *No Ceilings* database, [www.noceilings.org](http://www.noceilings.org)

82 UN, “Access and participation of women and girls in education, training and science and technology, including for the promotion of women’s equal access to full employment and decent work,” Commission on the Status of Women, Issues Paper, 2014. [http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/58/csw58\\_issues\\_paper\\_review\\_theme\\_14\\_feb\\_2014\\_final%20pdf.ashx](http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/58/csw58_issues_paper_review_theme_14_feb_2014_final%20pdf.ashx)

83 UNESCO Institute for Statistics, accessed May 2014; OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), accessed May 2014. See *No Ceilings* database, [www.noceilings.org](http://www.noceilings.org)

84 U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS), “Degrees and Other Formal Awards Conferred” surveys; and Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), “Completions” surveys (table prepared June 2000). <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d00/dt283.asp>; National Science Foundation, “Women, Minorities, and Persons with Disabilities in Science and Engineering: 2013,” 2013. [http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/wmpd/2013/pdf/nsf13304\\_full.pdf](http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/wmpd/2013/pdf/nsf13304_full.pdf)



million in any given year.<sup>85</sup> This son preference—also termed “gendercide”—has resulted in skewed sex ratios in certain countries and regions. China accounts for about 77 percent of these missing girls, while India accounts for 18 percent.<sup>86</sup> According to the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, by the year 2020, China will have 30 to 40 million more males than females under age 20.<sup>87</sup>

Adolescent and teen pregnancy and childbirth pose significant health risks to girls and their offspring. Teenage pregnancy and complications during childbirth are the second highest cause of death for 15 to 19 year old girls worldwide.<sup>88</sup> There has been some progress since 1995: Over the past two decades, the rate of adolescent births dropped by almost a third, to 45 births per 1,000 girls aged 15 to 19.<sup>89</sup> However, the rate of adolescent pregnancy and childbirth remains high in many regions. About 20,000 girls under the age of 18 in developing countries give birth annually, and 95 percent of births to adolescents globally occur in the developing world.<sup>90</sup> Nine of the top 10 countries with the highest rate of births to women under the age of 18 are in Africa, ranging from 51 percent in Niger to 36 percent in Madagascar. The highest absolute numbers of teen births are in India, with 12 million women aged 20 to 24 giving birth before age 18.<sup>91</sup> The United States, which has one of

the highest rate of teen pregnancy in the developed world—at 27 births per 1,000 teenage girls aged 15 to 19—has seen a significant drop in recent years, with its rate falling 57 percent from 1991 to 2013.<sup>92</sup>

One of the most persistent harmful traditional practices that limits the full potential of girls is child marriage, which undermines health, education, economic opportunity, and security. While the share of women aged 20 to 24 who were married or in a union before their 18th birthday has declined over the past two decades—from 31 percent to 26 percent—this progress has been uneven and the pace of change remains far too slow.<sup>93</sup> In 2010, 15 years after Beijing, an estimated 67 million women worldwide aged 20 to 24 had been married under the age of 18.<sup>94</sup> Again, we see worse outcomes for the poor: Girls in the lowest wealth quintile are 2.5 times more likely to marry as children compared to those in the highest quintile.<sup>95</sup> In Niger, which has the highest prevalence of child marriage in the world, 77 percent of women aged 20 to 49 were married before their 18th birthday, and 28 percent of girls before the age of 15.<sup>96</sup> In India, which is home to one-third of the world’s known child brides, more than 25 million girls in 2010 were married before age 18.<sup>97</sup> Experts predict that unless current trends change, approximately 140 million girls worldwide will become child brides between 2011 and 2020—nearly 50 million

<sup>85</sup> World Bank, “Four Million Missing Women”, World Development Report on Gender Equality and Development, 2012. <http://go.worldbank.org/GPLFFB9PQ0>

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> “The Worldwide War on Baby Girls,” *The Economist* (March 2010), cited from Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS). January 2010.

<sup>88</sup> WHO Fact sheet: Adolescent Pregnancy, September 2014. <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs364/en/>

<sup>89</sup> World Bank, adolescent fertility rate data. <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.ADO.TFR>

<sup>90</sup> UNFPA, “Adolescent Pregnancy,” <http://www.unfpa.org/adolescent-pregnancy>; WHO Fact Sheet No. 364, “Adolescent Pregnancy,” updated September 2014. <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs364/en/>

<sup>91</sup> E. Loaiza and M. Liang, “Adolescent Pregnancy: A Review of the Evidence,” UNFPA, 2013. [http://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/ADOLESCENT%20PREGNANCY\\_UNFPA.pdf](http://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/ADOLESCENT%20PREGNANCY_UNFPA.pdf), p. 15.

<sup>92</sup> S.J. Ventura, B.E. Hamilton, and T.J. Matthews, “National and state patterns of teen births in the United States, 1940–2013,” *National vital statistics reports: from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System* 63, No. 4 (2014): 1–34.

<sup>93</sup> UNICEF, “Ending Child Marriage: Progress and Prospects,” 2014. [http://www.unicef.org/media/files/Child\\_Marriage\\_Report\\_7\\_17\\_LR.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/media/files/Child_Marriage_Report_7_17_LR.pdf)

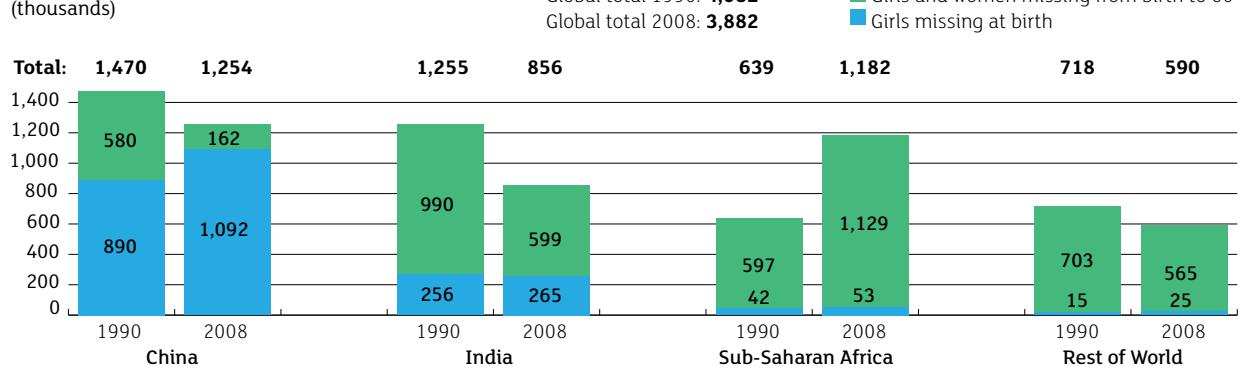
<sup>94</sup> UNFPA, “Marrying Too Young: End Child Marriage,” 2012. <http://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/MarryingTooYoung.pdf>

<sup>95</sup> UNICEF, “Ending Child Marriage: Progress and Prospects,” 2014. [http://www.unicef.org/media/files/Child\\_Marriage\\_Report\\_7\\_17\\_LR.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/media/files/Child_Marriage_Report_7_17_LR.pdf)

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> UNFPA, MDG 5b+ Info Country Profiles: India. <http://www.devinfo.info/mdg5b/profiles/>

Figure 10  
**Excess female deaths, 1990 and 2008**  
(thousands)



Source: World Bank, “Four Million Missing Women”, World Development Report 2012



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Figure 11  
**Under what circumstances can 15-year old girls be married?**

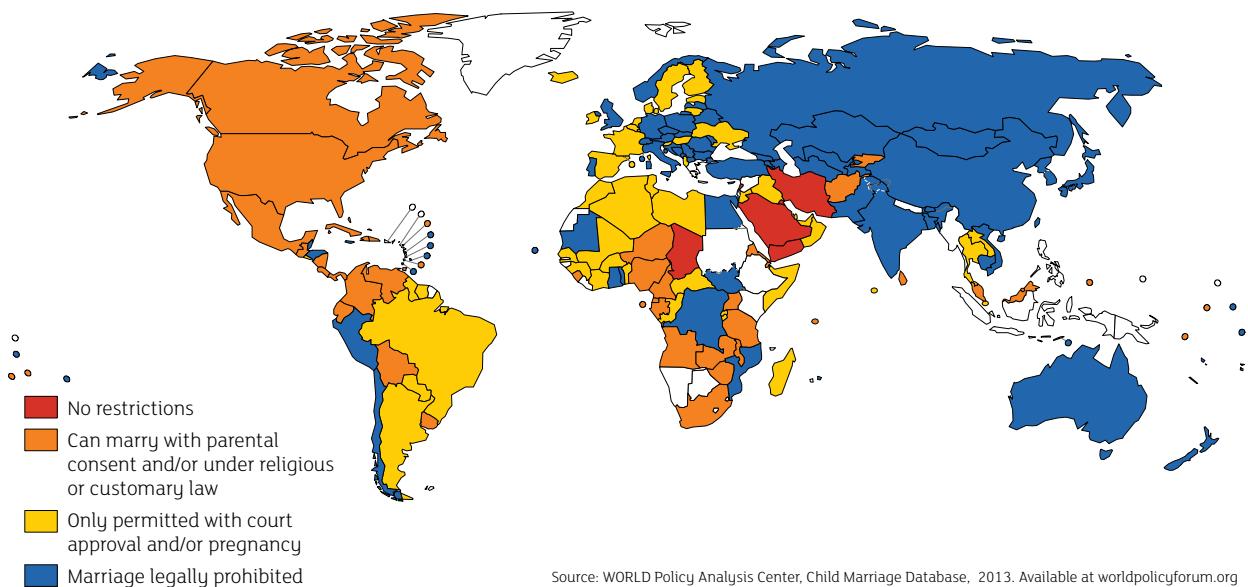
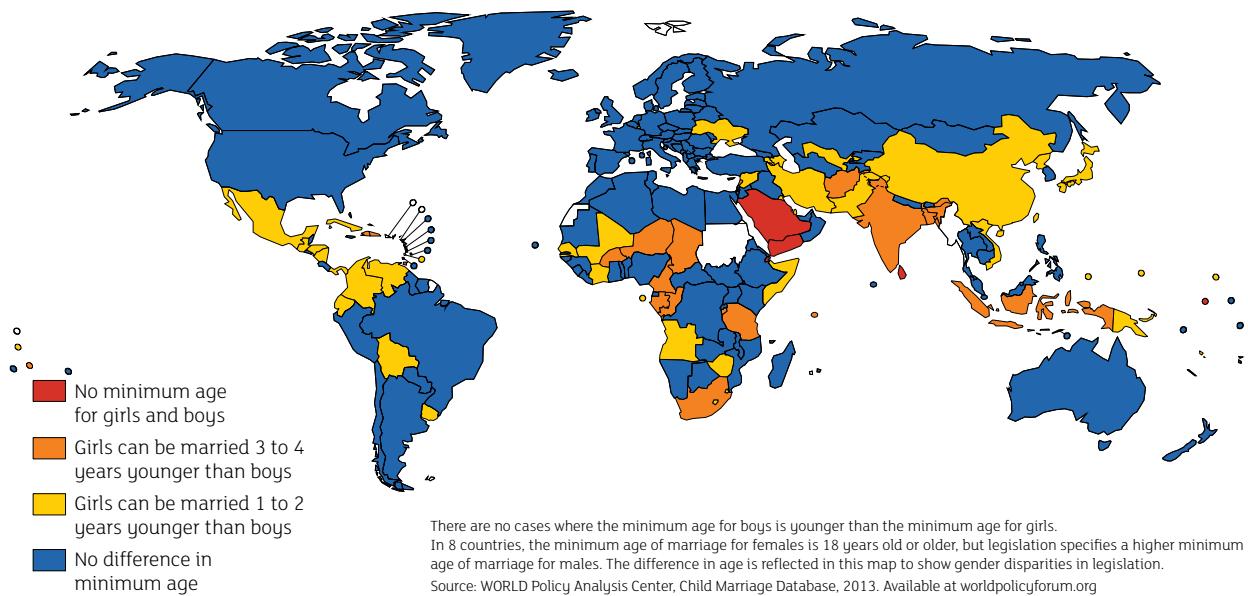


Figure 12  
**Is there a gender disparity in the minimum legal age of marriage with parental consent?**



of whom will be younger than 15.<sup>98</sup>

While many factors influence the prevalence of child marriage, laws can play a foundational role by setting minimum ages of marriage, which affect social norms and expectations.<sup>99</sup> Since 1995, legal prohibitions of child marriage have expanded globally. Among 105 low- and

middle-income countries,<sup>100</sup> the percentage that allow girls to be married before age 18 fell from 24 percent in 1995 to 12 percent in 2013. In some instances, laws have helped reduce prevalence rates. For example, in 2001, the Maldives passed the Family Act, which for the first time set a legal minimum age for marriage at 18. Between

98 UNFPA, "Marrying Too Young: End Child Marriage," 2012. <http://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/MarryingTooYoung.pdf> UNICEF Press Release: "Child Marriages: 39,000 Every Day," March 7, 2013. [http://www.unicef.org/media/media\\_68114.html](http://www.unicef.org/media/media_68114.html)

99 WORLD Policy Analysis Center and MACHEquity, "Legal Protections Against Child Marriage Around the World," 2015. <http://www.worldpolicyforum.org>

100 To look at change over time, MACHEquity researched laws in 105 low- and middle-income countries included in the Demographic and Health Surveys and Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys for which we were able to collect complete information about minimum age of marriage laws between 1995 and 2013.

1995 and 2009, the share of Maldivian girls aged 15 to 18 who were married fell from almost half to below 6 percent.<sup>101</sup> In other countries, even where laws establish a minimum marital age of 18 with no exceptions, social norms endure and implementation remains a challenge. In Bangladesh, for instance, where child marriage has long been illegal, the child marriage rate is among the highest in the world.

Legal exceptions to minimum marital age laws can undercut their effectiveness. More than half of the world's countries (52 percent) allow girls to be legally married below the age of 18 with their parents' consent. Since child marriages most often occur with the involvement of the parents, the effect of these loopholes is significant. In 19 percent of countries, girls may be

legally married under the age of 18 if they live in communities adhering to religious or customary law that allows marriage at younger ages. In many cases, laws explicitly reinforce gender inequalities by setting a lower minimum age of marriage for girls than boys. Nearly a third of countries (31 percent) legally allow girls to be married at younger ages than boys with parental permission. In 27 percent of countries, girls can be married two to four years earlier than boys.<sup>102</sup> But significant progress has been made in narrowing this gap since the Beijing Declaration. Between 1995 and 2013, among 105 low- and middle-income countries, the number of countries permitting girls to be legally married younger than boys with parental permission fell from 66 to 44 percent.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>101</sup> WORLD Policy Analysis Center and MACHEquity, "Legal Protections Against Child Marriage Around the World," WORLD and MACHEquity Child Marriage Database, 2015. <http://www.worldpolicyforum.org>

<sup>102</sup> WORLD Policy Analysis Center and MACHEquity, "Legal Protections Against Child Marriage Around the World," WORLD Child Marriage Database, 2015. <http://www.worldpolicyforum.org>

<sup>103</sup> WORLD Policy Analysis Center and MACHEquity, "Legal Protections Against Child Marriage Around the World," WORLD and MACHEquity Child Marriage Database, 2015. <http://www.worldpolicyforum.org>



## Chapter Two

# Ensuring security

Security—including freedom from all forms of violence, in both public and private life—is fundamental to the full participation of women and girls. This chapter looks at threats to the security of women and girls in three areas. First, it addresses gender-based violence, which remains an epidemic and is critical not only to individual health and well-being, but also to economic participation and growth. One recent estimate calculates the cost of intimate partner violence for a variety of countries as ranging from 1.2 percent to 3.7 percent of GDP.<sup>104</sup> Second, this section discusses conflict, focusing both on women as victims in conflict situations and also on women's participation in resolving conflict. Research shows that involving women in peace negotiations is critical to long-term stability, as women are more likely to raise issues like human rights, security, justice, employment, and health care, which are fundamental to lasting and sustainable peace. Third, this section looks at environmental threats, including climate change and natural disasters, as well as representation in environmental security efforts, in light of women's roles in managing natural resources and the disproportionate effects that natural disasters have on women and girls. While data on women and the environment are scarce, experience suggests that involving women in responses to climate change and other environmental challenges is important.

In these areas, we have seen too little progress for women and girls over the past 20 years. Despite an increase in laws outlawing violence against women and girls, this scourge affects every corner of the globe. Notwithstanding growing recognition of the importance of women's participation in peace and security processes, women continue to be excluded from these discussions. And women's roles as stewards of natural resources are often overlooked in efforts to protect and secure the environment.

