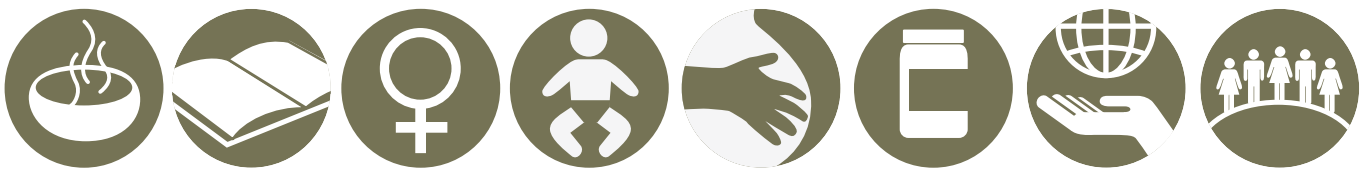


# Gender Justice:

Key to Achieving the Millennium Development Goals



# Gender Justice and the Millennium Development Goals

“Social, political and economic equality for women is integral to the achievement of all Millennium Development Goals. Until women and girls are liberated from poverty and injustice, all our goals — peace, security, sustainable development — stand in jeopardy.”

— Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon — June 2010

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

Goal 4: Reduce child mortality

Goal 5: Improve maternal health

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development

The Millennium Declaration and the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) collectively herald a vision for a more just and equal world: a promise by governments in 189 countries to achieve social justice for all. Only five years remain until the target date of 2015 for achieving the MDGs. This briefing, an excerpt from UNIFEM's forthcoming *Progress of the World's Women 2010/11* on access to justice, points to key areas that must be addressed to move towards meeting the MDGs.<sup>1</sup>

While there have been considerable gains since 2000 on many of the MDG targets, progress has been slowest on the gender equality dimensions of these targets — from improving maternal health and access to decent work to eradicating hunger. Often invisible or unacknowledged — but still pervasive — discrimination against women is at the heart of this slow pace of change.

Gender justice entails ending the inequalities between women and men that are produced and reproduced in the family, the community, the market and the state. It also requires that mainstream institutions — from justice to economic policymaking — are accountable for tackling the injustice and discrimination that keep too many women poor and excluded.<sup>2</sup>

Discrimination is a blight that holds back progress towards social justice in developed and developing countries alike. The MDGs are interdependent and every one depends on making progress on gender equality. Scaling up investment and action on the gender equality dimensions of all the goals has the dual advantage of addressing widespread inequality and accelerating progress overall.

Tackling poverty and hunger (MDG 1) depends on improving access to decent work, particularly for women and young people, and on securing access to assets, including land. The MDG targets on health and education (MDGs 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6) cannot be met unless all girls have the chance to go to school and women's sexual and reproductive health and rights are addressed. Tackling child mortality (MDG 4) depends on improving the status and well-being of women. Progress on combatting HIV and AIDS (MDG 6) requires recognition of how gender inequality and violence against women fuel the pandemic. Since women usually bear the burden of collecting water (MDG 7), improving access to water is essential for enabling girls to attend school, and for women to be able to gain paid employment and participate in their communities. Progress on all of these goals underpins women's social and economic empowerment and access to decision-making at all levels (MDG 3).

Since the Millennium Summit in 2000, there have been numerous initiatives to explore the gender equality dimensions of the MDGs.<sup>3</sup> All have noted the importance of far-reaching commitments to achieve women's rights from the past 30 years, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), ratified by 186 member states; the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action; the Beijing Platform for Action; and Security Council resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888 and 1889 on women, peace and security and sexual violence in conflict. In addition, government commitments to take action are reflected in regional treaties such as the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, and in an increasing number of national legal and constitutional gender equality guarantees.

This briefing builds on the recommendations of these initiatives to call for urgent action in four areas that are critical to both gender justice and the MDGs:

- Expanding women-friendly public services: to meet women and girls' rights to education, health and food;
- Guaranteeing land and jobs for women: ensuring the right to a decent livelihood, through access to economic assets;
- Increasing women's voice in decision-making: full participation of women in society, starting from autonomy in the household, to voice in all political processes at community, national and international levels; and
- Ending violence against women and girls: a scourge that too many women and girls face in daily life, stunting their opportunities, curtailing their mobility and denying them rights.

Ending discrimination and enhancing gender justice are key to meeting MDG commitments and the principles embodied in the Millennium Declaration.

As we consider key strategies for meeting the MDGs, the promises that have been made to address inequalities and injustice must be the centrepiece of further action.

# 1 Expanding women-friendly public services

Tackling hunger, achieving universal education, reducing maternal and child mortality, promoting universal access to reproductive health, stopping the spread of HIV and improving water and sanitation all require strong public services, accessible to all. These services are crucial to enable citizens to secure their basic human rights. Services can play an important part in achieving gender justice if they are responsive and accountable to women, and provide equal access and outcomes.