<sup>104</sup> J. Klugman, L. Hamner, S. Twigg, T. Hasan, J. McCleary-Sills, and J. Santamaría, "Voice and Agency: Empowering Women and Girls for Shared Prosperity," World Bank Open Knowledge Repository, 2014.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

### Violence against women is a global epidemic

Violence against women and girls is both a manifestation of and a contributor to gender inequality. The UN defines violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life."<sup>105</sup>

An estimated one in three women worldwide has experienced physical or sexual violence, the vast majority at the hands of her husband or partner.<sup>106</sup> Rates of intimate partner violence vary across countries: In Georgia and Switzerland, between 5 and 9 percent of women experience physical violence from a partner in their lifetime. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Kiribati in the Pacific, the proportion is as high as 60 percent.<sup>107</sup> Because violence against women and girls remains underreported, most estimations rely on surveys. Despite advances in data collection, limited trend data make it difficult to conclude whether the rate of violence against women has changed over the past 20 years.<sup>108</sup>

Violence against women and girls affects women from all economic, social, and geographic strata.<sup>109</sup> Women in both high and low-income countries are at risk; almost one in four women in high-income countries report

<sup>105</sup> UN General Assembly Resolution 48/104 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, 1993. <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm>

<sup>106</sup> WHO, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and South African Medical Research Council, "Global and Regional Estimates of Violence against Women Prevalence and Health Effects of Intimate Partner Violence and Non-Partner Sexual Violence," 2013, [http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/85239/1/19789241564625\\_eng.pdf](http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/85239/1/19789241564625_eng.pdf); L. Heise and C. Garcia-Moreno, "Violence by intimate partners," in Etienne G. Krug *et al.*, eds., "World report on violence and health," WHO, 2002, p. 89; M. Ellsberg and L. Heise, "Researching Violence Against Women," WHO and Program for Appropriate Technology in Health (PATH), 2005, p.12.

<sup>107</sup> Indicator: Intimate partner violence, physical, percentage of women who experienced in a lifetime. UN Women, from the Demographic and Health Surveys Program (DHS), WHO, Multi-country study, International Violence Against Women Surveys, various years. [http://www.endvawnow.org/uploads/browser/files/vaw\\_prevalence\\_matrix\\_15april\\_2011.pdf](http://www.endvawnow.org/uploads/browser/files/vaw_prevalence_matrix_15april_2011.pdf)

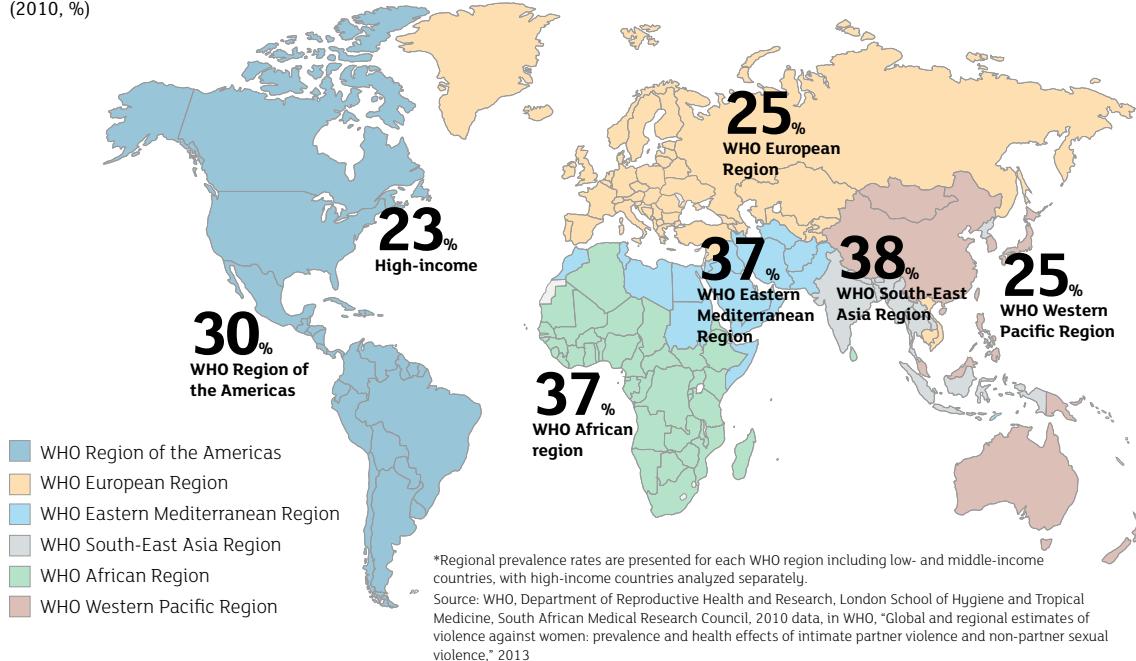
<sup>108</sup> See, for example, European Union, "Violence against women: an EU-wide survey," 2014, Foreword, p. 3.

<sup>109</sup> WHO, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and South African Medical Research Council, "Global and Regional Estimates of Violence against Women Prevalence and Health Effects of Intimate Partner Violence and Non-Partner Sexual Violence," 2013, [http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/85239/1/19789241564625\\_eng.pdf](http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/85239/1/19789241564625_eng.pdf); L. Heise and C. Garcia-Moreno, "Violence by intimate partners," in Etienne G. Krug *et al.*, eds., "World report on violence and health," WHO, 2002, p. 89.



Figure 13

### WHO estimates of regional prevalence rates of intimate partner violence (2010, %)



having ever experienced intimate partner violence.<sup>110</sup> Recent analysis across a diverse range of 22 developing countries found that rates of experiencing violence were twice as high in the poorest quintile, relative to the richest, 42 versus 21 percent.<sup>111</sup> Women and girls are particularly at risk of intimate partner and sexual violence at younger ages; violence often begins early in women's relationships.<sup>112</sup> However, less is known about the experience with violence for women in older age groups, especially in low- and middle-income countries, because most surveys focus on women who are under 49 years of age. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons can also face heightened risk of violence.<sup>113</sup>

Violence against women and girls can take many forms. Human trafficking is one manifestation of violence that is on the rise. Data show that known victims are overwhelmingly women and girls, and the estimated share of girls among total trafficking victims has doubled, from 10 percent in 2004 to 21 percent in

2011.<sup>114</sup> Female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), another form of violence, has declined significantly in some communities and countries. However, more than 130 million girls and women in 29 countries in Africa and the Middle East have experienced some form of FGM/C.<sup>115</sup> Other violent practices include dowry deaths, acid-throwing, so-called "honor" crimes, and domestic violence perpetrated by other members of the family, for which data are incomplete.

Violence against children—particularly sexual violence against girls—is also widespread. The Center for Disease Control's National Violence Against Children surveys completed in five countries—Swaziland, Tanzania, Kenya, Zimbabwe, and Haiti—revealed that 26 to 38 percent of girls and 9 to 21 percent of boys experienced sexual violence before age 18.<sup>116</sup> In each of these countries, first sex for more than one in four girls was unwanted.<sup>117</sup> Violence against children and violence against women are interrelated and have intergenerational effects: For example, evidence demonstrates that experiencing or witnessing violence as

<sup>110</sup> Indicator: percentage of women who are victims of intimate partner violence in their lifetimes (regional): WHO, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and South African Medical Research Council, "Global and Regional Estimates of Violence against Women Prevalence and Health Effects of Intimate Partner Violence and Non-Partner Sexual Violence," 2013. [http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/85239/1/9789241564625\\_eng.pdf](http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/85239/1/9789241564625_eng.pdf)

<sup>111</sup> J. Klugman and L. Hamner, "Expanding Women's Agency: Where Do We Stand?" *Feminist Economics*, unpublished at press time.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> See, for example, Human Rights Watch, "We'll Show You You're a Woman: Violence and Discrimination against Black Lesbians and Transgender Men in South Africa." <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/southafrica1211.pdf>

<sup>114</sup> UN Office on Drugs and Crime, "Global Report on Trafficking in Persons: 2014," 2014. [http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/GLOTIP\\_2014\\_full\\_report.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/GLOTIP_2014_full_report.pdf)

<sup>115</sup> UNICEF, "Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: What might the future hold?" 2014. [http://data.unicef.org/corecode/uploads/document6/uploaded\\_pdfs/corecode/FGM-C-Brochure-7\\_15-Final-LR\\_167.pdf](http://data.unicef.org/corecode/uploads/document6/uploaded_pdfs/corecode/FGM-C-Brochure-7_15-Final-LR_167.pdf)

<sup>116</sup> J. Mercy, CDC Foundation blog entry, "CDC Measures Violence Against Children, Sparks Action," November 25, 2013. <http://www.cdcfoundation.org/blog-entry/cdc-measures-violence-against-children-sparks-action>

<sup>117</sup> Together for Girls, Data and Resources, accessed December 2014. <http://www.togetherforgirls.org/data-and-resources/>

## Measuring and collecting data on violence

The Beijing Platform brought attention to the absence of adequate data on violence against women and recommended improved data collection and research. Traditionally, measuring progress in reducing violence against women has been difficult because of a number of methodological and ethical challenges, and official police numbers significantly underreport the magnitude of the problem. Victims typically do not seek help because they consider violence to be normal, are ashamed, fear retaliation or stigma, feel that services are either unreliable or untrustworthy, or face financial obstacles.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A recent study found that only 2 percent of women in India and East Asia, 6 percent in Africa, 10 percent in Central Asia and 14 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean ever made any formal disclosure of their experience of violence (Palermo, Bleck and Peterman, "Tip of the Iceberg: Reporting and Gender Based Violence in Developing Countries," *American Journal of Epidemiology* 179 (5): 602-12).

a child is a risk factor for either perpetrating or experiencing sexual or intimate partner violence as an adult.<sup>118</sup> In a survey of six countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, intimate partner violence among women who have been married was at least twice as high for those who experienced sexual abuse as children.<sup>119</sup>

### Legal protections against violence have improved, but vary by region

Since 1995, there has been a growing recognition in the international community that threats to women's security are a fundamental violation of human rights and undermine peace and development.<sup>120</sup> National legal protections against violence have grown: By 2013, 76 of 100 countries had passed legislation outlawing domestic violence, up from 13 in 1995.<sup>121</sup> Yet legal protections vary widely by region and country. For example, nine of the 26 countries studied in Sub-Saharan Africa lack any legal protection from violence against women.<sup>122</sup> In some countries, laws remain weak: The World Bank found that 62 of 100 countries surveyed do not explicitly criminalize

<sup>118</sup> J.A. Mercy, J. Saul, and S. Hillis, "The Importance of Integrating Efforts to Prevent Violence Against Women and Children," UNICEF Office of Research, Research Watch, October 2013, <http://www.unicef-irc.org/research-watch/Violence-against-children--a-silent-threat/983/>

<sup>119</sup> S. Bott, A. Guedes, M. Goodwin, and J.A. Mendoza, "Violence against women in Latin America and the Caribbean: A comparative analysis of population-based data from 12 countries," Pan American Health Organization, 2012.

<sup>120</sup> UN Women, "Global Norms and Standards—Ending Violence Against Women," [www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/global-norms-and-standards](http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/global-norms-and-standards)

<sup>121</sup> World Bank and International Finance Corporation, "Women, Business and the Law 2014," 2013. <http://wbl.worldbank.org/~media/FPDKM/WBL/Documents/Reports/2014/Women-Business-and-the-Law-2014-FullReport.pdf>

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

However, there have been major advances in this field since 1995. A solid empirical base about the prevalence and patterns of intimate partner violence, the most common form of gender-based violence, is now emerging. This path was forged by the landmark 2005 World Health Organization (WHO) *Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence Against Women*, which systematically documented multiple forms of violence using a standardized questionnaire, training, and methodology. The WHO then gave some of the first global and regional estimates for prevalence of violence against women in 2013. The UN Statistical Commission also took note of a core set of nine statistical indicators on violence against women in 2012, and the UN Statistics Division issued *Guidelines for Producing Statistics on Violence Against Women* in 2014. Political commitment and resources are now needed to ensure that gaps are filled and monitoring is carried out on a regular basis.

## Enforcement gap: Prosecuting offenders

Violence against women is chronically underreported to the police or authorities, and reports seldom lead to charges or conviction of a perpetrator.<sup>1</sup> One study of 11 countries around the world found that charges were brought in fewer than 6 percent of physical and sexual assaults and resulted in convictions in only 1 to 5 percent of cases.<sup>2</sup> Poland had the best record, even though it had only a 10 percent rate of both charging and convicting offenders.<sup>3</sup> The 2014 United Nations Handbook on Effective Prosecution Responses to Violence Against Women and Girls sets out guidelines and best practices for reporting, case management, and convictions.<sup>4</sup> Efforts are needed around the world to put these systems in place and improve enforcement of laws adopted to protect women and girls.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H Johnson et al., *Violence Against Women: An International Perspective* (New York: Springer, 2008), cited in UNODC, "Handbook on Effective Prosecution," 2014, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> H Johnson et al., *Violence Against Women: An International Perspective*. Eleven countries included Australia, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Greece, Hong Kong, Italy, Mozambique, the Philippines, Poland, and Switzerland.

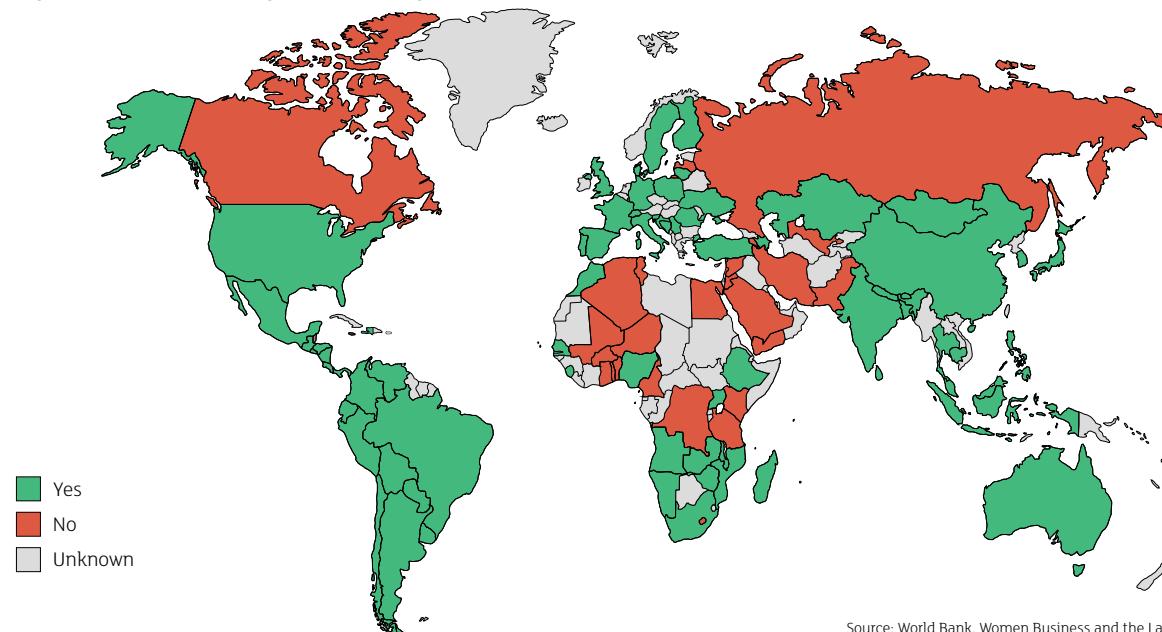
<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> UNODC, "Handbook on Effective Prosecution," 2014, p. 161.

<sup>5</sup> UNODC, The "Training Curriculum on Effective Police Responses to Violence Against Women, Criminal Justice" handbook series, 2010.



Figure 14

**Legislation explicitly addressing domestic violence around the world**

Source: World Bank, Women Business and the Law, 2012

marital rape or sexual assault within marriage.<sup>123</sup> Even where strong laws are on the books, implementation and enforcement are variable and often lacking.

### **Social norms contribute to violence against women and can be slow to change**

Traditional gender norms often underpin violence against women.<sup>124</sup> In many societies, women are still regarded as subject to the authority of the male head of household, and both men and women believe it is acceptable for husbands to beat their wives. Data from the World Values Survey indicate that men are more likely than women to believe it is sometimes justifiable for a man to beat his wife. In 10 countries—Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, India, Iraq, Nigeria, the Philippines, Rwanda, South Africa, and Zimbabwe—more than half of men believed beating was sometimes acceptable; the largest gaps in women's and men's perceptions of the acceptability of violence are in the MENA region.<sup>125</sup> These norms persist around the world: A 2010 survey conducted in 27 countries of the EU found that on average more than half of men and women agreed that women's provocative behavior was a cause of

domestic violence against women.<sup>126</sup>

Surveys show that some believe men are entitled to sex irrespective of a woman's consent. The International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) found that in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, 62 percent of women and 48 percent of men agreed or partially agreed that a man has a right to sex even if a woman refuses.<sup>127</sup> A recent UN study of 10,000 men in Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Papua New Guinea found the most common reason that men cited for rape was a belief that they have a right to have sex regardless of whether the woman agreed.<sup>128</sup>

Yet there is encouraging evidence that norms are changing—particularly among women—and in some countries mores have changed substantially since 1995. In 2012, only 3 percent of women in Haiti agreed that it is acceptable for a husband to beat his wife if she argues with him, down from 11 percent in 2000.<sup>129</sup> In Latin America, a recent survey found that acceptance of wife

123 J. Klugman, L. Hammer, S. Twigg, T. Hasan, J. McCleary-Sills, and J. Santamaría, "Voice and Agency: Empowering Women and Girls for Shared Prosperity," World Bank Open Knowledge Repository, 2014. [http://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/Gender/Voice\\_and\\_agency\\_LOWRES.pdf](http://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/Gender/Voice_and_agency_LOWRES.pdf)

124 WHO and London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, "Preventing intimate partner and sexual violence against women: taking action and generating evidence," 2010. L. Heise and C. Garcia-Moreno, "Violence by intimate partners," in Etienne G. Krug *et al.* eds., "World report on violence and health," WHO, 2002, p. 100.

125 World Values Survey, <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org>

126 E. Gracia, "Intimate Partner Violence against Women and Victim-Blaming Attitudes among Europeans," WHO Bulletin 92, No. 5, May 1, 2014: 380–81, doi:10.2471/BLT.13.131391.

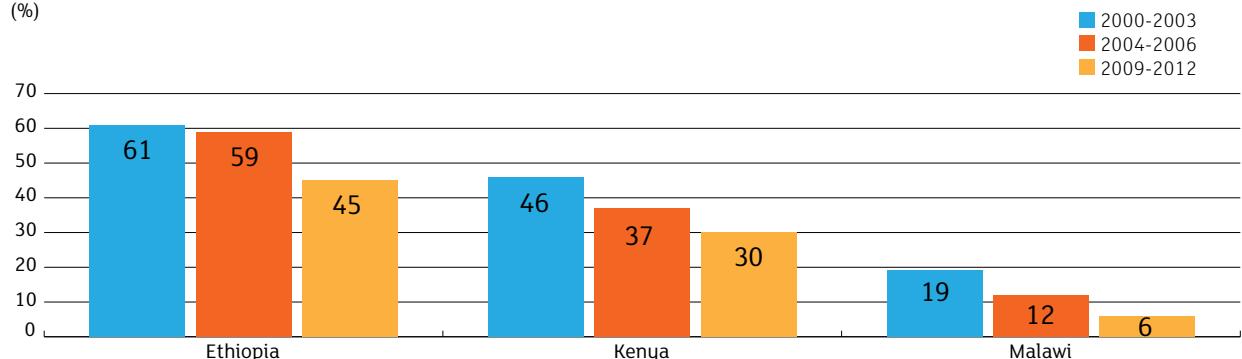
127 H. Slegh, G. Barker, and R. Levov, "Gender Relations, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence and the Effects of Conflict on Women and Men in North Kivu, Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo: Results from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES)," Promundo-US and Sonke Gender Justice, May 2014.

128 E. Fulu *et al.*, "Why Do Some Men Use Violence against Women and How Can We Prevent It?: Quantitative Findings from the UN Multi-Country Study on Men and Violence in Asia and the Pacific," Partners for Prevention, 2013. <http://www.partners4prevention.org/about-prevention/research/men-and-violence-study/regional-findings>

129 Percentage of women who believe a husband is justified in beating his wife when she argues with him; compiled by World Bank from DHS and MICS. <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SG.VAW.ARGU.ZS>

Figure 15

### Share of women who believe a husband is justified in beating his wife when she argues with him (%)



Source: Compiled by World Bank from Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) and Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS)

beating had fallen in several countries.<sup>130</sup> Attitudes in Sub-Saharan Africa have also evolved since 2000—for example, in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Malawi.<sup>131</sup>

## WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY

### The importance of women's participation in peace and security efforts is increasingly being recognized

Research suggests that the security of women and the security of states are linked. Fourteen of the 17 countries that score the worst in the OECD's Social Institutions and Gender Index for gender discrimination in laws, attitudes, and practices also experienced conflict over the past two decades.<sup>132</sup> Since 1995, the international community has increasingly recognized this connection and addressed the importance of including women as part of peace negotiations and ensuring their security in armed conflict. This is of further importance as almost half of peace agreements in the 1990s were shown to have failed within five years.<sup>133</sup> In 2000, the UN Security Council adopted the landmark Resolution 1325, which recognized women's critical role in making and keeping

peace.<sup>134</sup> Since that time, the Security Council has issued six additional resolutions, with four focused on conflict-related sexual violence.<sup>135</sup> Since 1995, international courts and tribunals for the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone, as well as the International Criminal Court, have all recognized rape and other forms of sexual violence as war crimes, crimes against humanity, acts of torture, or acts associated with genocide and have successfully prosecuted a small number of perpetrators.

### Women are consistently excluded from peace and security processes

Notwithstanding growing recognition of the importance of women's participation to peace and security efforts, and despite a growing body of evidence suggesting that women often speak on behalf of marginalized groups and raise issues in peace negotiations that are critical to reconciliation and reconstruction, women rarely have been represented in the peace processes that bring groups to the negotiating table and establish post-conflict frameworks. A recent UN survey of women's participation in peace processes from 1992 to 2011 found that women make up just 9 percent of negotiating delegations, 4 percent of signatories, and 2 percent of chief mediators.<sup>136</sup>

In part because women have taken so few seats at peace tables around the world, quantitative analysis of the effects of women's participation in peace

<sup>130</sup> S. Bott, A. Guedes, M. Goodwin, and J.A. Mendoza, "Violence Against Women in Latin America and the Caribbean: A comparative analysis of population-based data from 12 countries," Pan American Health Organization, 2012. [http://www.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=8175:violence-against-women-latin-america-caribbean-comparative-analysis-population-data-from-12-countries&Itemid=1519&lang=en](http://www.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=8175:violence-against-women-latin-america-caribbean-comparative-analysis-population-data-from-12-countries&Itemid=1519&lang=en)

<sup>131</sup> Percentage of women who believe a husband is justified in beating his wife when she argues with him; compiled by World Bank from DHS and MICS. <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SG.VAW.ARGU.ZS>

<sup>132</sup> OECD Development Centre, Social Institutions and Gender Index 2014, available at <http://genderindex.org/>; Uppsala Conflict Data Program/International Peace Research Institute (UCDP/PRI) Armed Conflict Dataset at Uppsala University. In 2014, the OECD ranked 17 countries as having "very high" levels of discrimination in their social institutions, including discriminatory family codes, restricted civil liberties, and restricted access to resources.

<sup>133</sup> Human Security Report Project (HSRP), Human Security Report 2009/2010: "The causes of peace and the shrinking costs of war." 2010. <http://www.hsrpgroup.org/docs/Publications/HSR20092010/20092010HumanSecurityReport-Part3-TrendsInHumanInsecurity.pdf>

<sup>134</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (October 31, 2000), UN Doc. S/RES/1325. Prior to this, recent resolutions on women and peace and security had largely focused on women as victims of sexual violence rather than agents for shaping peace and security. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ods/S-RES-1325%282000%29-E.pdf>

<sup>135</sup> B. Miller, M. Pournik, and A. Swaine, "Women in Peace and Security through United Nations Security Resolution 1325: Literature Review, Content Analysis of National Action Plans, and Implementation," Institute for Global and International Studies, The George Washington University, May 2014. [http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/NationalActionPlans/miladpournikanalysisdocs/igis\\_womeninpeaceandsecuritythroughhnsr1325\\_millerpournikswaine\\_2014.pdf](http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/NationalActionPlans/miladpournikanalysisdocs/igis_womeninpeaceandsecuritythroughhnsr1325_millerpournikswaine_2014.pdf)

<sup>136</sup> UN Women, "Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations: Connections Between Presence and Influence," October 2012, p. 3.



## The Philippines: Historic first for women's participation in peace processes

In March 2014, Miriam Coronel-Ferrer—the first woman ever to serve as a chief negotiator for a peace agreement—signed a peace accord on behalf of the government that brought an end to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front's (MILF) decades-long insurgency in the Philippines. Women made up half of the government's negotiating team and one quarter of the total number of signatories. Their participation was “not just token representation on the table, but is something that has been shaping the discourse of the talks,” said Teresita Quintos-Deles, the presidential adviser on the peace process.<sup>1</sup>

There were precedents for increased involvement of Filipina women in peace talks. In a separate peace

<sup>1</sup> “Women lead Philippines historic peace accord,” Nobel Women’s Initiative, April 1, 2014. <http://nobelwomensinitiative.org/2014/04/women-lead-philippines-in-historic-peace-accord/#sthash.86Vs9xuk.dpuf>

process in 2011 between the government and the National Democratic Front, a leftist opposition group, women comprised 35 percent of the negotiating teams. Women had also been actively campaigning for peace in civil society for decades. As they pushed for participation in talks and made increasingly meaningful contributions, perceptions about their roles changed over time.

Irene Santiago, one of the first women to represent the government in negotiations with MILF between 2001 and 2004, said her expertise in ceasefires helped her earn a place at the table.<sup>2</sup> She and other women who joined the negotiations with MILF later helped nominate other female experts to the negotiating teams.<sup>3</sup> “MILF said in public... in 2006... that women have no role in public decision making. They would never say that now,” said Santiago.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Unpublished research interview by Marie O'Reilly and Irene Santiago, carried out in conjunction with Andrea Ó Siúiléabhaín, at the International Peace Institute in New York, September 25, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

negotiations is limited. We do know that low levels of female participation are correlated with poor recognition of women’s needs in peace agreements. Only 16 percent of the 585 peace deals signed between 1990 and 2010 referenced women.<sup>137</sup> In the few cases where women were involved significantly in talks—such as in Guatemala, Sudan, and Burundi—personal security issues, including support for victims of sexual violence, services for widows, and education and health were more likely to be incorporated into final peace agreements.

### Women and girls continue to suffer unique risks during and after conflict

Since 1995, women and girls have continued to experience domestic and sexual violence during wars and natural disasters. Although men also experience sexual violence during war, the risks for women are much higher.<sup>138</sup> Amid conflict, rape can take on new and even more brutal forms.<sup>139</sup> The 1990s saw major atrocities in the use of rape as a weapon of war. In Bosnia and Rwanda, mass rape was used as a tool for ethnic

cleansing, targeting Bosnian Muslims and Tutsi women in particular. In Liberia, militias used gang rapes and mutilations to project power and terrorize communities. And women are often stigmatized and cast out from families and communities after experiencing rape, losing their familial, social, and economic safety nets in a time of societal crisis and instability.<sup>140</sup> Women refugees also face increased security risks, including violence.<sup>141</sup>

Conflict can also exacerbate rates of intimate partner violence.<sup>142</sup> During various periods of conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, almost twice as many women reported sexual violence at the hands of their intimate partners than rape in general.<sup>143</sup> Recent statistical analysis of the determinants of intimate partner violence in 22 developing countries found that

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), “Guidelines for Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings,” Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), 2005. <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/opendocPDFViewer.html?docid=453492294&query=gender-based%20violence>

<sup>142</sup> Human Security Report Project, *Human Security Report 2012: Sexual Violence, Education, and War—Beyond the Mainstream Narrative*. J.V. Gallegos and I.A. Gutierrez, “The Effect of Civil Conflict on Domestic Violence: The Case of Peru,” Working Paper, August 3, 2011. <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1904417> S. Maguire, “Researching a Family Affair: Domestic Violence in FRY, Albania,” in C. Sweetman, ed., *Violence Against Women* (Oxford, UK: Oxford, 1998).

<sup>143</sup> Authors used “nationally representative household survey data from 3,436 women selected to answer the domestic violence module who took part in the 2007 DRC Demographic and Health Survey along with population estimates to estimate levels of sexual violence.” A. Peterman, T. Palermo, and K. Bredenkamp, “Estimated and Determinants of Sexual Violence Against Women in the Democratic Republic of Congo,” *American Journal of Public Health* 101, No. 6 (2011): 1060–1067. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3093289/>

<sup>137</sup> C. Bell and C. O'Rourke, “Peace Agreements or ‘Pieces of Paper’?: The Impact of UNSC Resolution 1325 on Peace Processes and Their Agreements,” *International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 59, No. 4 (2010): 941–980.

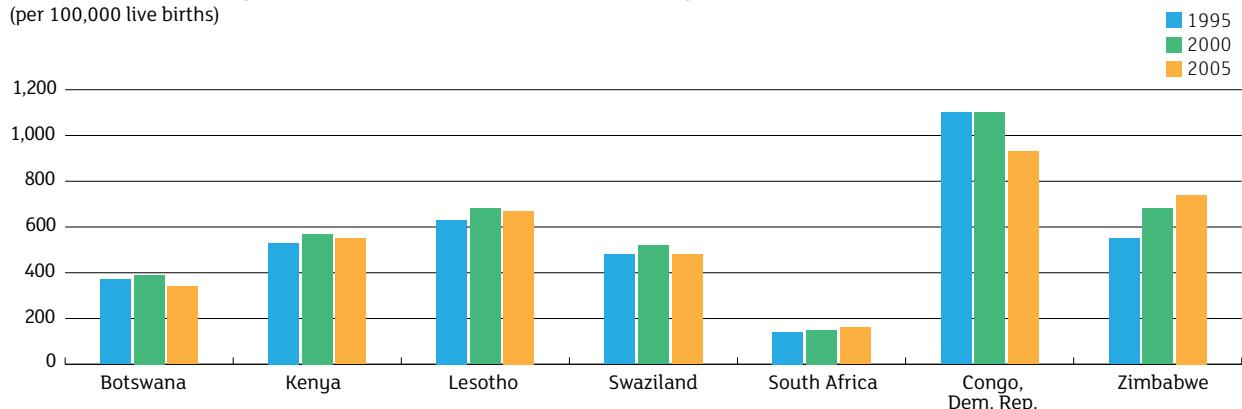
<sup>138</sup> HSRP, Human Security Report 2012: “Sexual Violence, Education, and War—Beyond the Mainstream Narrative,” 2012.

<sup>139</sup> C. Cohn, “Women and Wars: A Conceptual Framework,” in C. Cohn, ed., *Women & Wars* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2013): 29.



Figure 16

### Maternal mortality rates (MMR) for countries with high HIV/AIDS, in conflict, or post conflict (per 100,000 live births)



Sources: Data from World Bank. Countries were analyzed based on report: UNECA, "Assessing Progress in Africa Toward the Millennium Development Goals", 2012.

living in a fragile or conflict-affected state increased the likelihood that a woman will experience intimate partner violence by one-third.<sup>144</sup>

In the wake of conflict, disaster, or public health crises, women and girls are often uniquely and adversely affected. While men are more likely to die in battle, women are more likely to die from the indirect effects of a conflict after it ends, decreasing their life expectancy.<sup>145</sup> The adverse effects last for decades—even generations. Recent research suggests that girls in countries experiencing conflict, instability, or humanitarian crises are often more vulnerable to child marriage.<sup>146</sup> According to the UN, from 2011 to 2013, eight countries detected an increase in trafficking victims from Syria, a rise from previous years before the conflict began.<sup>147</sup> A 2008 study found that the eight countries with the highest maternal mortality rates were either facing or emerging from conflict.<sup>148</sup> The recent Ebola crisis in West Africa has strained health systems, compromising care—especially for pregnant women—and creating a risk of rising maternal mortality rates in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.<sup>149</sup>

<sup>144</sup> J. Klugman and L. Hamner, "Expanding Women's Agency: Where Do We Stand?" *Feminist Economics*, unpublished at press time.

<sup>145</sup> Thomas Plümper and Eric Neumayer, "The Unequal Burden of War: The Effect of Armed Conflict on the Gender Gap in Life Expectancy," *International Organisation* 60, No. 3 (2006).

<sup>146</sup> G. Lemmon, "Fragile States, Fragile Lives: Child Marriage Amid Disaster and Conflict," Working Paper, Council on Foreign Relations, 2014. <http://www.cfr.org/global-fragile-states-fragile-lives/p33093>; World Vision, "Untying the Knot: Exploring Early Marriage in Fragile States," March 2013; M. O'Reilly and W. Alhariri, "While Seeking Stability, Yemen Builds Momentum Against Child Marriage," *The Global Observatory*, April 10, 2014. <http://theglobalobservatory.org/2014/04/finding-an-opening-yemens-makes-strides-against-child-marriage/>

<sup>147</sup> UN Office on Drugs and Crime, "Global Report on Trafficking in Persons: 2014," 2014. [http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/GLOTIP\\_2014\\_full\\_report.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/GLOTIP_2014_full_report.pdf)

<sup>148</sup> UNECA, "Assessing progress toward the Millennium Development Goals," 2012, p. 68. These countries were: Burundi, CAR, Chad, DRC, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Somalia.

<sup>149</sup> UNFPA, "Pregnant in the shadow of Ebola: Deteriorating health systems endanger women," 2014. <http://www.unfpa.org/news/pregnant-shadow-ebola-deteriorating-health-systems-endanger-women>

## ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY

### Though women can be more vulnerable to the consequences of environmental challenges, they are often excluded from planning and negotiations

Environmental disasters create security and safety risks for everyone, but women often face different challenges from those of men. In poor rural settings, they are often responsible for collecting water, food, and firewood; when women have to go farther to search for those resources, they may be exposed to increased risks of violence, particularly around refugee camps and unsafe settings that often emerge after environmental disasters.<sup>150</sup> Evidence also suggests that domestic violence against women may increase in the aftermath of environmental catastrophes, in part due to increases in alcohol abuse and breakdowns in law and order.<sup>151</sup>

Although women are disproportionately affected by natural disasters and are often the stewards of natural resources, they are not fully involved in disaster risk management programs or environmental processes.<sup>152</sup> Since 1995, there has been some progress in recognizing women's role in combatting environmental threats, particularly with respect to climate change. The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has identified adaptation, mitigation, and other issues as critical areas where gender should be considered.