The MDGs have driven expansion of some public service provision, particularly education. But critical gender gaps remain:

- In 2008, there were 96 girls for every 100 boys enrolled in primary school, up from 91 in 1999.<sup>4</sup> Although this signals good progress, 37 million girls were not in primary school in 2008, compared to 32 million boys.<sup>5</sup>

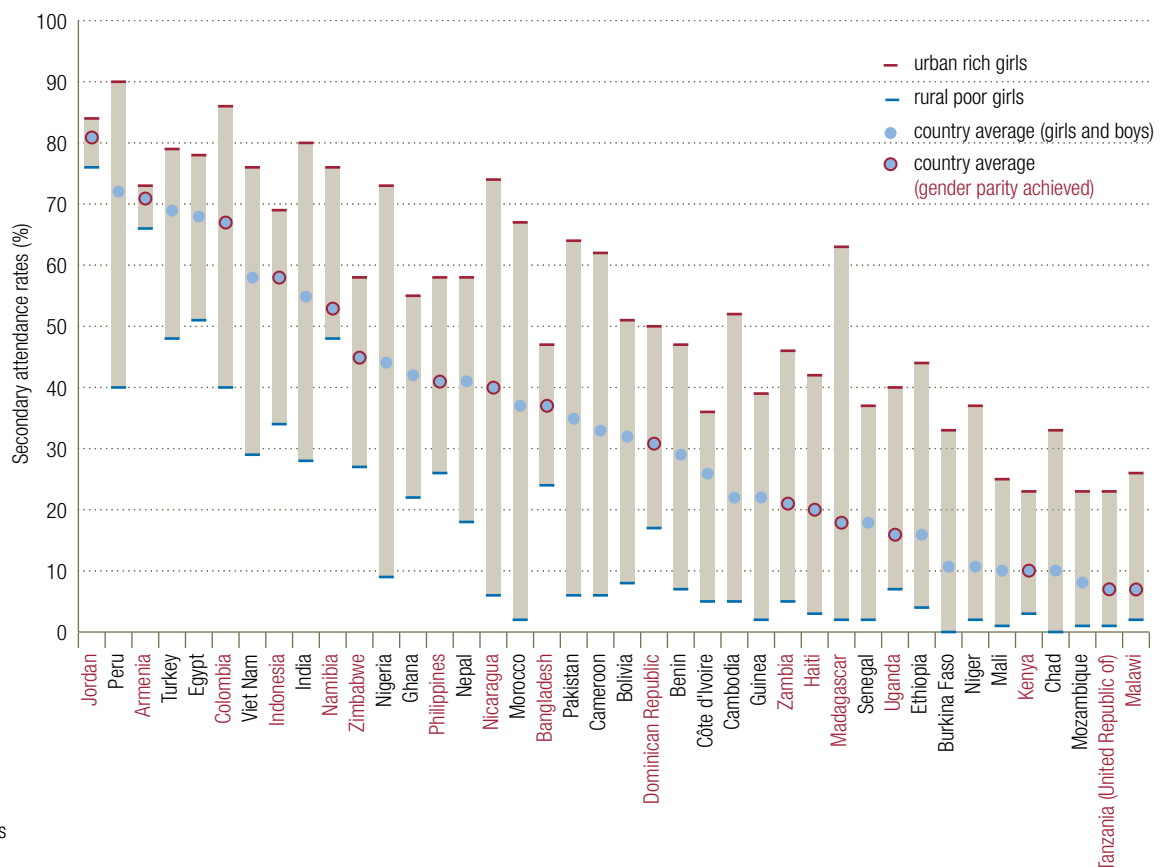
- Globally, gender parity in secondary school enrolment has improved, from 76 girls for every 100 boys in 1991, up to 95 girls for every 100 boys in 2008. However, rates of secondary enrolment remain low in sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia.<sup>6</sup>
- Globally, the number of maternal deaths has decreased by less than 2 percent a year since 1990, far short of the 5.5 percent annual reductions needed to meet the target to reduce maternal mortality by three quarters.<sup>7</sup>
- Unmet need for family planning has remained high. Poor, uneducated, rural and young women are least well served.<sup>8</sup>
- In developing regions overall, 53 percent of people living with HIV were women in 2008.<sup>9</sup> At 58 percent, women's share of those living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa is the highest in the world, although latest figures show that prevalence among young women has declined significantly in some of the worst hit countries in the region.<sup>10</sup> However, in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), South Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and North Africa, women's share of those living with HIV has increased since 2002.<sup>11</sup>

FIGURE 1: Secondary school attendance rates for girls in rural poor and urban rich households

Gender parity has been achieved in secondary enrolment for 17 out of 40 countries in our sample. However, for some this has been achieved at very low overall rates and poor girls from rural areas are missing out.

Source: Seck and Azcona (2010). Based on calculations commissioned by UNIFEM from Harttgen and Klasen (2010).<sup>12</sup>

Notes: Data refers to most recent year available (2003-2008). Information on the country specific school system is used to obtain the respective age ranges for secondary school attendance. In this analysis the lowest and highest quintile in the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) wealth asset index are used to define 'poor' and 'rich', respectively.



Inequalities in access to services, both between women and men, but also between different groups of women, are holding back progress on the MDGs, especially on health and education. In particular, poor and rural women and girls, who are especially reliant on public services, are often left behind. In many countries, living in a rural area is a marker of disadvantage, because poverty rates are higher and access to services and markets are lower.<sup>13</sup> The interaction of poverty, gender and location often creates double and triple disadvantage.

Ensuring that services are accessible to all is essential. Key approaches to increase access, particularly for poor and excluded women and girls, include cost mitigation and employment of more female service providers.