<sup>150</sup> UNEP, UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, UN-PBSO and UNDP, "Women and Natural Resources: Unlocking the Peacebuilding Potential," 2013. <http://www.fao.org/gender/home/gender-programme/gender-natural/en/>

<sup>151</sup> See, for example, Sarah Bradshaw, "Socio-economic impacts of natural disasters: a gender analysis," *Serie Manuales* 33 (2004) and Santiago de Chile: UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, cited in Neumayer and Plümper, "The Gendered Nature of Disasters: The Impact of Catastrophic Events on the Gender Gap in Life Expectancy, 1981–2002," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 97, No. 3 (2007): 551–566.

<sup>152</sup> E. Enarson, P.G. Dhar Chakrabarti, eds., *Women, Gender and Disaster: Global Issues and Initiatives* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2009).



However, only 16 percent of countries report taking gender into account in how they are adapting to climate change in their UNFCCC National Communications.<sup>153</sup> And women's participation in environmental processes continues to lag. During the 19th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) in November 2013, just under one-quarter of the official delegates were women.<sup>154</sup>

Data on the environment are seldom gender disaggregated. This is important as deterioration in environmental quality—such as access to clean water and sanitation, air pollution and habitat degradation—can affect men and women in different ways. Lack of data hinders the design of policies that will both address the challenge of environmental sustainability and respond to the specific needs of women and girls.

<sup>153</sup> Climate Change and Adaptation Research Group (CCARG) and WORLD Policy Analysis Center, Climate Adaptation Database. <http://www.worldpolicyforum.org>

<sup>154</sup> The supreme body of the Convention. It currently meets once a year to review the Convention's progress. The word "conference" is not used here in the sense of "meeting" but rather of "association." The "Conference" meets in sessional periods; for example, the "fourth session of the Conference of the Parties."



## Chapter Three

# Creating opportunity

When women are given the opportunity to participate more fully in economic, political, and civic life, the benefits extend to their families, communities, and countries. But progress in these areas has been slow. Improvement in education has not translated into significant gains for women in the economic sphere. Gender disparities have perpetuated economic inequalities, including women's segregation in certain occupations, earnings gaps, greater responsibility for housework and the care of family members, and unequal access to assets and resources. Economic constraints, including poverty, have also contributed to gender inequality. Biases have limited women's ability to have a voice politically and assume leadership roles in both the private and public sectors. The reasons for these persistent gaps in opportunities include formal legal barriers as well as social norms, reflected both in girls' and women's own expectations and in the chances open to them at home, at school, at work, and in their communities. This section outlines trends in women's economic, political, and civic participation over the past 20 years and highlights critical barriers to progress.

## ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

### **Increasing women's participation in the labor force fuels economic growth—yet barriers persist**

The OECD estimates that narrowing the gap between male and female employment accounted for a quarter of Europe's annual GDP growth between 1995 and 2008.<sup>155</sup> One analysis found that if the female labor force participation rate rose to match that of men, GDP would rise in the United States by 5 percent, in the United Arab Emirates by 12 percent, and in Egypt by 34 percent.<sup>156</sup> For those countries that lag furthest behind on women's participation, the benefits of expanding women's economic opportunities are particularly significant. Japan's potential economic growth rate would rise by about one-quarter of a percentage point annually if female labor force participation rates rose to the G7 average—an enormous boost for a country that has averaged less than 1 percent real GDP growth during the

last decade.<sup>157</sup>

Yet the potential benefits of women's greater economic opportunities are often not realized. Critical barriers continue to limit full economic participation. Some barriers are legal, and these can take many forms, from explicit legal restrictions on women's right to work to the absence of anti-discrimination provisions or work-family policies. Only one-third of national constitutions protect women from workplace discrimination or guarantee equal pay for equal work.<sup>158</sup> Fewer than three out of 10 countries have legal protections against gender discrimination in both hiring and pay.<sup>159</sup>

Many countries have laws that limit women's economic opportunities. Recent data from the World Bank show that 128 countries out of 143 surveyed have at least one legal difference between men and women restricting women's economic opportunities, and in many economies there are multiple differences. Women are disadvantaged by five or more legal differences in 54 countries. Regionally, the highest numbers of legal differences between men and women are found in the Middle East and North Africa, South Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa. These include restrictions on types of work women can do, ability to own property, and retirement age. In the Russian Federation, for example, women still face restrictions in 456 specific jobs, including freight train conductor and lift machinist in the oil and gas industry.<sup>160</sup> There has been change over time—for example, since 1995, at least six countries have removed barriers to women's legal rights to sign a contract or open a bank account—but it has been limited.<sup>161</sup>

<sup>155</sup> International Monetary Fund (IMF), "Women, Work and the Economy: Macroeconomic Gains from Gender Equity," 2013, <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/sdn/2013/sdn1310.pdf>; IMF, Country Report No. 12/208, Japan Article IV Consultation, 2012, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scri/2012/cr12208.pdf>.

<sup>156</sup> While protection from discrimination is more common in constitutions adopted after Beijing (38% post-Beijing versus 12% pre-Beijing), there has been little change in constitutional guarantees of women's rights to equal pay for equal work (23% post-Beijing versus 20% pre-Beijing). WORLD Policy Analysis Center, "Equal Rights for Women and Girls in the World's Constitutions," (2015) WORLD Constitutions Database, <http://www.worldpolicyforum.org>

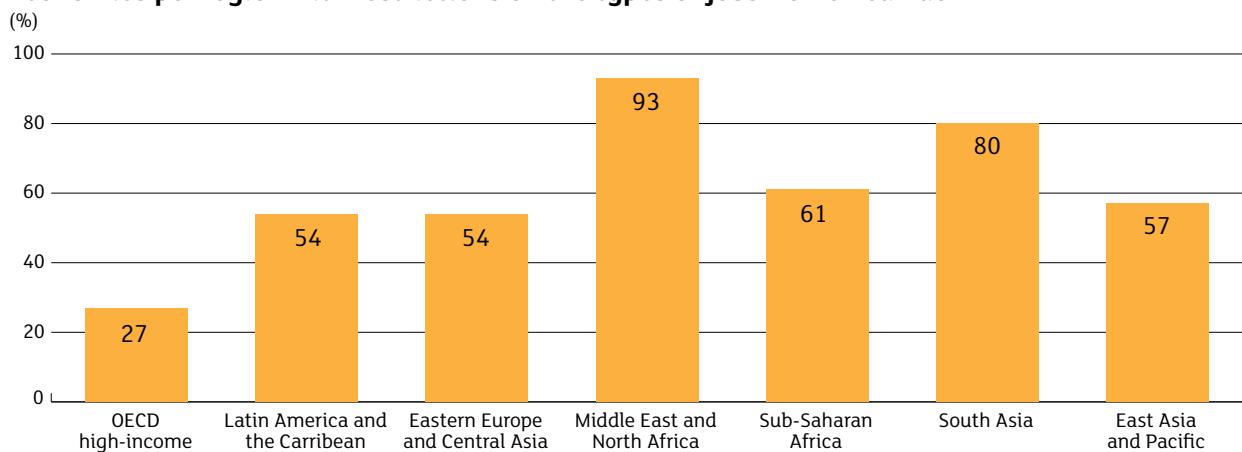
<sup>157</sup> WORLD Policy Analyst Center, "Are States Parties to CEDAW Living up to Their Commitments to Women and Girls? A Globally Comparative Analysis of National Action," 2015. <http://www.worldpolicyforum.org/>; World Bank, Women, Business and the Law Database.

<sup>158</sup> World Bank, "Women, Business and the Law 2014: Removing Restrictions to Enhance Gender Equality," 2013. <http://wbl.worldbank.org/-/media/PDFK/WBL/Documents/Reports/2014/Women-Business-and-the-Law-2014-FullReport.pdf>

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.



Figure 17

**Economies per region with restrictions on the types of jobs women can do**

Source: World Bank, Women, Business and the Law, available at: <http://wbl.worldbank.org/data>, accessed June 2014

Persistent gaps in economic opportunities are also caused by social norms, which may be formalized in law or manifested in the expectations that influence women's and girls' experiences in their homes, schools, workplaces, and communities. Norms affect whether women can work if they choose, the types of jobs they can have, the pay they receive, their opportunities to advance at work, and their share of responsibilities at home. Globally, nearly 40 percent of people agree that when jobs are in short supply, men should have more right to a job than women.<sup>162</sup> These challenges are magnified for those facing overlapping disadvantages—like poverty, race, disability, or isolation in remote areas.

Barriers to women's economic opportunities can be more than just legal and cultural—they can include gender differences in human capital, time use, and access to assets, productive inputs and markets, as well as differences in legal and regulatory frameworks and social norms. These differences constrain women's productivity: Women work hard for meager returns, which results in families and societies investing less in women.<sup>163</sup>

### **Women's participation in the workforce has stagnated for two decades**

Globally, women's participation in the labor force has stalled over the past 20 years. While male participation rates fell, the gap between men and women remains wide

and virtually unchanged since 1995. Today, according to the International Labour Organization (ILO), around 55 percent of women globally are part of the labor force, compared with 82 percent of men.<sup>164</sup>

There are exceptions, however. Women's participation rates in Latin America rose by nearly 20 percent between 1995 and 2013.<sup>165</sup> In Colombia, once one of the countries in the region that was least open to female workers, the presence of women in the labor force climbed by more than 50 percent over this period.<sup>166</sup> By contrast, the United States experienced a decline, with about 66 percent of women between ages 15 and 64 participating in the workforce in 2013, down from 69 percent in 1995.<sup>167</sup>

Labor force participation rates are often used to represent women's economic opportunities. These data have the advantage of being much more widely available than other indicators, such as wages or the quality of work. However, it is important to note that labor force participation rates tend to be high in poor countries where people may not have any choice but to seek some kind of work outside the home. Labor force participation is also defined to exclude unpaid domestic labor and child care in one's own home, as well as subsistence agriculture—work that is significantly more likely to be

<sup>164</sup> International Labor Organization (ILO) Key Indicators of the Labor Market (KILM), labor force participation rates, male and female, percentage of population aged 15–64, modeled ILO estimate, accessed January 2015. As defined by the ILO, the labour force participation rate is the proportion of the population that is economically active—meaning all people who supply labor for the production of goods and services during a specified period.

<sup>165</sup> ILO, KILM. The labor force participation rate in Latin America rose from 48.5% in 1995 to 58.1% in 2013.

<sup>166</sup> ILO, KILM.

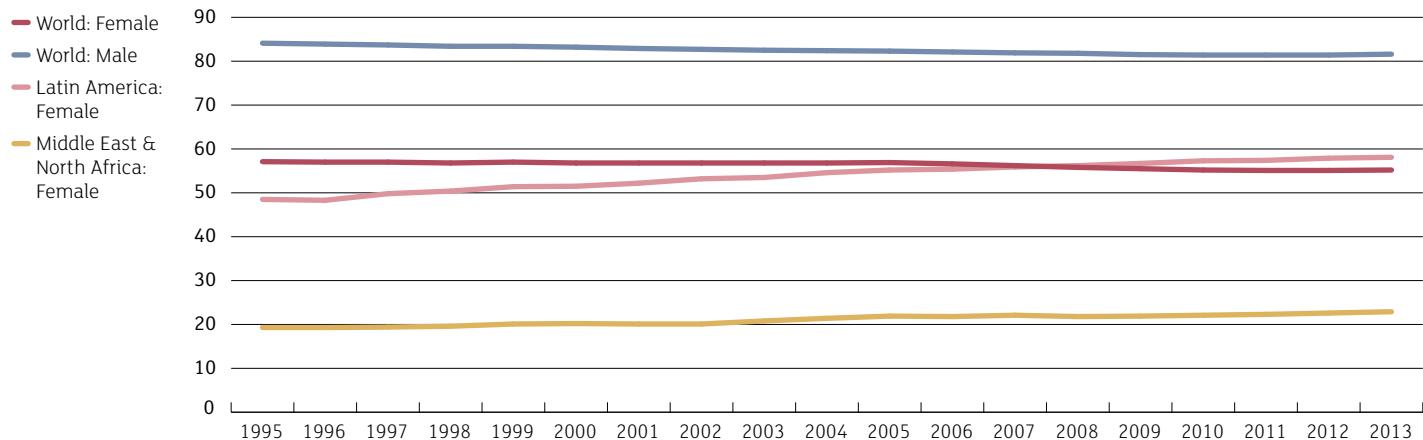
<sup>167</sup> Labor force participation rates for both men and women have been declining in the United States during the past 20 years.

<sup>162</sup> World Bank, "Gender at Work: A Companion to the World Development Report on Jobs," 2014. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/17121>

<sup>163</sup> World Bank, "World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development," 2012. <http://econ.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTEDEC/EXTRESEARCH/EXTWDRS/EXTWDR2012/0..contentMDK:22999750~menuPK:8154981~pagePK:64167689~piPK:64167673~theSitePK:7778063,00.html>



Figure 18  
**Participation in the labor force**  
 (% age 15-64, global and selected regions)



Source: ILO, Key Indicators of the Labor Market

performed by women than men. Therefore, in understanding the full picture of women's work, earnings, job security, quality of work, and other factors should be considered as well.

Throughout the world, tens of millions of people are earning a living in the informal economy—this can include laborers on small farms, entrepreneurs selling goods in local markets, and domestic workers. This is true in all economies, in both high- and low-income countries, although much more prevalent in developing countries. While there is a diversity of informal sector jobs, such workers are typically not often recognized or protected under national legal and regulatory frameworks and, as a result, are often excluded from the coverage of labor rights, minimum wages, parental leave and retirement benefits. They typically only receive parental leave and retirement benefits if these are provided through social security systems that are not tied to jobs. A recent ILO report found that in 30 out of 41 countries and in six cities in China, women are more likely than men to work in the informal sector.<sup>168</sup>

### Women around the world continue to earn less than men

Although data on earnings for women and men are limited, reported gender gaps generally range from about

10 to 40 percent.<sup>169</sup> In high-income countries, the average wage advantage for men is around 15 percent. It is as little as 6 percent in Belgium and as high as 37 percent in South Korea.<sup>170</sup> The gap typically widens as women enter their childbearing years, creating a "motherhood penalty" that is estimated at 14 percent of the gap in advanced economies.<sup>171</sup>

There has been little progress in closing the gender wage gap since 1995. According to calculations based on data from the ILO, the average gender wage gap narrowed from 28 percent to 20 percent between 1995 and 2011 in around 70 countries covering about one-third of the world's population.<sup>172</sup>

An important driver of persistent earnings gaps is occupational segregation. Around the world women are more likely to be in vulnerable and informal types of work, while men are more likely to have jobs as wage and salaried employees and as employers—jobs that are typically more secure and have more legal and social protections.<sup>173</sup> During the past two decades, however, there is some evidence of a narrowing of the gender gap in wage and salaried work: For a group of 66 middle- and

169 UN, "The World's Women 2010: Trends and Statistics." Earnings measured as the proportion of women's average earnings to men's average earnings, usually only for the manufacturing sector. <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/Worldswomen/WW2010pub.htm#>

170 OECD, Gender Equality Database, gender wage gap. <http://www.oecd.org/gender/data/genderwagegap.htm>

171 IMF, "Women, Work and the Economy." <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/cat/longres.aspx?sk=40915>

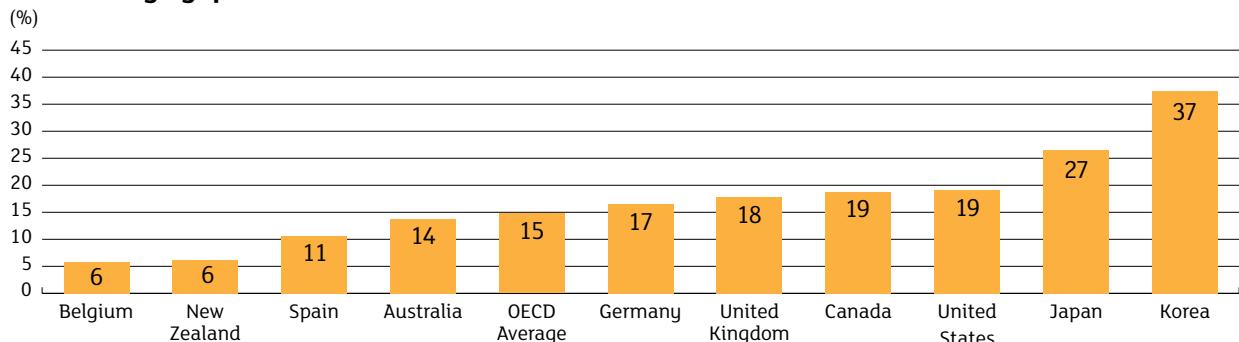
172 EIU calculations based on data from "ILO Global Wage Report 2012/13: Wages and Equitable Growth," 2012. Figures cited are gaps between average nominal monthly wages for women and average nominal monthly wages for men, comparing the periods 1995-1999 and 2007-2011, taking simple averages of all available country wage gaps during those two periods. <http://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/global-wage-report/2012/lang--en/index.htm>

173 ILO, "Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Picture," second edition, 2002. [http://www.ilo.org/stat/Publications/WCMS\\_234413/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/stat/Publications/WCMS_234413/lang--en/index.htm)