## Education

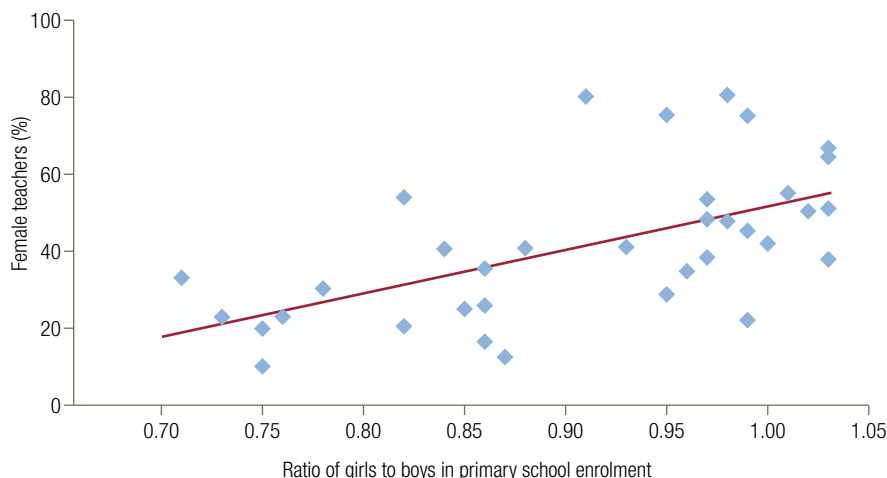
A stronger focus on girls' access to secondary education is needed to sustain progress on all of the MDGs, including gender equality and women's empowerment.

There is a growing body of evidence to show that girls' education prevents the intergenerational transmission of poverty and advances progress on other MDGs, including on reducing maternal and child mortality, and access to decent work. Educated women have fewer children, later and are more likely to send children to school.<sup>14</sup> There is a correlation between educational attainment of mothers and reduced infant mortality, with a particularly marked effect for women with secondary education.<sup>15</sup>

Secondary education enables the achievement of other rights by empowering girls to benefit from social and economic development. Studies have found that women with above average years of education earn wages that are 10 to 20 percent higher.<sup>16</sup> Secondary education is key: a study on Pakistan, for example, found that women's labour force participation only increases when they have 10 or more years of schooling.<sup>17</sup>

Although some countries have reached gender parity in secondary attendance, poor girls and those in rural areas are missing out, especially in the poorest countries in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

FIGURE 2: Female teachers and gender parity in schools, sub-Saharan Africa



For example, in the United Republic of Tanzania, although gender parity has been reached overall, just one percent of poor rural girls are enrolled in secondary education, compared to 23 percent of rich urban girls (see figure 1).

Abolishing user fees and introducing cash incentives are two approaches that have been successful in enabling the poorest girls to access education. For example, a programme in Cambodia offered girls a US\$45 grant upon finishing primary school and entering secondary school. The incentive was strongest for the poorest households, increasing girls' enrollment by 50 percent.<sup>18</sup> In Malawi, a cash transfer programme not only increased girls' school attendance, but it also reduced HIV prevalence rates among programme beneficiaries by 60 percent compared to non-beneficiaries. Researchers attributed this impact to changes in girls' sexual behaviour, including less "transactional sex" with older men.<sup>19</sup>

A major barrier to girls' enrolment and completion is the violence they face at school and on the way to school. The presence of female teachers can mitigate this and create safer school environments for girls.<sup>20</sup> In sub-Saharan Africa, the presence of female teachers correlates with higher levels of girls' enrolment in primary school (see figure 2).

Ensuring that girls receive a quality education is vital. Outdated curricula that portray women in subservient roles can reinforce gender inequality. Encouraging girls into science can help to increase the number of women pursuing non-traditional careers and decrease occupational segregation.<sup>21</sup>

**There is a correlation between the percentage of female teachers in primary schools and the ratio of girls and boys attending primary school.**

Source: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), *EFA Global Monitoring Report: The Leap to Equality* (2003/2004).

Notes: For more details on this analysis, see Colclough, C. et al. *Achieving Schooling for All in Africa: Costs, Commitment and Gender* (2003).

## Reproductive health

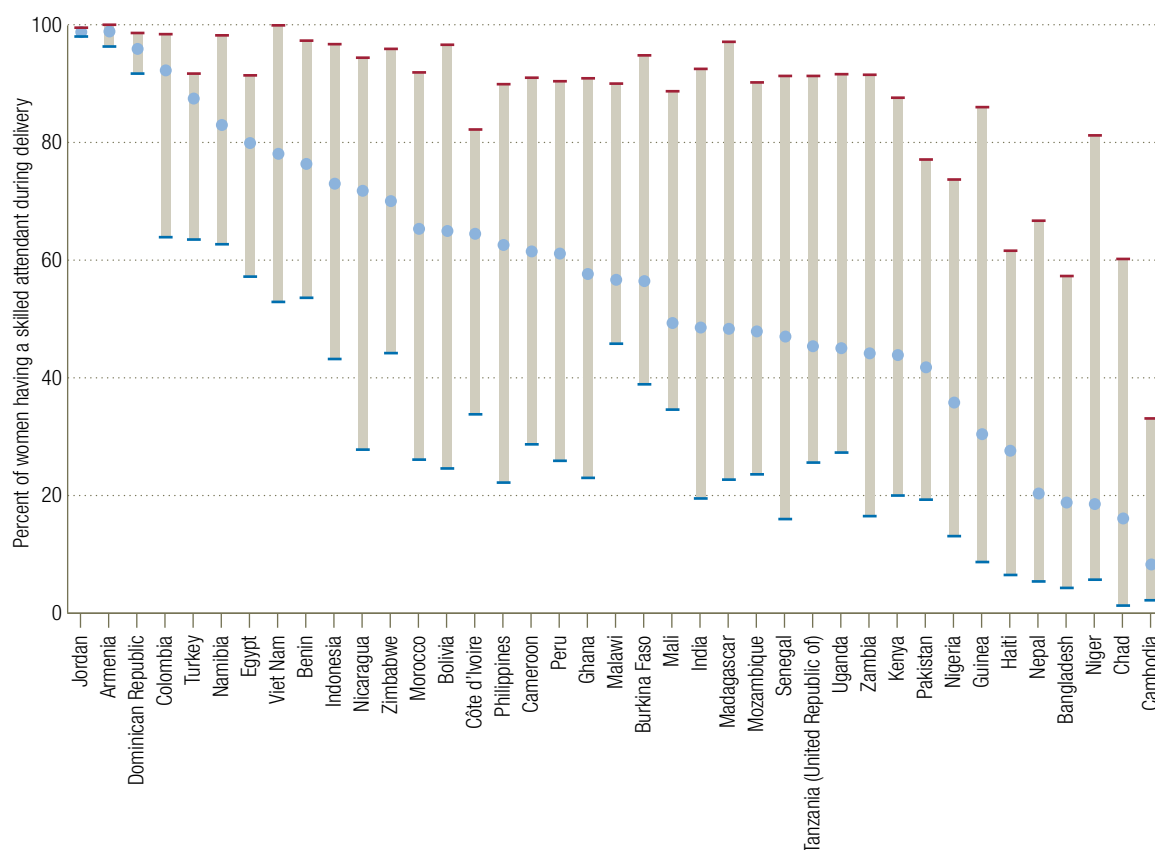
The commitment to improve maternal health (MDG 5) is the goal that most depends on improving women's status and access to public services. It is also the most off-track and least likely to be achieved. On current trends only 23 countries will meet the target to reduce maternal mortality by three quarters by 2015.<sup>22</sup> Access to reproductive health services, including comprehensive family planning, skilled attendance at childbirth and HIV prevention and treatment services, is essential for achieving gender justice and the MDGs.