168 ILO, "Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Picture," second edition, 2013, [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---stat/documents/publication/wcms\\_234413.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---stat/documents/publication/wcms_234413.pdf); World Bank, "World Development Report 2013: Jobs," 2013. [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTNWRD2013/Resources/8258024-1320950747192/8260293-1322665883147/WDR\\_2013\\_Report.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTNWRD2013/Resources/8258024-1320950747192/8260293-1322665883147/WDR_2013_Report.pdf)



Figure 19

**Gender wage gap for selected advanced economies**

The gender wage gap is unadjusted and calculated as the difference between median earnings of men and women relative to median earnings of men; 2012 or latest year.  
Source: OECD

high-income countries representing 28 percent of the global population, the gap fell from about 27 percent in the late 1990s to about 17 percent in more recent years.<sup>174</sup>

Twenty years after Beijing, women in developing countries are still more likely to work in agriculture and service industries that pay less than sectors such as manufacturing, where men work in greater numbers. In the developed world as well, there has been remarkably little change in the gender balance of some professions. In the United States, for example, 80 percent of secretaries, teachers, nurses and home health aides are female.<sup>175</sup>

For workers in the formal sector, strong minimum wage policies can help to lift workers out of poverty and close gender pay gaps.<sup>176</sup> Moreover, evidence from across Latin America demonstrates in a majority of these countries increases in the minimum wage also increased earnings in the informal economy.<sup>177</sup> More than four out of five low- and middle-income countries have established a minimum wage.<sup>178</sup> However, in nearly 10 percent of these countries, the minimum wage adjusted for purchasing power parity is below US\$2 per day for a worker and his or her dependent child. In more than half

of those countries, changes in the minimum wage since 1999 have not kept pace with changes in GDP growth.<sup>179</sup>

### Women continue to lack access to assets and resources

Laws can prescribe that women have equal rights to receive family assets. Today, most countries (81 percent) do so, and some recent inheritance reforms have had far-reaching effects. A study of India's national Hindu Succession Law found positive effects on women's access to bank accounts and increased household bargaining power.<sup>180</sup> However, women in 17 percent of countries still do not have the same chance to inherit as their brothers, and women whose husbands die before them may not be equally entitled to the property that they shared during marriage.<sup>181</sup>

Women still have less access to basic assets and resources than men. For example, women comprise almost half of the agricultural workers in Sub-Saharan Africa, but typically own smaller plots of land than men, and their yields tend to be 13 percent to 25 percent lower, according to a six-country study.<sup>182</sup> These disparities not only limit women's potential but also shortchange broader productivity and growth. The FAO forecasts that closing gender gaps in access to resources could boost overall agricultural productivity worldwide by 2.5 to 4

<sup>174</sup> ILO, KILM. A comparison of the gap, in percentage terms, in the actual number of women and men who were wage and salaried employees in these 66 countries, comparing the earliest year for which there are data from 1995 to 1999 with the latest year for which there are data from 2007 to 2012.

<sup>175</sup> A. Hegewisch and H. Hartmann, "Occupational Segregation and the Gender Wage Gap: A Job Half Done," Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) Scholars' Papers series, June 2014. <http://www.iwpr.org/publications/pubs/occupational-segregation-and-the-gender-wage-gap-a-job-half-done>

<sup>176</sup> H. Robinson, "Regional evidence on the effect of the national minimum wage on the gender pay gap," *Regional Studies* (serial online) 39, No. 7, (2005): 855-872, available from EconLit, Ipswich, MA; D. Grimshaw and M. Miozzo, "Minimum wages and pay equity in Latin America," ILO, 2003. [http://www.ilo.int/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms\\_decl\\_wp\\_14\\_en.pdf](http://www.ilo.int/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms_decl_wp_14_en.pdf)

<sup>177</sup> Maloney, W. and Mendez, J. (2004). Measuring the impact of minimum wages: Evidence from Latin America. pp.109-130. <http://www.nber.org/chapters/c10068.pdf>

<sup>178</sup> MACHEquity and WORLD Policy Analysis Center, "Minimum Wage Policies to Support Women and Their Families in 121 Low- and Middle-Income Countries," MACHEquity Minimum Wage Database, 2015. <http://www.worldpolicyforum.org>

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> WORLD Policy Analysis Center, "Are States Parties to CEDAW Living up to Their Commitments to Women and Girls? A Globally Comparative Analysis of National Action," 2015. <http://www.worldpolicyforum.org>; World Bank, Women, Business and the Law Database; K. Deininger, F. Xia, S. Jin, and H.K. Nagarajan, "Inheritance law reform, empowerment, and human capital accumulation: second-generation effects from India," Policy Research Working Paper No. WPS 7086, World Bank Group, 2014.

<sup>181</sup> WORLD Policy Analysis Center, "Are States Parties to CEDAW Living up to Their Commitments to Women and Girls? A Globally Comparative Analysis of National Action," World Bank Women, Business and the Law Database, 2015. <http://www.worldpolicyforum.org>

<sup>182</sup> World Bank, "Levelling the Field: Improving Opportunities for Women Farmers in Africa," 2014. Productivity per hectare in six countries studied. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/region/afr/publication/levelling-the-field-improving-opportunities-for-women-farmers-in-africa>



## Entrepreneurship in Sub-Saharan Africa

Entrepreneurial activity creates economic opportunity. In many countries, women and men who start their own businesses can lift themselves out of poverty while also spurring job creation and boosting the national economy. People in low-income countries tend to have high rates of entrepreneurship, in part because it can be an important means of survival.<sup>1</sup> This is certainly true in many Sub-Saharan African countries, where overall rates of entrepreneurship typically range from 30 to 40 percent.

Worldwide surveys by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) consistently show that men are more likely to start businesses than women, although rates can vary considerably across countries. Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America have higher rates of gender parity than other regions of the world. In 2012, the rates were equal, or nearly so, in Uganda and Namibia, and Ghana and Nigeria are among the few countries in the world where the rate of female entrepreneurship exceeds that of men.

<sup>1</sup> Experts often distinguish between necessity-driven entrepreneurship, which may be a matter of basic survival for residents of a low-income country, and opportunity-driven entrepreneurship, which is more common in higher-income countries in which residents may be creating more innovative businesses.

By contrast, the largest gender gap is in the Middle East and North Africa, where men start businesses at three times the rate of women.<sup>2</sup>

Little is known about gender differences in the sizes of these businesses and the extent to which they are driven by necessity versus opportunity. More research is needed to answer these questions, as well as to see if there are differences in perceptions of male and female entrepreneurs.<sup>3</sup> The Evidence and Data for Gender Equality (EDGE) Initiative, launched at the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness at Busan in November 2011 and catalyzed by the United States' call to action at the OECD Ministerial Session on Gender and Development earlier that year, is in the process of developing standards and guidelines for gender indicators on entrepreneurship and assets, among other areas.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Gender Entrepreneurship Monitor, "African Entrepreneurship: Sub-Saharan African Regional Report 2012," 2012. <http://www.gemconsortium.org/docs/2909/gem-2012-sub-saharan-africa-regional-report>

<sup>3</sup> GEM report, African Entrepreneurship, 2012. Although some time-series data exist on female entrepreneurship rates in Sub-Saharan Africa, annual rates tend to be volatile and say little about trends over time.

<sup>4</sup> Busan Joint Action Plan for Gender Equality and Development, November 2011. <http://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/49503142.pdf>; UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UN Statistics Division, Gender Statistics, The Evidence and Data for Gender Equality (EDGE) Initiative. <http://genderstats.org/EDGE>

percent.<sup>183</sup> Access to productive resources—including capital, technology, and training—is particularly important to poor women working in subsistence production and in very small farms and firms.

Today, hundreds of millions of women run their own businesses, but access to finance remains a barrier. According to the World Bank's *Global Financial Inclusion Database (Global Findex)*, women in developing countries are 20 percent less likely than men to have an account at a formal financial institution or bank, and 17 percent less likely to have borrowed in the past year from a formal institution.<sup>184</sup> When women in low-income countries do get loans, they are much more likely to come from a family member or friend than from a financial institution. The average company owned by a man in a city or urban area in Africa has more than twice the start-up capital than the average woman-owned firm.<sup>185</sup> Beyond loans, women often have less access than men to other kinds of financial services and resources, such as

savings, insurance, and digital payment methods. Lack of financial education can also limit women's opportunities to start their own businesses.<sup>186</sup> Mobile Banking and digital payments offer an opportunity to increase women's access to secure, convenient, private, and reliable accounts.<sup>187</sup>

### Women and girls still do most unpaid and domestic labor

Women's economic opportunities continue to be limited by their disproportionate role in unpaid work in the home. Women in every country are still overwhelmingly responsible for housework and the care of children and the elderly. This has been called the "second shift."<sup>188</sup> On average, women devote up to three hours more each day to housework than men, including two to 10 times more time on family care, and one to four fewer hours on work

<sup>183</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, "The State of Food and Agriculture, Women in Agriculture: Closing the Gender Gap for Development," 2011. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i2050e00.htm>

<sup>184</sup> World Bank, Global Financial Inclusion Database. <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTGLOBALFIN/Resources/8519638-1332259343991/N9gender.pdf>

<sup>185</sup> World Bank, "World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development," 2012. <http://econ.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTECD/EXTRESEARCH/EXTWDRS/EXTWDR2012/0..contentMDK:22999750~menuPK:8154981~pagePK:64167689~piPK:64167673~theSitePK:7778063.00.html>

<sup>186</sup> World Bank, Global Financial Inclusion Database, and World Bank website on women's access to finance. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2013/04/01/banking-on-women-extending-womens-access-to-financial-services>

<sup>187</sup> GSMA mWomen Global Development Alliance, "Unlocking the Potential: Women and Mobile Financial Services in Emerging Markets," last modified February 2013. [http://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/GSMA-mWomen-Visa\\_Unlocking-the-Potential\\_Feb-2013.pdf](http://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/GSMA-mWomen-Visa_Unlocking-the-Potential_Feb-2013.pdf)

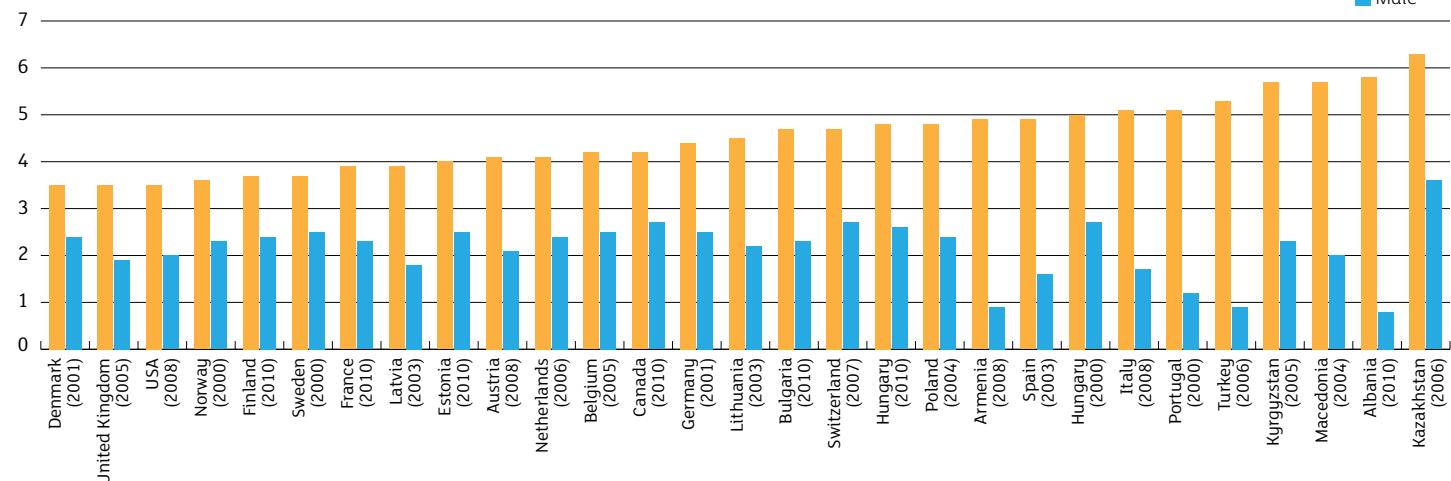
<sup>188</sup> A. Hochschild, *The Second Shift: Working Parents and the Revolution at Home* (New York: Viking, 1989).



Figure 20

**Time spent on unpaid domestic work**

(Average hours spent per day)

Time spent on domestic work refers to average hours per day that women or men ages 20-74 spent on housework, child and adult care, and shopping and services, among other household activities.

Sources: World Bank World DataBank Gender Statistics; Compiled from UNECE

outside the home.<sup>189</sup> In high-income countries, including the United States, women spend twice as much time on unpaid work as men.<sup>190</sup>

**Nearly all countries provide for paid maternal leave, but other policies are needed**

Labor policies that facilitate or hinder working adults' ability to balance jobs and caregiving have a particularly large impact on women. Paid maternal leave supports women's continued employment, job stability, and longer-term wage growth.<sup>191</sup> Since 1995, eight countries have enacted paid maternal leave, more than 50

189 World Bank, "World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development," 2012. <http://econ.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTRESEARCH/EXTWDRS/EXTWDR2012/0,,contentMDK:22999750~menuPK:8154981~pagePK:64167689~piPK:64167673~theSitePK:7778063,00.html>

190 OECD, "Closing the Gender Gap—Act Now," 2012. According to the OECD, women in advanced economies spend around 277 minutes a day on work in the home, men about 140 minutes. [http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/social-issues-migration-health/close-the-gender-gap-now\\_9789264179370-en#page1](http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/social-issues-migration-health/close-the-gender-gap-now_9789264179370-en#page1)

191 WORLD Policy Analysis Center and MACHEquity, "Labor Policies to Promote Equity at Work and at Home: Findings from 197 Countries," 2015. <http://www.worldpolicyforum.org>

approved an increase in leave duration, and 20 raised payment rates.<sup>192</sup> Today, only nine countries (the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Suriname, Tonga, and the United States) do not have laws that provide for some paid leave for mothers of infants. The United States is the only high-income country without paid leave.<sup>193</sup>

Around half of countries have enacted paid paternal leave, though typically for far shorter periods or only as

192 WORLD Policy Analysis Center and MACHEquity, "Labor Policies to Promote Equity at Work and at Home: Findings from 197 Countries," WORLD and MACHEquity Adult Labor Database, 2015. <http://www.worldpolicyforum.org>

193 WORLD Policy Analysis Center and MACHEquity, "Labor Policies to Promote Equity at Work and at Home: Findings from 197 Countries," WORLD Adult Labor Database, 2015. <http://www.worldpolicyforum.org>; ILO, "Maternity and Paternity at Work: Law and Practice across the World," 2014. [http://www.ilo.org/wcms5/groups/public/-/dgreports/-/dcomm/documents/publication/wcms\\_242617.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcms5/groups/public/-/dgreports/-/dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_242617.pdf). Of the 185 countries and territories surveyed, the ILO found only two countries (the United States and Papua New Guinea) that do not guarantee workers paid maternity leave. Because the WORLD Policy Analysis Center conducted a review of 197 countries, they found an additional seven countries (Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Suriname, and Tonga) that do not guarantee such paid leave. Of note, five of the nine countries without universal paid maternity leave do include coverage for public sector workers (Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Suriname, and Tonga).

Figure 21

**Change in percentage of countries guaranteeing at least 14 weeks of paid maternal leave from 1995 to 2014 by country income level\***

	1995	2000	2005	2010	2014
All countries	41%	43%	45%	50%	52%
Low-income countries	39%	39%	39%	48%	48%
Medium-income countries	31%	33%	35%	39%	41%
High-income countries	58%	61%	66%	70%	75%

\*Country income level is based on the World Bank's income level categorization in February 2014 and does not reflect change over time.  
Source: MACHEquity & WORLD Policy Analysis Center, Adult Labor Database (1995-2014)


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Research and analysis by the EIU and the WORLD Policy Analysis Center

Figure 22

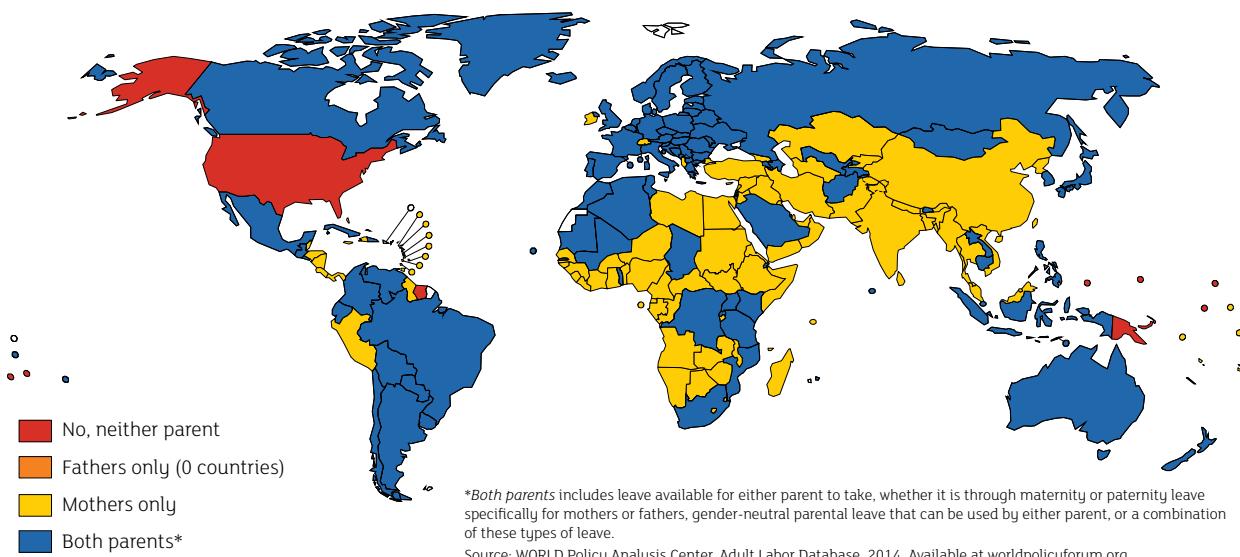
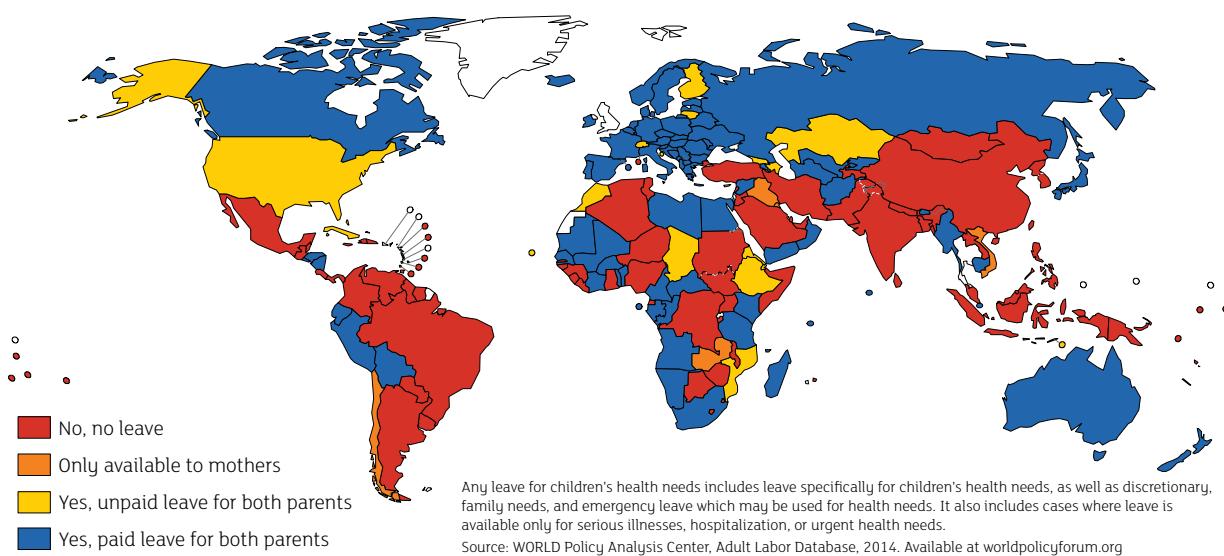
**Is paid leave available for both parents of infants?**

Figure 23

**Are working women and men guaranteed leave specifically for their children's health needs?**

gender-neutral parental leave.<sup>194</sup> Providing father-specific paid leave is important, since research shows that men are more likely to take leave when it is specifically allocated to them. In Sweden, where the amount of paternal leave taken has increased significantly since 1995, fathers are given 60 days of leave along with an additional 360 days that can be shared with the

mother.<sup>195</sup> Such laws help promote involvement by men in child care over time.<sup>196</sup>

Of course, caregiving does not end at infancy. Many countries lack policies to enable workers to meet essential family needs. Forty-six percent of countries do

<sup>194</sup> In 2013, a quarter of all parental leave days were taken by fathers compared with only 7% in 1989. Thirteen percent of couples share parental leave fairly equally. International Network on Leave Policies and Research, "10th International Review of Leave Policies and Related Research 2014," 2014. [http://www.leave-network.org/fileadmin/Leave-network/Annual\\_reviews/2014\\_annual\\_review\\_korr.pdf](http://www.leave-network.org/fileadmin/Leave-network/Annual_reviews/2014_annual_review_korr.pdf)

<sup>195</sup> M. O'Brien, "Fathers, Parental Leave Policies, and Infant Quality of Life: International Perspectives and Policy Impact," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 624 (2009): 190-213; L. Nepomnyashchy and J. Waldfogel, "Paternity Leave and Fathers' Involvement with Their Young Children," *Community, Work and Family* 10, No. 4 (2007): 427-453; S. Tanaka and J. Waldfogel, "Effects of Parental Leave and Work Hours on Fathers' Involvement with their Babies," *Community, Work and Family* 10, No. 4 (2007): 409-426.

194 WORLD Policy Analysis Center and MACHEquity, "Labor Policies to Promote Equity at Work and at Home: Findings from 197 Countries," WORLD Adult Labor Database, 2015. <http://www.worldpolicyforum.org>

## Child and elder care policies around the world

Around the world, women are largely responsible for caring for children and bear increasing responsibility for elderly relatives as well. This is particularly true as more and more families move to urban areas and away from extended family. Access to child care and elder care are important to the economic participation of parents, particularly women. Investments in child care and early childhood programs are also critical to child development and the ability of children to reach their full potential as adults.

Finding affordable, quality care that meets the needs of working families is difficult. Large gaps in access remain, particularly in low-income countries, quality is strained, services for children under three are often not available, and access to full day services that address the needs of working families remains limited.<sup>1</sup> Around the world, the poorest children are at greatest risk of being left alone or with inadequate care.<sup>2</sup>

The most reliable figures on cost—themselves incomplete—are for a group of high-income countries that are members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). These data show that formal child care is more available in the OECD economies than in low-income countries, although the cost to families can be high. In 34 OECD countries, costs for a two-year-old in child care or pre-school amounts to around 27 percent

1 OECD, "Babies and Bosses: Reconciling Work and Family Life—A Synthesis of Findings for OECD Countries," 2007. <http://www.oecd.org/els/family/babiesandbosses-reconcilingworkandfamilylifeasynthesisoffindingsforoecdcountries.htm>

2 UNICEF, "Inequities in Early Development: What the Data Say," 2012.

of an average worker's wages.<sup>3</sup> OECD data also show that the level of combined national spending on child care and pre-primary education averages nearly half a percent of GDP in these economies, and is slightly more than 1% in Sweden.<sup>4</sup>

Only 29 percent of countries guarantee leave to working men and women specifically to meet elderly parents' health needs.<sup>5</sup> In many cases, this leave may be too short to attend to more serious or long-term health needs or is only available in the case of imminent death. When leave is unavailable, women are more likely to risk job or income loss to provide care for parents.<sup>6</sup> Among the countries that allow for leave to meet family health needs—including for parents—are the Seychelles and El Salvador, for 15 and 30 days respectively. In Belgium, workers are guaranteed paid leave for more extended periods to care for seriously ill family members.<sup>7</sup>

Collecting better data—particularly to get national-level data—on the costs, availability, and quality of child care, early childhood education, and elder care is critical.

3 OECD Family Database. <http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database.htm>.

4 Ibid.

5 WORLD Policy Analysis Center and MACHEquity, "Labor Policies to Promote Equity at Work and at Home: Findings from 197 Countries," WORLD Adult Labor Database, 2015. <http://www.worldpolicyforum.org>

6 J. Heymann and A. Earle, *Raising the Global Floor: Dismantling the Myth That We Can't Afford Good Working Conditions for Everyone* (Stanford Politics and Policy, 2009); J. Heymann, *Forgotten Families: Ending the Growing Crisis Confronting Children and Working Parents in the Global Economy* (Oxford University Press, 2007); World Bank, "World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development," p. 219; H. E. Restrepo and M. Rosenthal, "The social impact of aging populations: some major issues," *Social Science & Medicine* 39 (9): 1323-38; P. B. Doress-Worters, "Adding Elder Care to Women's Multiple Roles: A Critical Review of the Caregiver Stress and Multiple Roles," *Literatures in Sex Roles* 31 (9-10): 597-616; Y. Hashizume, "Available but Not Accessible: An Examination of the Use of Workplace Policies for Caregivers of Elderly Kin," *Journal of Family Issues* 19 (3): 274-299.

7 WORLD Policy Analysis Center and MACHEquity, "Labor Policies to Promote Equity at Work and at Home: Findings from 197 Countries," WORLD Adult Labor Database, 2015. <http://www.worldpolicyforum.org>

not guarantee leave for parents to address children's health needs, three-quarters provide no form of leave for parents to support a child's education, and half do not allow leave to meet the health requirements of an adult family member. Five countries perpetuate unequal caregiving by guaranteeing leave to meet children's health needs only to mothers.<sup>197</sup>

### Fewer women live in poor households than 20 years ago, but many are still vulnerable

Poverty fell from 36 percent of the global population living on less than US\$1.25 a day in 1990 to 15 percent in 2011.<sup>198</sup> Because most measures of poverty rely on household survey data, and because the distribution of

income within households is typically unequal, we do not know the number of women and girls in poverty. However, evidence suggests that women are more likely to live in poverty than men.<sup>199</sup>

Discriminatory laws restrict women's access to inheritance, land, and property. Women are less likely than men to own assets, have access to credit, and get decent work. And they are disproportionately responsible for care and domestic work. As a result, women are less likely to be able to earn incomes and are therefore more likely to be poor.<sup>200</sup> Even in high-income countries, poverty is a serious concern, especially for women. In the United States, for example, 60 percent of poor adults are women. More than one in seven U.S. women, or about 18 million, lived in poverty in 2013, and poverty rates are

197 WORLD Policy Analysis Center and MACHEquity, "Labor Policies to Promote Equity at Work and at Home: Findings from 197 Countries," WORLD Adult Labor Database, 2015. <http://www.worldpolicyforum.org>

198 World Bank Global Monitoring Report. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/global-monitoring-report/report-card/twin-goals/ending-extreme-poverty>

199 UN, "The World's Women 2010: Trends and Statistics." <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/Worldswomen/WW2010pub.htm#>

200 Ibid.



especially high for minority women, single mothers, and elderly women living alone.<sup>201</sup>

In old age, women are often more vulnerable to poverty than men due to lower rates of participation in the formal labor force, lower wages, and longer life spans. In 18 percent of countries, women whose husbands die before them may not be equally entitled to the property that they shared during marriage, endangering economic security.<sup>202</sup> Pensions provide an important safety net against poverty in old age. While nearly all countries had some form of pension system in place in 2012, in about half pensions were “contributory,” meaning they are only available to workers who have contributed to the pension system. This disadvantages the many women who work in the informal economy as well as those who took leave from work to care for their children or were paid lower wages than men.<sup>203</sup>

<sup>201</sup> National Women's Law Center, "Analysis of 2013 Census Poverty Data," based on data from the US Census Bureau. <http://www.nwlc.org/nwlc-analysis-2013-census-poverty-data>

<sup>202</sup> WORLD Policy Analysis Center, "Are States Parties to CEDAW Living up to Their Commitments to Women and Girls? A Globally Comparative Analysis of National Action," 2015. <http://www.worldpolicyforum.org>; World Bank, Women, Business and the Law Database.

<sup>203</sup> WORLD Policy Analysis Center, Poverty Database.

### Access to technology is increasing, but a gender gap exists

In the 21st century, technology and media are increasingly pathways to opportunity. Access to computers and the Internet has increased dramatically since 1995 and has revolutionized everything from the availability of health information to educational and economic opportunity. According to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), approximately 2.7 billion people used the Internet in 2013, more than doubling over the decade, and there were almost 7 billion mobile cellular and over 2 billion mobile broadband subscriptions by the end of 2013.<sup>204</sup>

Yet there are gaps. An estimated 200 million fewer women than men are online in developing countries, and 300 million fewer women own a mobile phone.<sup>205</sup> A 2012 study by Intel concluded that across the developing world, an average of 23 percent fewer women than men

<sup>204</sup> International Telecommunication Union, "Measuring the Information Society," 2013. [http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/publications/mis2013/MIS2013\\_without\\_Annex\\_4.pdf](http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/publications/mis2013/MIS2013_without_Annex_4.pdf)

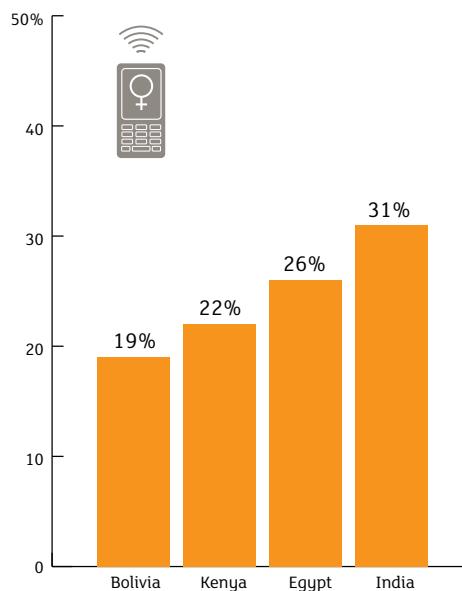
<sup>205</sup> *Women and the Web: Bridging the Internet Gap and Creating New Global Opportunities in Low- and Middle-Income Countries* (Santa Clara, CA: Intel, Dalberg, 2012). <http://www.intel.com/content/dam/www/public/us/en/documents/pdf/women-and-the-web.pdf>; *Women & Mobile: A Global Opportunity*. (United Kingdom: GSMA mWomen, Cherie Blair Foundation for Women, 2010). [http://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/GSMA\\_Women\\_and\\_Mobile-A\\_Global\\_Opportunity.pdf](http://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/GSMA_Women_and_Mobile-A_Global_Opportunity.pdf)

Figure 24

## Women and ICT

### Mobile gender gap

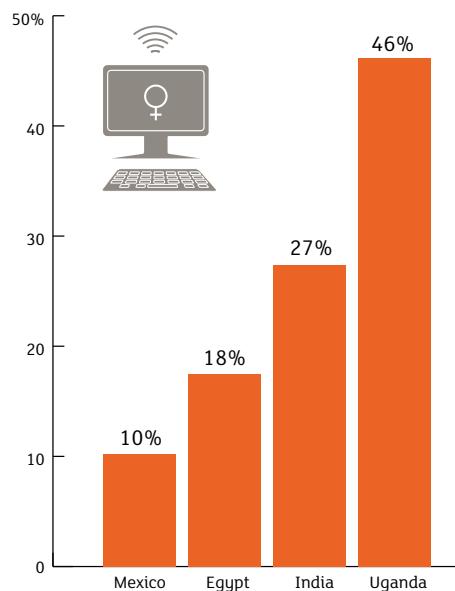
What % of women are less likely to own a mobile phone than a man?



Source: Cherie Blair Foundation for Women, GSMA mWomen, Vital Wave Consulting, "Women & Mobile: A Global Opportunity," 2010

### Internet gender gap

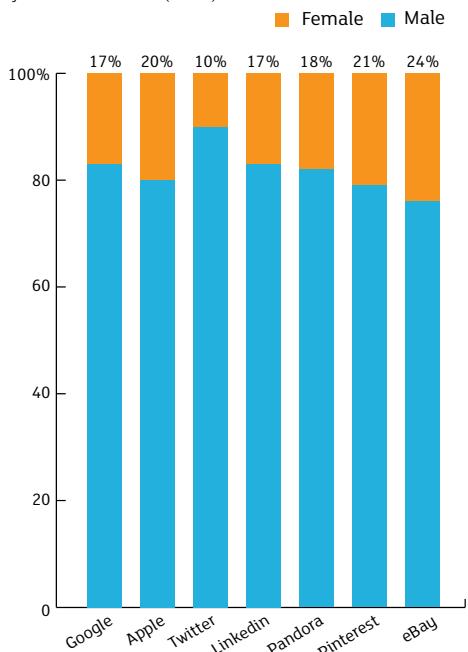
What % fewer women have access to the internet than men?