Where women lack control over their own fertility, they are at greater risk of maternal mortality and morbidity. It is estimated that one in three maternal deaths could be avoided if women who wanted contraception had access to it.<sup>23</sup> In addition to deaths, over 300 million women worldwide suffer long-term health problems and disability arising from complications of pregnancy or delivery.<sup>24</sup> Further, the ability of women to choose how many children they have, and when, has a critical bearing on whether they can access education, decent work and participate in decision-making.

FIGURE 3: Skilled attendance at delivery, urban rich and rural poor women

Rural poor women are much less likely than urban rich women to receive assistance from a skilled health professional during childbirth.

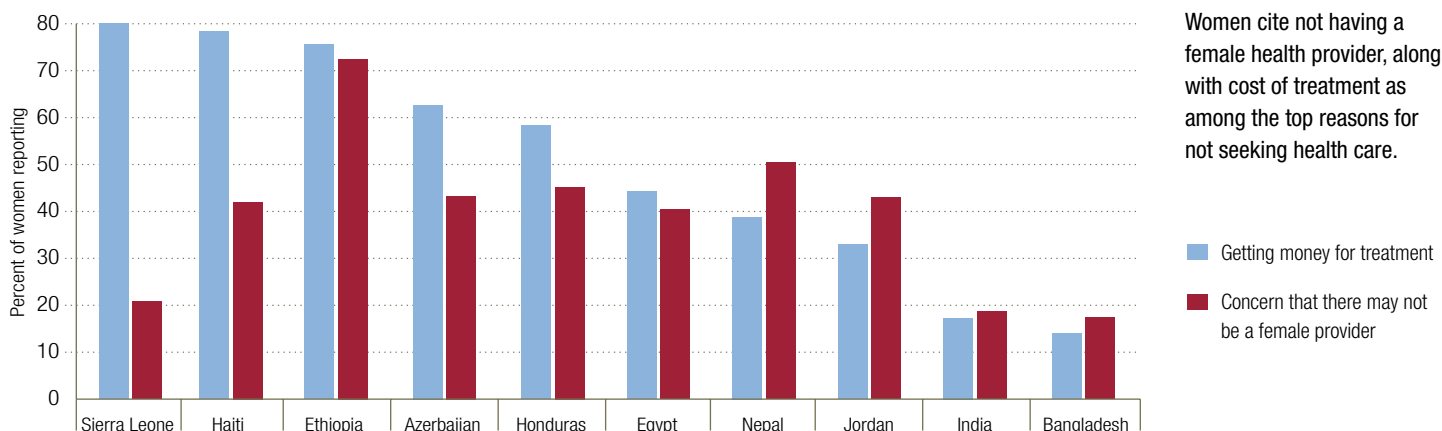
— urban rich  
— rural poor  
● country average



Source: Seck and Azcona (2010). Based on calculations by Harttgen and Klasen (2010).

Notes: Data refers to most recent year available (2001-2008). Skilled attendance defined as having had assistance by a doctor or nurse. In this analysis the lowest and highest quintile in the DHS wealth asset index are used to define 'poor' and 'rich', respectively.

FIGURE 4: Barriers to women accessing health care, in selected countries with high rates of maternal mortality



Source: UNIFEM elaboration using MEASURE DHS STATcompiler, ORC Macro (2010).

Notes: Data refer to most recent year available (2004-2008). Values calculated for women 15-49 years old.

Despite slow overall progress, some countries have increased women's access to skilled birth attendance at delivery and have improved levels of unmet need for contraception. In Bangladesh, Indonesia and Nepal skilled attendance has doubled, albeit from a low base.<sup>25</sup> In Nepal, the number of poor women in rural areas reporting an unmet need for contraception fell from 40 percent in 1996 to 29 percent in 2006.<sup>26</sup>

However, rural location and poverty combine to make pregnancy a serious risk for many women. Despite overall progress, in Nepal and Bangladesh, only around 5 percent of poor rural women have access to skilled birth attendance. In both countries, wealthy urban women are at least 10 times more likely to receive this service than poor rural women (see figure 3).

Figure 4 shows that cost and lack of female providers are major barriers to women accessing health care services. Eighty percent of women in Sierra Leone, which has one of the highest rates of maternal mortality in the world, reported concern about cost as a reason for not seeking health care.<sup>27</sup> In response to this, the Government has recently announced it is abolishing user fees for maternal and child health care.<sup>28</sup>

A number of countries have had marked success in increasing access to health care by employing more women in frontline service delivery roles.

Since 1990, the proportion of births attended by skilled personnel in Indonesia has doubled to 73 percent and the maternal mortality rate has been cut in half. This has largely been achieved as a result of Government investment in the "midwife in every village" programme: within seven years, 54,000 midwives were trained, certified and deployed. Midwives are equipped with birthing rooms in their houses or clinics and provide outreach and reproductive health services. The programme also includes a feedback mechanism, which has helped to improve the service and make it more responsive to women's needs.<sup>29</sup>

As well as increasing uptake of services, enabling women to access public sector jobs creates opportunities for decent work and can heighten women's status in their communities.

# 2 Guaranteeing land and jobs for women

Control over resources, including opportunities for decent work and the acquisition of economic assets, are essential elements for gender justice. They enable women to profit from their hard work, for their own and their families' well-being.

Women's employment and control over land are central to achieving the MDGs, because they help to reduce poverty and increase food security. But access to these resources also has other important benefits for women: where women control land, they gain greater livelihood security and access to other resources, including credit and other financial products, seeds and extension services. In rural societies, land has symbolic as well as economic value, which contributes to women's status within their communities. Where they earn their own income, women have more say in domestic decision-making and may be less exposed to domestic violence.<sup>30</sup> However, both decent work and control over land are denied to many women.

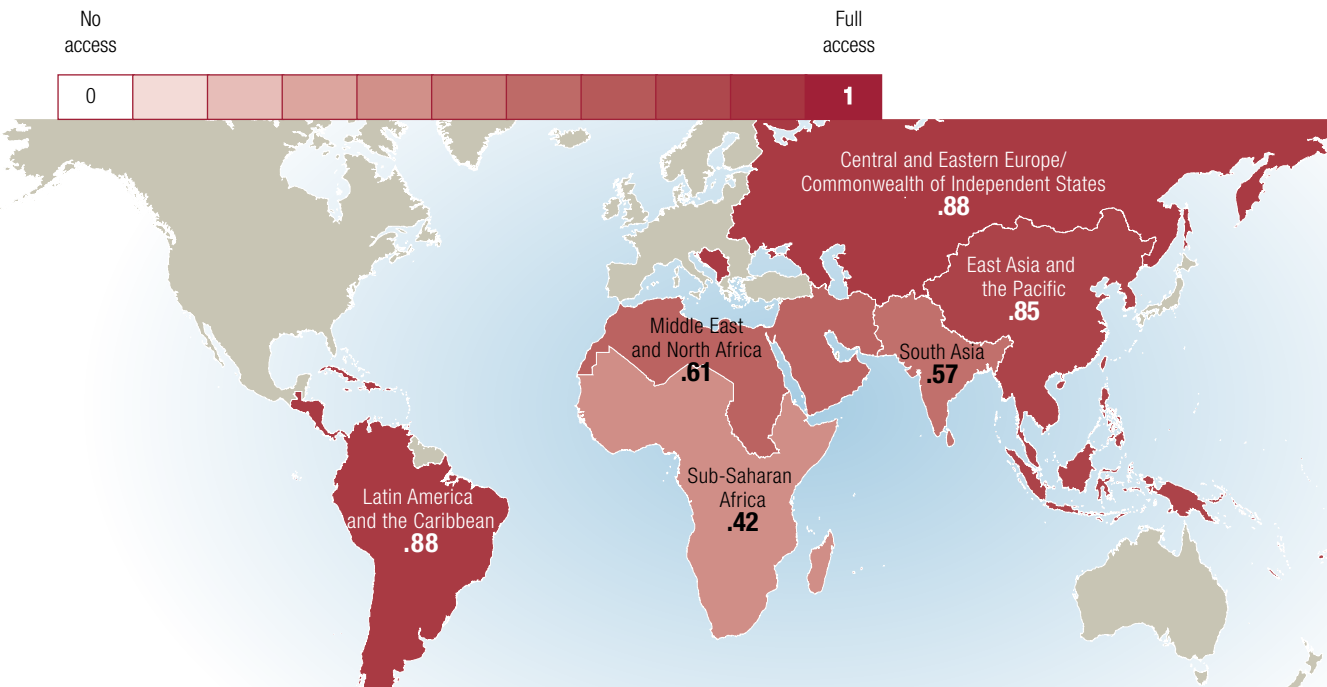
One major constraint to women's access to decent work, as well as their agricultural productivity, is the gendered division of labour within the household that assigns women most of the housework and family responsibilities.

It is estimated, for example, that globally women provide 70 to 90 percent of the care to people living with HIV and AIDS, work that props up failing health care systems, but remains generally unrecognized and unsupported.<sup>31</sup> This presents a significant disadvantage to women seeking to compete for jobs with men who do not have these additional responsibilities. A study in Uruguay found that women spend more than twice as much time as men on unpaid household work, and only half as much on paid work.<sup>32</sup>

Alongside care-giving roles, women are largely responsible for collecting water and firewood and preparing food, tasks which are especially burdensome for rural women. Declining incomes and the roll-back of public services in the context of the economic crisis are likely to intensify the burden on women, as they fill gaps left by the state and take on additional burdens to save money.<sup>33</sup>

FIGURE 5: Women's access to agricultural land

Discriminatory inheritance practices, unequal access to land markets and gender-biased land reform continue to limit women's control over land.



Source: OECD, Gender, Institutions and Development Database 2009 (GID-DB) (2010).