Source: Intel, Dalberg, "Women and the Web: Bridging the Internet Gap and Creating New Global Opportunities in Low and Middle-Income Countries," 2012

### Gender gaps in tech employment

% of males and females in technology jobs at tech firms (2014)



Source: Company websites and C. Forrest, "Diversity stats: 10 tech companies that have come clean," TechRepublic, August 2014



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The Economist Intelligence Unit

WORLD Policy Analysis Center

## From the field: The power of mobile technology

For many women, a mobile phone is an essential tool for work, safety, and independence.<sup>1</sup> In Uganda, women farmers use texts to stay on top of current market prices and seek advice on farming techniques. In rural Pakistan, Lady Health Workers connect patients with doctors and other health providers through text messaging. In Kosovo, through the use of mobile phones, Women for Women mobilized women across the country in just 48 hours to participate in a forum supporting a gender equality

<sup>1</sup> Women & Mobile: A Global Opportunity. (United Kingdom: GSMA mWomen, Cherie Blair Foundation for Women, 2010). [http://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/GSMA\\_Women\\_and\\_Mobile-A\\_Global\\_Opportunity.pdf](http://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/GSMA_Women_and_Mobile-A_Global_Opportunity.pdf)

clause in the constitution, which was later adopted.<sup>2</sup> Women are also using the Internet and mobile phones to organize themselves and express their views in unprecedented numbers. For example, Manal al-Sharif, who founded the Women2drive campaign in Saudi Arabia, has attracted both social and traditional media to her efforts to secure the right for women to drive cars in her country.<sup>3</sup> A recent report also found that access to mobile and digital financial accounts provides women with increased decision-making and control over their income.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> UNHCR, "Manal al-Sharif, a driving force for change," 2013. <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/ManalAl-Sharifadriivingforceforchange.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> World Bank Development Research Group for the G20 Australian Presidency, "The Opportunities of Digitizing Payments," 2014. [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTGLOBALFIN/Resources/8519638-1332259343991/G20\\_Report\\_Final\\_Digital\\_payments.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTGLOBALFIN/Resources/8519638-1332259343991/G20_Report_Final_Digital_payments.pdf)

have Internet access.<sup>206</sup> Also, women in developing countries are 21 percent less likely to own a mobile phone than men, and this gap increases to 23 percent in Africa, 24 percent in the Middle East, and 37 percent in South Asia. In Latin America, the gap is only 1 percent, and in Western Europe there is no gap at all.<sup>207</sup> Having an Internet connection or a mobile phone can make a significant difference in women's lives. Intel estimates that when women in developing countries get online, 30 percent earn additional income, 45 percent search for jobs, and 80 percent improve their education.<sup>208</sup>

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

<sup>207</sup> Women & Mobile: A Global Opportunity (United Kingdom: GSMA mWomen, Cherie Blair Foundation for Women, 2010). [http://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/GSMA\\_Women\\_and\\_Mobile-A\\_Global\\_Opportunity.pdf](http://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/GSMA_Women_and_Mobile-A_Global_Opportunity.pdf)

<sup>208</sup> Women and the Web: Bridging the Internet Gap and Creating New Global Opportunities in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (Santa Clara, CA: Intel, Dalberg, 2012). <http://www.intel.com/content/dam/www/public/us/en/documents/pdf/women-and-the-web.pdf>

## LEADERSHIP

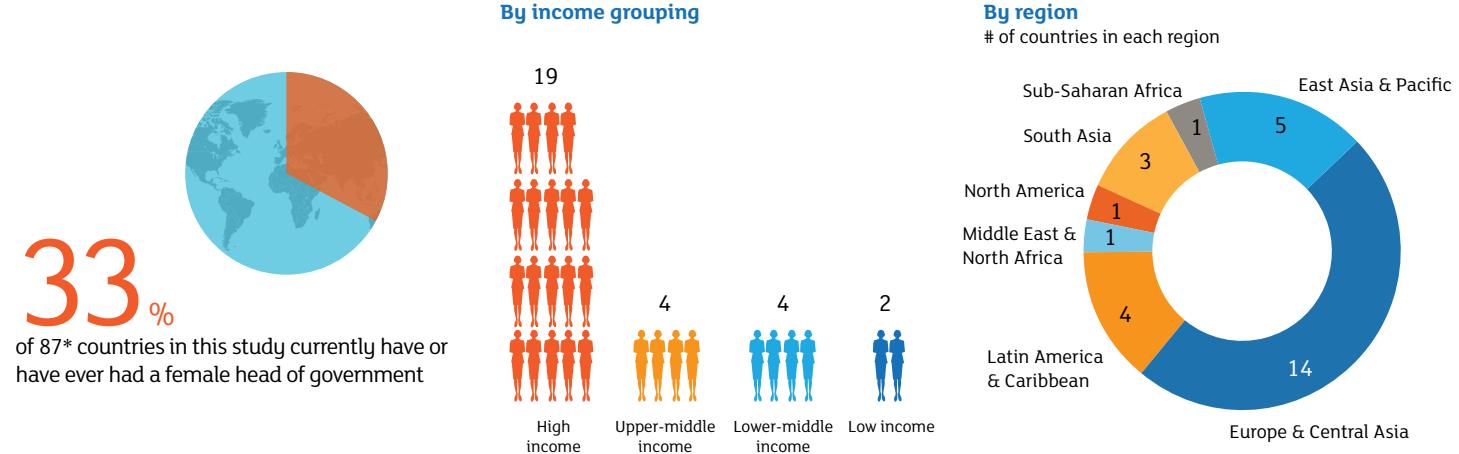
While women have gained political rights over the past two decades, their power and influence remain limited. In both public and private life, women's voice and decision-making power are still constrained, and they are underrepresented in leadership positions.

### Women's rights to political association, voting, and holding office have grown

Over the past 20 years, a growing number of national constitutions have established protections of women's political rights. Recently adopted constitutions are more likely to guarantee a woman's right to hold legislative office. Ninety-one percent of constitutions adopted after the Beijing Declaration ensure this right, compared with

Figure 25

### Female heads of government



\*The EIU conducted a study of heads of government for 87 countries from 1900 to the present. This geographic set includes countries that contribute ~92% of global GDP and account for ~95% of global population. The study considers female heads of government, and does not extend to heads of state.



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## Effect of women's leadership: Women in India's Panchayats

The *Panchayat* is the traditional Indian village council that oversees local governance and grassroots politics. In 1993, the government of India reserved one-third of seats in *Panchayats* for women.<sup>1</sup> This was increased to 50 percent in 2011 for many states, including Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, and Bihar.<sup>2</sup> Today, more than one million women in India are serving in public office. This policy has challenged social norms by bringing women in traditional village society into the decision-making arena. One study found that female village council chiefs in India were positive role models, increasing adolescent girls' own career aspirations and educational attainment as well as parents' aspirations for their daughters' education and work opportunities, while reducing time girls spent on household chores.<sup>3</sup> Another

- 1 The Hunger Project Brochure, "Women in Panchayati Raj: Change Agents for a New Future for India," [http://thp.org/files/women\\_in\\_panchayati\\_raj\\_brochure.pdf](http://thp.org/files/women_in_panchayati_raj_brochure.pdf)
- 2 "Cabinet approves 50% reservation for women in Panchayats," *Times of India*, July 2011.
- 3 L. Beaman *et al.*, "Female Leadership Raises Aspirations and Educational Attainment for Girls: A Policy Experiment in India," *Science Magazine*, 2012.

found that women's representation could be linked to decreased corruption.<sup>4</sup> Further, at the local level, many women now are running and winning in non-reserved seats.<sup>5</sup>

There is also evidence that women's increased political participation has led to changes in public spending. For example, investments in drinking water in states such as West Bengal rose when women took office because women were more likely than men to raise concerns about water.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, in India and elsewhere, higher rates of women's civic participation may encourage governments to improve policy and practice in areas of particular concern to women, such as provision of social services. Further research is needed to understand the full effects of women's political leadership.

<sup>4</sup> R. Chattopadhyay and E. Duflo, "Women as Policy Makers: Evidence from a Randomized Policy Experiment in India," *Econometrica* 72 (5): 1409-1443.

<sup>5</sup> UN Women, "Women emerge as strong leaders during village council elections in India's Odisha state," 2012. <http://www.unwomensouthasia.org/2012/more-women-emerge-as-leaders-and-voters-during-the-odisha-panchayat-elections/>

<sup>6</sup> R. Chattopadhyay and E. Duflo, "Women as Policy Makers: Evidence from a Randomized Policy Experiment in India," *Econometrica* 72 (5): 1409-1443.

70 percent adopted previously. Similarly, a growing share guarantee women's right to political association (63 percent versus 53 percent). Finally, 95 percent of constitutions adopted since Beijing guarantee women's right to vote, compared with 73 percent adopted before.<sup>209</sup>

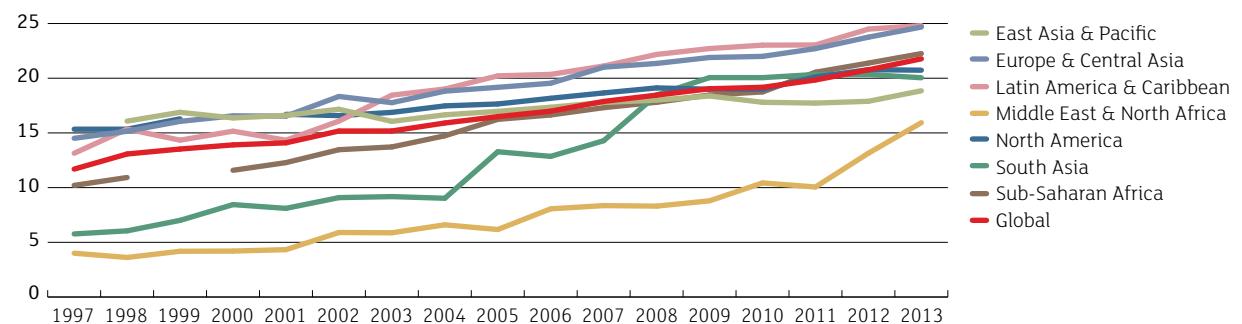
To date, more than half of the world's constitutions ensure that women have the right to form and join political parties, unions, and other groups. Thirty-seven percent do so by specifically guaranteeing women's right to political association, while 19 percent guarantee the

right to association broadly. Seventy-six percent of current constitutions protect women's right to hold legislative office, either through explicit guarantees to women (27 percent) or by establishing an elected legislature and prohibiting discrimination based on gender (49 percent). Women's right to vote, which is featured in 79 percent of constitutions, is the most commonly protected political right.<sup>210</sup>

<sup>209</sup> WORLD Policy Analysis Center, "Equal Rights for Women and Girls in the World's Constitutions," WORLD Constitutions Database, 2015. <http://www.worldpolicyforum.org>

<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

Figure 26  
**Female representation in national parliaments (single or lower chamber)**  
(% of all occupied seats)

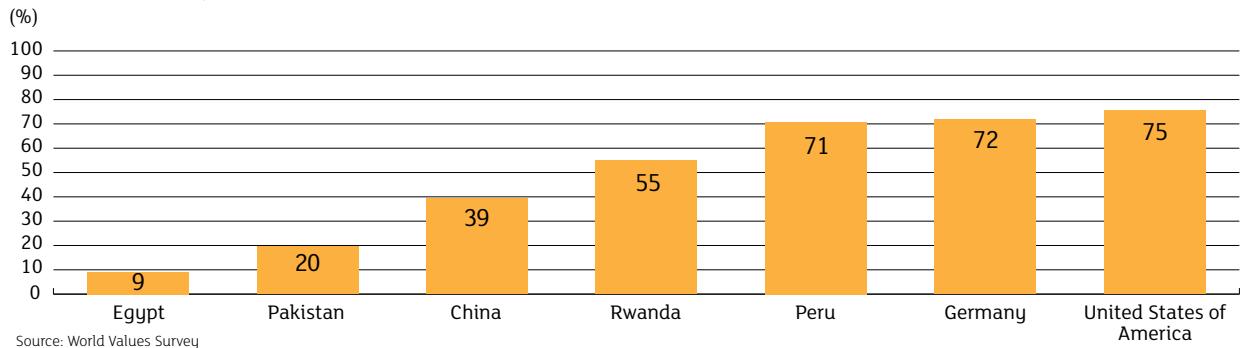


The female representation in national parliaments is not available in East Asia & Pacific (1997), Sub-Saharan Africa (1999) and North America (2000).  
Sources: United Nations Statistics Division via the Inter-Parliamentary Union; Millennium Development Goals Indicators



Figure 27

### Men who disagree or strongly disagree that men make better political leaders than women do, 2010



#### Women remain underrepresented in political and civic positions

While data are missing for a range of key indicators of women's political and civic representation—including participation in local government, public administration, the judiciary, political parties, unions, and civil society organizations—the numbers we do have indicate that women are now better represented in government than they were in 1995. The number of countries with a woman as head of state or government has risen from 12 in 1995 to 18 today.<sup>211</sup> The global share of female lower-house lawmakers has almost doubled over that period.

According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the highest rates of female representation have been reached in Western Europe and Latin America, where women hold around one-quarter of legislative seats.<sup>212</sup> In the Scandinavian countries, the rates approach or exceed 40 percent. Representation for South Asian women has climbed three-fold since 1996, and for women in the Middle East and North Africa it has grown four-fold—though from a low base.<sup>213</sup> In three countries—Rwanda, Bolivia, and Andorra—50 percent or more of lower- or single-house parliamentary seats are held by women.<sup>214</sup>

However, the pace of change in women's leadership has been far too slow, and women remain dramatically underrepresented in political and civic leadership in almost every part of the world. Despite increases in parliamentary participation, in most instances the proportion of female representatives remains below 30 percent. Globally, only 22 percent of parliamentarians

<sup>211</sup> According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), as of January 1, 2014, nine women were serving as heads of state and 15 as heads of government. Six women served in both capacities, resulting in 18 countries with a woman in one of these positions. [http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/wmmmap14\\_en.pdf](http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/wmmmap14_en.pdf); <http://www.ipu.org/news-e/wop/37/5.htm>

<sup>212</sup> IPU database, world and regional, as of December 2014. <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm>

<sup>213</sup> IPU Statistical archive. <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world-arc.htm>

<sup>214</sup> IPU database, countries, as of December 2014. <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

are female, according to the IPU.<sup>215</sup> And today, women are only slightly more likely to be members of cabinets.<sup>216</sup> Their share of government ministerial positions edged up from an average of 15 percent globally in 2005 to just below 17 percent in 2012. About a fifth of ministers in Latin America and Africa are women, but—as seen elsewhere in the world—they tend to run social portfolios such as health, education, or welfare, and are left out of defense and financial ministries. In 2014, women held finance or budget cabinet posts in just 24 of 189 countries, and served as chief justices in the judiciaries of only 16 of 123 countries.<sup>217</sup>

Social norms about the role of women in public life and beliefs about their ability to be effective leaders continue to limit their leadership potential.<sup>218</sup> Analysis of Gallup World Poll data suggests that in many countries, both men and women generally believe that men make better political leaders than women—nearly 90 percent in Egypt and Iraq, and more than 80 percent in Libya, Tunisia, and other North African countries—and these numbers have remained fairly consistent. In Egypt, 85 percent of men and 80 percent of women in 2011 asserted that they would not vote for a qualified woman for president. Young people were more opposed than older citizens, as were those who lived in urban areas and in the richest 20 percent of households.<sup>219</sup>

That said, in countries such as Australia, the United

<sup>215</sup> IPU database, world and regional, as of December 2014.

<sup>216</sup> IPU database concerning women ministers: [http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/wmmmap14\\_en.pdf](http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/wmmmap14_en.pdf)

<sup>217</sup> IPU database concerning women ministers: [http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/wmmmap14\\_en.pdf](http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/wmmmap14_en.pdf); World Bank data for women on constitutional courts. <http://wbl.worldbank.org/~media/FPDKM/WBL/Documents/Reports/2014/Women-Business-and-the-Law-2014-FullReport.pdf>

<sup>218</sup> L. Beaman, R. Chattopadhyay, E. Duflo, R. Pande, and P. Topalova, "Powerful Women: Does Exposure Reduce Bias?" *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 4 (2009): 1497-1540.

<sup>219</sup> J. Klugman and L. Hammer, "Expanding Women's Agency: Where Do We Stand?" *Feminist Economics*, unpublished at press time.



## Increasing the use of women as experts

Caroline Criado-Perez, a journalist and broadcaster, heard a panel of male “experts” on U.K. radio in October 2012 describing the feelings women experience while suffering from breast cancer. She later asked the broadcasting company why it did not have a female on the panel and was told it was not able to find one. She quickly sent out a request for such experts on her Twitter account and almost instantly received enough responses to create a list of female breast cancer

experts to send to media outlets. That led to the launch of The Women’s Room ([thewomensroom.org.uk](http://thewomensroom.org.uk)), a database of female experts in a number of fields that is now regularly used by the media. A few months later, Criado-Perez had raised enough money through crowd-funding to pay for a new website. She said she “simply wanted to make it easier for the media to find women to talk to.”

Source: “Women in Decision Making: The role of the new media for increased political participation.” Directorate General for Internal Policies. European Union, 2013.