Notes: Women's access to land measures women's right and de facto access to agricultural land. The values are derived from assessments that take into account legal situation in the areas, drawing on the Constitution and other legal documents as a reference and an assessment of the extent to which these legal provisions are applied within the actual country context and whether other obstacles prevent women from access.

## Access to land

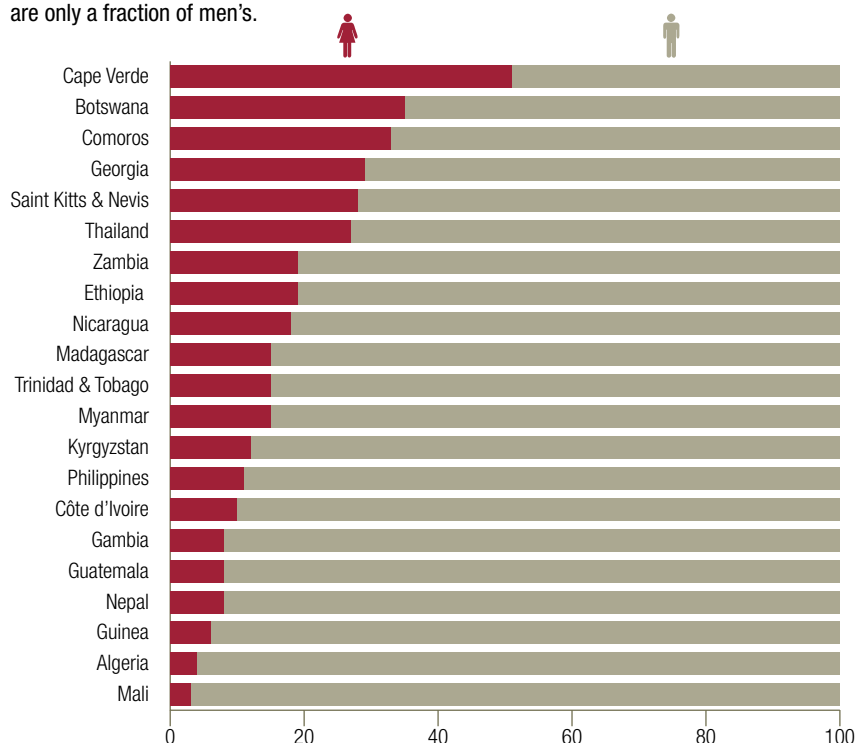
Despite the guarantees in CEDAW, in many countries women lack control over the land they rely upon for their livelihoods (figures 5 and 6). Even in countries where legislation guarantees women's land rights, implementation remains a challenge. In Madagascar, for example, women's land rights are guaranteed in the Constitution and the civil code. However, although 83 percent of employed women work in agriculture, they own just 15 percent of small landholdings<sup>34</sup> (figure 6).

Lack of control over land has knock-on effects on access to other resources. Without holding land as collateral, women often cannot access bank loans and other financial services, such as insurance and savings accounts, which enable them to accumulate assets and mitigate poverty. Insecure land tenure also contributes to environmental degradation, since women farmers, fearful of losing their land, leave it fallow for less time than men at significant cost to long-term productivity.<sup>35</sup>

Female farmers often feature in donor policies, but funding streams have not matched policy commitments. OECD statistics show that of the US\$18.4 billion spent on agricultural aid between 2002 and 2008, donors reported that just 5.6 percent included a focus on gender.<sup>36</sup>

FIGURE 6: Disparity in land ownership between men and women

Women's agricultural land holdings are only a fraction of men's.



Source: Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Gender and Land Rights Database (2010).

Notes: Data refer to most recent year available (2001-2005). An agricultural holding is an economic unit of agricultural production under single management, comprising all livestock kept and all land used wholly or partly for agricultural production purposes, without regard to title, legal form, or size. The holder is a civil or juridical person who makes major decisions regarding resource use and exercises management control over the agricultural holding operation.

### BOX 1

## Investing in female farmers and making women's land rights a reality

Women make up the majority of small-scale farmers and play a crucial role in food security in developing countries. However, agricultural extension services are overwhelmingly targeted at male landholders and in many contexts, cultural norms make it difficult for women to access extension services from men. A study of 24 agricultural extension programmes in Africa, Asia and Latin America found that the presence of female extension agents was an important factor for the participation of female farmers. In Ghana, it was found that female extension workers reached more than twice as many female farmers as male extension workers.<sup>37</sup>