States, Germany, and Mexico, the number of men and women who believe that men make better leaders is declining. To combat pervasive social norms, some countries have adopted legal quotas to secure leadership roles for women. Electoral gender quotas are now in effect in about 80 countries, and a number of political parties have made voluntary commitments to include female candidates.<sup>220</sup>

### Women are underrepresented in private-sector leadership

Although modest progress has been made in women’s leadership in the private sector, women remain dramatically underrepresented in management positions 20 years after Beijing. The share of women CEOs of Fortune 500 companies grew from zero in 1995 to just over 2 percent in 2008 and just under 5 percent in 2014.<sup>221</sup> Between 2000 and 2012, ILO data show that there were more women in management in most countries. The proportion of women increased in 77 percent of countries, or 84 of 109 for which data were available. Nevertheless, increases in more than half of these countries were marginal, and in 22 countries—from all regions and levels of development—the proportion of women in management fell, despite increased participation in the workforce and rising education levels.<sup>222</sup>

Women also remain underrepresented on corporate boards. According to the OECD, only 10 percent of the

board seats of listed companies in high-income countries were filled by women in 2009.<sup>223</sup> A recent study by the ILO paints an equally bleak picture. Thirty percent of companies surveyed had no women on their boards, and about two-thirds had fewer than 30 percent women.<sup>224</sup> In the United States, women hold only 19 percent of S&P 500 board seats, up slightly from 14 percent in 2006.<sup>225</sup> Women’s share of board seats across other countries varies, ranging from 8 percent in Portugal to 36 percent in Norway, but parity remains elusive everywhere.<sup>226</sup>

### Women’s participation in media is improving but remains too low

Women’s involvement in all types of media is increasing everywhere, but they are often a minority, and the subject of stereotypes. One study reveals that only 24 percent of news subjects worldwide were women, up from 17 percent in 1995.<sup>227</sup> Women were featured in only 19 percent of stories on politics and government in 2010, compared with 7 percent in 1995.<sup>228</sup> For economic news, women were featured only 20 percent of the time. The share of women involved in news as experts or commentators increased slightly from 17 percent in 2005 to 20 percent in 2010.<sup>229</sup>

Women fare somewhat better when it comes to shaping the news. Thirty-seven percent of news stories in 2010 were authored by female reporters, up from 31

<sup>223</sup> OECD, “Closing the Gender Gap—Act Now,” 2012.

<sup>224</sup> ILO, “Women in Business and Management: Gaining Momentum,” 2015. [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---pub/documents/publication/wcms\\_316450.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---pub/documents/publication/wcms_316450.pdf)

<sup>225</sup> Catalyst, “Pyramid: Women in S&P 500 Companies,” January 2015. <http://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/women-sp-500-companies>

<sup>226</sup> Catalyst, “2014 Catalyst Census: Women Board Directors,” January 2015. <http://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/2014-catalyst-census-women-board-directors>. See also Catalyst 2006 census. [http://www.catalyst.org/system/files/2006%20Census.wbd\\_.pdf](http://www.catalyst.org/system/files/2006%20Census.wbd_.pdf).

<sup>227</sup> Global Media Monitoring Project. [http://whomkesthenews.org/](http://whomakesthenews.org/) See also the *No Ceilings* database at [www.noceilings.org](http://www.noceilings.org)

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.



percent in 2000, as were 41 percent of senior professional news gatherers, writers, and editors.<sup>230</sup> Globally, women hold only 27 percent of top management positions, although this has risen from 12 percent in 1995.<sup>231</sup> Eastern Europe and Nordic Europe boast even higher percentages of women in the news media, and some countries have achieved particular success. For example, in South Africa women make up nearly 80 percent of those in senior news management.<sup>232</sup> In Nigeria, male and female journalists are paid equally, and in some cases women's salaries are actually higher than their male counterparts.<sup>233</sup> Asia shows significantly less progress, with women barely comprising 13 percent of senior management.<sup>234</sup> In the Middle East and North Africa, men in governance or top management earn three to five times more than women.<sup>235</sup>

230 International Women's Media Foundation, "Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media," 2011.

231 Ibid.

232 Ibid.

233 Ibid.

234 Ibid.

235 Ibid.

# Conclusion

We stand at a critical moment. Twenty years after the Beijing Conference, 15 years after the passage of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security, and on the cusp of a new set of development goals that will lead us into the next decade, this year holds great potential. The evidence is strong: We now know that when the status of women and girls is advanced, economies grow and nations prosper. We cannot get ahead by leaving half the population behind.

This report provides a roadmap for the work ahead and the benefits we stand to reap if we address the unfinished business that remains. The data in this report show us significant progress is possible. A girl born today is more likely than her mother to be educated, to get a good job, and to live to see her own children grow to be healthy adults. The data also show that despite the successes since 1995, much work remains to realize the promise of the Beijing Platform for Action and the full participation of women and girls.

The opportunities for progress are greater than ever before. Tools like technology can broaden access to vital services and enhance advocacy efforts. A wide range of partners, including the private sector, religious leaders,

and men and boys, can help leverage resources that drive greater and faster change.

To capitalize on this moment, the global community must take action to accelerate the pace of change. We can do this by ensuring equality under the law, eradicating legal barriers that limit the potential of women and girls, and implementing guarantees of rights where they already exist. We need to provide resources to support efforts to close gender gaps, change the social norms that underpin inequality, and address the unique challenges and opportunities of the most marginalized. We must also commit to improving our measurement of progress for women and girls, because we know that what gets measured, gets done.

To finally achieve the full participation of women and girls, it will take engagement from everyone—governments, multilateral institutions, the private sector, and civil society. Now is the time to recommit to the work outlined in Beijing so we can ensure a promising future for the next generation of women and girls, along with their families, communities, and countries. To learn more and join our effort, visit [www.noceilings.org](http://www.noceilings.org).

# Appendix A

## Outcome data

### Overview

The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) assessed the progress of women and girls since 1995 by collecting existing indicators from a wide variety of respected international sources. (A list of major sources can be found at the end of this section.) These indicators were then assembled into a new database, which is available at [www.noceilings.org](http://www.noceilings.org).

The EIU's data collection focused mainly on quantifiable outcomes for women and girls (e.g., health and education) and how they have changed since 1995. In some cases, the EIU also examined qualitative indicators that show progress in laws, legal protections, and policies (e.g., legislation that outlaws domestic violence). Indicator names in the database, and this report, closely follow the naming convention used by major international organizations to allow for consistency across other reports in the field.

The database generally allows for analysis of women's and girls' progress over time; a comparison of women and girls in one region or income group against others; and a comparison of women and girls with men and boys.

### Criteria and Organization

The indicators collected by the EIU met one or all of three criteria:

1. They were essential to understanding women's and girls' progress in a particular theme of the Beijing Platform for Action
2. They were available across time
3. They covered a large number of countries

### Beijing Platform Themes

The EIU developed nine categories for the data based on the original 12 critical areas of concern highlighted in 1995 in the Beijing Platform. These categories are:

1. Health (158 indicators)
2. Education (192)
3. Economic opportunities (308)
4. Political and civic participation (33)
5. Violence against women (35)
6. Conflict (21)
7. Environment (55)

8. Communications (56)
9. The girl child (36)

Poverty was included under economic opportunities, and human rights and institutional mechanisms were covered by the WORLD Policy Analysis Center (WORLD) (see Appendix B). In addition, the context for topics identified as critical in the Beijing Platform in 1995 has changed over time. For example, the Beijing Platform discusses the "stereotyping of women and inequality in women's access to and participation in all communication systems, especially in the media." In 1995, this mainly referred to access to computer technology and satellite and cable television. The EIU shifted its focus to include data and analysis on the rise of mobile telephony and the Internet, which have revolutionized communication in the past two decades and changed women's and girls' lives.

A set of 32 background indicators is also included to provide an understanding of the macroeconomic and demographic aspects of countries, regions, and income groups.

### Time Series

Identifying time-series data from 1995 to 2014 (or the latest available year) was particularly important to show trends over time. Often, series were incomplete. In some cases, only a handful of data points were available. The decision to include or exclude a series was made by the project team, based on the perceived importance of the indicator in explaining the progress of women and girls. In a few cases, data are provided from 1990 because of the importance to the historical assessment of a specific topic, such as excess female deaths at birth.

### Content and Aggregations

The final database includes over 900 indicators. In many cases, there are data gaps across countries due to a lack of country coverage in existing datasets.

In addition to country-level data, the database includes global, regional, and income-group aggregations. These were collected from the original sources, when available.

When aggregations were not available, or to provide a



wider range of options, the EIU calculated its own aggregations. These included global, regional, and income-group averages; medians; and population-weighted values when sufficient data were available. The criterion used by the EIU for data sufficiency for aggregations was a minimum representation of 60 percent of the population of any grouping. For example, if 60 percent of South Asia's population was present in the country-level data for the female literacy rate in the year of an available data point, then that year's EIU-calculated average, median, and population-weighted value for South Asia's female literacy rate was calculated. Population figures for weighting are based on the population of the year of the data points available.

For a limited set of indicators, the EIU gathered data beyond the country level, including disaggregation by rural and urban settings, by income groups within a country, and at different levels of education. Where available, data on men and boys are included to analyze gender gaps.

### Expert Consultations

To gather insights on women's and girls' progress and how to assess it, the EIU conducted an expert panel of leading academics, analysts, and practitioners from the

World Bank, the World Health Organization, UN Women, the International Center for Research on Women, OECD, Population Council, and many more. The Data2X expert working group, focused on improving gender data, served as technical advisors for the meeting. The EIU also conducted a series of individual consultations with experts to seek input on in data collection and the analysis of progress.

### Major Data Sources

Major sources of existing indicators collected by EIU are listed below:

- World Bank
- World Health Organization (WHO)
- Demographic and Health Surveys Program (DHS)
- United Nations, multiple agencies
- International Labour Organization (ILO)
- Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
- The Economist Intelligence Unit
- Global Burden of Disease by Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (GBD by IHME)
- World Values Survey

# Appendix B

## Data on Laws and Policies

### Background: The Need for Transparent, Comparative Data

Historically, the availability and accessibility of information on policies and laws relevant to women's and girls' rights around the world has been limited. Global bodies have pulled together a tremendous amount of invaluable information on outcomes that matter for women and girls, but to begin to analyze what action steps countries have taken to improve these outcomes requires similarly comparable data on laws and policies. Some UN bodies have compiled and published the full text of laws and policies in particular areas. These efforts provide a wealth of important information, but to understand how an individual country is performing relative to its peers requires reading through tens of thousands of pages of legislation in many different languages.

To fill this information gap, the WORLD Policy Analysis Center (WORLD) transforms massive quantities of legal and policy data into accessible, user-friendly resources. This appendix outlines WORLD's methods for the *No Ceilings* initiative. For more detailed information on WORLD methods or to download the data, please visit [www.worldpolicyforum.org](http://www.worldpolicyforum.org).

The WORLD Policy Analysis Center team consists of individuals from around the world, including Latin America, Europe, Asia, and North America. The regional knowledge and linguistic skills of this global, multilingual team minimize errors in interpretation and the need for translation. In analyzing laws and policies, the WORLD team brings advanced training and expertise in law, political science, economics, international development, and public health. For the *No Ceilings* initiative, WORLD partnered with the Maternal and Child Health Equity (MACHEquity) research program, a global team based at McGill University.

### Overview and Criteria

The focus of WORLD's research was on examining progress in constitutional guarantees of equal rights for women and girls since 1995 and assessing the current level of protections and gaps for women and girls in laws and policies related to education, work and family, and

child marriage in 197 countries and signatories to the Beijing Platform for Action. Current data on these areas are available as of 2013 or 2014. To assess change in legal protections over time, MACHEquity constructed historical data on laws and policies in the following areas: Child marriage, minimum wage, breastfeeding breaks, and maternal leave.

WORLD data focuses on national-level rights, laws, and policies. Future efforts should look at subnational variation in legal protections, which is particularly important for federal countries.

Legal indicators for the *No Ceilings* initiative were selected based on the following criteria:

1. Research evidence supported their importance to women's and girls' opportunities in a variety of geographic, social, and economic circumstances
2. Relevance of these policies to the Beijing Platform
3. The availability of globally comparable legislation or secondary sources

### Data Sources

WORLD databases are primarily coded from original national labor, social security, and family law; educational policies; and national constitutions. Preference is given to these primary sources to minimize data errors and inconsistencies in interpretation. When necessary, additional information was drawn from reliable and globally comparable secondary sources. Priority was given to country reports submitted to UN organizations. Documents were reviewed in their original language or in a translation into one of the UN's official languages. A list of the main data sources used to construct data for the *No Ceilings* initiative is given at the end of this appendix.

### Data Coding

Coding is the process by which an individual researcher takes a piece of information on legislation, policy, or constitutions and translates it into a set of features that can be mapped, quantitatively analyzed, and readily understood and shared. WORLD developed coding frameworks that allowed for the comparison of laws and policies across all the world's countries, even when there was a great deal of variation in the approach taken by



individual nations. The analytic approaches for each policy area began with the essential features, based on intrinsic characteristics of the policy, research evidence on important features, and applicable global agreements. To capture this information as reliably as possible, coding was carried out as often as possible by WORLD researchers fluent in the language of the original documents or in the language into which it had been translated by a UN source.

Policies, laws, constitutions, reports, and secondary sources were coded independently twice, and the results of each coding were compared to minimize human error.

### **Accuracy, Analysis, and Updating**

Nations that were outliers on particular policies were verified using external sources whenever possible. While numerous efforts were made to minimize errors and provide information that is as accurate as possible, errors can occur. The UN and other sources used may not always have the most up-to-date legislation where primary data were used.

Even with the double coding, the research team can make errors. WORLD welcomes feedback from readers if they believe that any individual countries have been placed in the wrong category and will update country reports in the databases when new primary sources of legislation or policy are received.

### **Sources for No Ceilings**

Major sources used to collect full-text constitutions, legislation, policy, and country reports for No Ceilings include:

- International Labour Organization's NATLEX database
- HeinOnline's World Constitutions Illustrated
- Constitutions of the Countries of the World

- Constitutions Finder
- Lexadin World Law Guide
- Foreign Law Guide
- Pacific Islands Legal Information Institute
- Asian Legal Information Institute
- JaFBase
- World Legal Information Institute
- The Social Security Programs Throughout the World database (SSPTW)
- Hard copies of relevant legislation at ILO's headquarters in Geneva, McGill University's law library, and Harvard's law library
- Official country websites
- ILO's Maternity Protection and Working Time databases
- World Bank's Women, Business and the Law
- UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE) reports: The fifth (2003), sixth (2006/2007), and seventh (2010/2011) editions, including all reports available as of June 2014
- 48th International Conference on Education reports
- Planipolis
- Millennium Development Goals Reports (2003-2010) and Education for All Mid-Decade Assessment Reports (available through Planipolis)
- Eurydice – Network on education systems and policies in Europe
- International Review of Leave Policies and Related Research, edited by Peter Moss of the Institute of Education, University of London
- Information on maternal leave and breastfeeding breaks was clarified by or corroborated with information from ILO's Maternity & Paternity at Work Report 2014

## Appendix C

# Country Coverage

EIU and WORLD looked for data on 197 countries and signatories to the Beijing Platform for Action. We started with the 189 countries that attended the Fourth World Conference on Women, which also included three non-member states of the UN: Cook Islands, Niue, and the Holy See. We then added any current member states of the UN that were not on that list: Grenada, Montenegro, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Somalia, South Sudan, and Timor-Leste. Finally, we also looked for data on Kosovo, which is recognized by the United States.

The countries in the database were categorized into seven regions and four income groups, using World Bank definitions. The seven regions are:

- East Asia and Pacific
- Europe and Central Asia
- Latin America and Caribbean
- Middle East and North Africa
- North America
- South Asia
- Sub-Saharan Africa

Countries are included in an income group according to how they were assigned by the World Bank. The 2013 and 2014 World Bank income groups are as follows:

- Low-income: \$1,035 or less GNI per capita
- Lower-middle income: \$1,036 – \$4,085 GNI per capita
- Upper-middle income: \$4,086 – \$12,615 GNI per capita
- High-income: \$12,616 or more GNI per capita

Four countries in the database do not have a World Bank region or income group designation. They are Cook Islands, Nauru, Niue, and Holy See. They were categorized by EIU and WORLD using the World Bank's GNI per capita criterion for each group.

# Appendix D

## Gender Data Gaps

This table—produced by Data2X, a project based at the United Nations Foundation—highlights gaps in gender data. Data2X was launched in 2012 by Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton to identify gender data gaps and to build partnerships to improve data collection and use in order to guide policy choices and investments. As a first step, Data2X identified 28 gaps in five areas: Health, education, economic opportunity, political participation, and human security.

**Table 1. Gender Data Gaps Highlighted in the Report**

	Type of gap (for developing countries)			
	Lacking coverage across countries and/or regular country production	Lacking international standards to allow for comparability	Lacking complexity (information across domains)	Lacking granularity (sizeable and detailed datasets allowing for disaggregation by demographic and other characteristics)
<b>Health</b>				
Maternal morbidity/mortality	●			●
Women's excess disease burdens	●			
Violence against women	●		●	
Mental health	●		●	●
Adolescent health	●		●	●
Utilization of health services by women	●			●
<b>Education</b>				
Learning outcomes	●	●		
Excluded girls	●	●		
Transition rates	●			
<b>Economic Opportunities</b>				
Unpaid work	●			
Informal employment	●			
Earnings and opportunity cost of paid work	●	●		
Conditions of migrant workers	●	●		
Employment mobility	●	●	●	●
Entrepreneurship	●		●	●
Asset ownership	●		●	●
Productivity in agriculture	●	●	●	●
Access to financial services	●			
Access to child care	●	●	●	●
Access to ICT (mobile phones & internet)	●	●	●	●
<b>Political Participation</b>				
Representation in local governance, political organizations & the professions	●	●		
National identity documentation	●			●
Voter registration and turnout	●	●		
<b>Human Security</b>				
Conflict-related mortality and morbidity	●			●
Forcibly displaced and migrant profiles	●			●
Impact of conflict on gender variables; women's adaptive responses to conflict	●		●	●
Conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence	●		●	●
Women's participation in peace and security processes	●	●	●	●



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