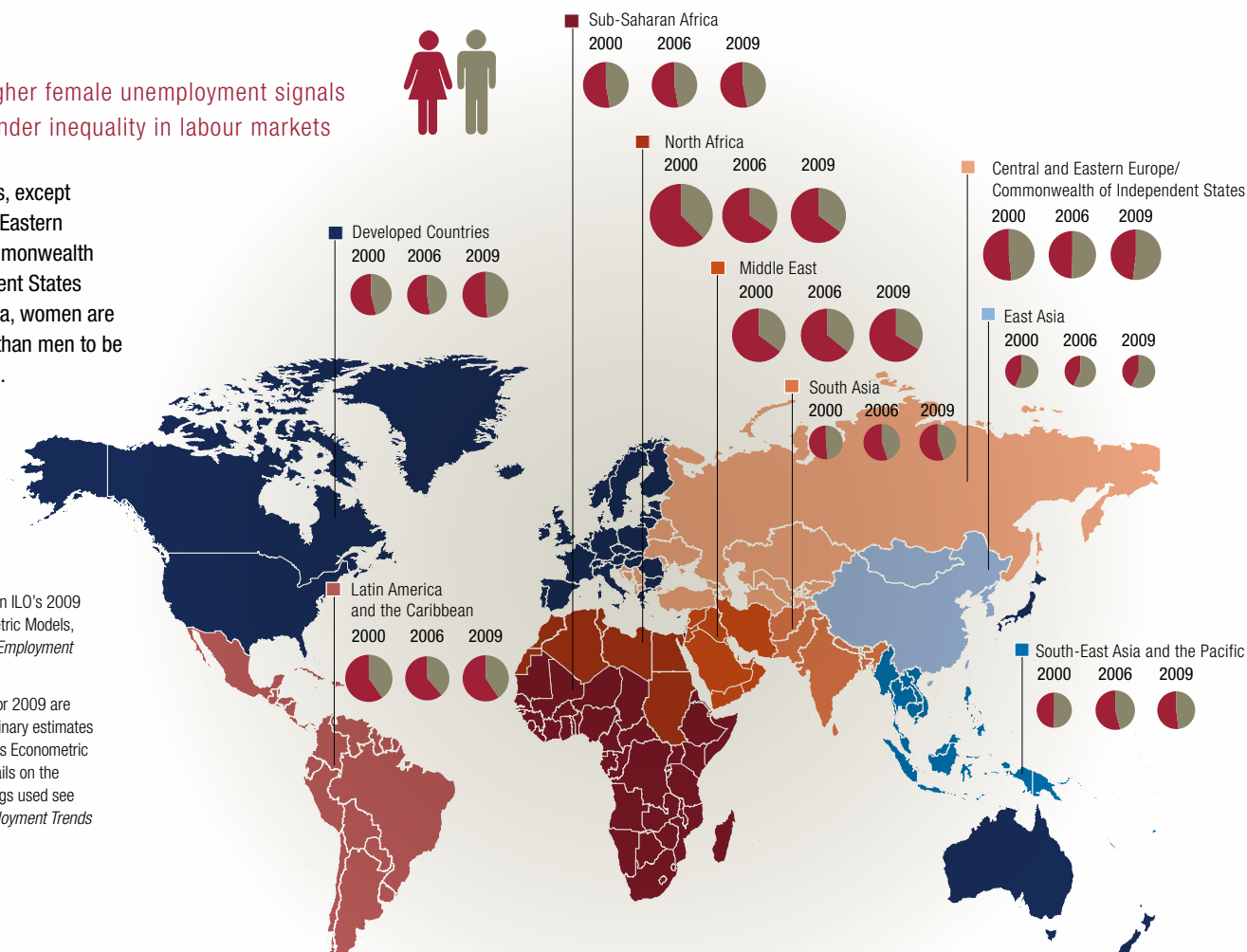
Land reforms introduced in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in the 1990s allowed women to own land on the same terms as men, but in reality it was difficult for women to claim this right. The Governments introduced further reforms to ensure that the law was implemented, including measures to provide women with legal advice and practical support to make land claims; raising awareness of women's rights among local officials and religious leaders; ensuring women's priorities were reflected in planning and budgeting; and supporting women's cooperatives. More remains to be done, but between 2002 and 2008, the proportion of women heading family farms in Tajikistan rose from 2 percent to 14 percent.<sup>38</sup>

FIGURE 7: Higher female unemployment signals gender inequality in labour markets

In all regions, except Central and Eastern Europe/Commonwealth of Independent States and East Asia, women are more likely than men to be unemployed.

Source: Based on ILO's 2009 Trends Econometric Models, see ILO, *Global Employment Trends* (2010).

Notes: Figures for 2009 are based on preliminary estimates from ILO's Trends Econometric Models. For details on the regional groupings used see ILO, *Global Employment Trends* (2010).



BOX 2

## Gender-responsive social protection

In April 2009, the joint UN response to the global economic crisis, adopted by 17 UN agencies, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, encompassed a commitment to introduce a social protection floor.<sup>39</sup> Social protection refers to policy measures and programmes that reduce poverty and vulnerability, protect workers and diminish people's exposure to risks associated with ill health, disability, old age and unemployment. While most countries provide some form of social security for the elderly, few provide coverage for all individuals, independent of their employment history.

Establishing a social protection floor, with coverage for all, should therefore be a priority. The ILO estimates that for a low-income country, even a basic social security system can make the difference to whether poverty reduction goals are achieved. Estimates from 12 countries in Africa and Asia indicate that social security systems can be affordable.<sup>40</sup>

Such policies are especially important for women, whose unpaid household and care responsibilities mean they are more likely to have part-time or informal jobs that lack protection against ill health or unemployment, and where earnings are often too meagre to qualify for social security.

Social protection programmes should also be designed to tackle some of the challenges women face in accessing employment opportunities. In Colombia, the *Hogares Comunitarios* programme facilitates the creation of semi-formal daycare facilities in women's homes. Over 80,000 women from low-income neighbourhoods participate in the Government-subsidized programme, enabling more women to enter the workforce.<sup>41</sup>

## Access to decent work

Access to decent work underpins gender justice, yet vulnerable employment, unemployment and gender wage gaps are persistent features of labour markets for women in developed and developing countries alike.

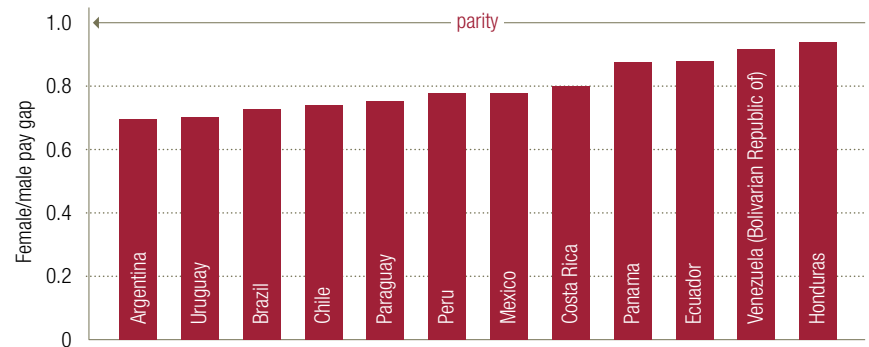
Globally, women make up 41 percent of the total employment in the non-agricultural sector. But in South and West Asia, and North Africa, female employment outside of agriculture remains extremely limited, with women accounting for just one fifth of employment in industry and service sectors.<sup>42</sup>

More than half of all women in the world (53 percent) work in vulnerable employment as unpaid family workers and own-account workers, employment that lacks security and benefits. In South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, more than 80 percent of women workers are in this kind of employment.<sup>43</sup>

Globally, women are more likely to be unemployed than men. Rates of unemployment among women have increased from 6.5 percent of the workforce in 2000 to 7 percent in 2009, compared to 6 percent to 6.3 percent for men.<sup>44</sup>

The gender gaps in unemployment are largest in North Africa, the Middle East and Latin America and the Caribbean (see figure 7). The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that since 2007 and as a result of the global economic and financial crises, up to 18.7 million women have become unemployed, and women have been pushed into insecure jobs at a faster rate than men.<sup>45</sup>

FIGURE 8: Gender wage gaps in Latin America



Across the board, women are paid less than men.

For those in employment, across all regions and sectors, women are paid less on average than men for the same job. In the majority of countries, women earn between 70 and 90 percent of men's wages, with even lower ratios observed in some Latin American countries.<sup>46</sup> (figure 8)

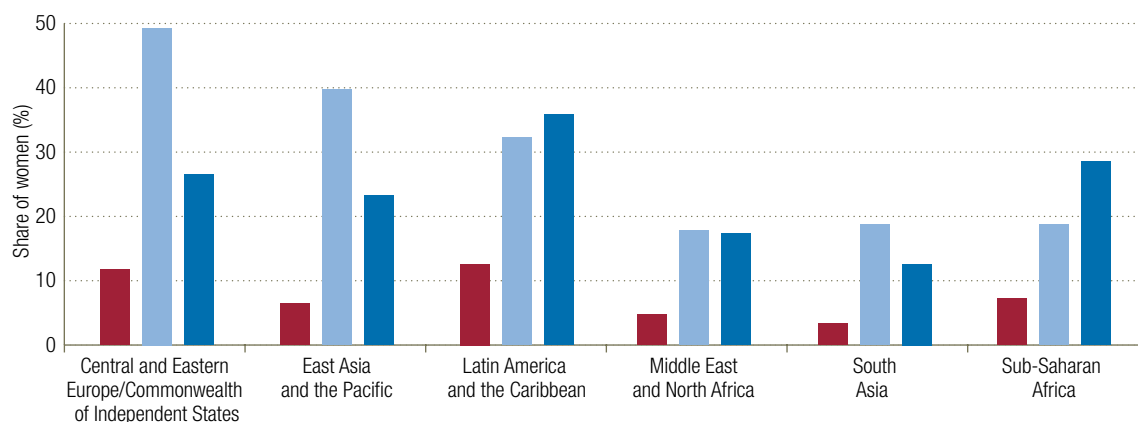
Globally, there has been a slow but consistent long-term narrowing of the gender pay gap. However, since the onset of the economic crisis, progress has stalled, and in the United States of America and the United Kingdom, the gender pay gap has in fact widened.<sup>47</sup>

Enabling women to access higher skilled jobs, through improving education opportunities, eliminating discrimination in labour markets and supporting women's unpaid care burdens is one way to close wage gaps, which tend to narrow in professional and managerial roles. However, women's share of senior positions is low and does not exceed 15 percent in any region (figure 9).

Source: ILO Global Wage Database (2009), part of ILO's Conditions of Work and Employment Programme (TRAVAIL).

Notes: Data refer to most recent year available (2006-2008). Mean/average nominal wages from household or enterprise surveys or national account estimates disaggregated by gender are used to assess gaps in pay. Only data on full time workers are used, which may skew the interpretation of the gender pay gap since part-time work is predominantly among women.

FIGURE 9: There is one woman for every nine men in senior management positions



The percentage of women in senior positions ranges from 3 to 13 percent, despite the fact that their share of full-time employment ranges from 18 to 49 percent.

■ Share of women in senior positions (%)  
 ■ Share of full-time female workers (%)  
 ■ Firms with female participation in ownership (%)

Source: World Bank Enterprise Survey (2008).

Notes: Unweighted regional averages were estimated. Companies surveyed were private or part private. Complete information for developed regions was unavailable.

### 3 Increasing women's voice in decision-making

Gender justice depends on women's ability to participate in and influence decision-making, whether in the household, the community or at national, regional and global levels. CEDAW stipulates that women should be represented in political and public life on equal terms with men. The presence of women in leadership increases the probability that their experiences are represented in decision-making and encourages girls to aspire to such roles.

No region of the world has achieved the critical mass of 30 percent for women's leadership. In every aspect of public life — from private sector companies to community organizations — urgent action is needed. The MDGs cannot be sustained without a significant increase in the representation of women in public life.

#### Women's autonomy in the household

Women's lack of voice in the public sphere starts in the home. Many women have no say in vital everyday decisions such as their own health care, household purchases, or visits to relatives. Lack of education and poverty can exacerbate women's disempowerment:

- In Bangladesh, 12 percent of women report having no say in these decisions. This figure is 17 percent for women in Azerbaijan.

- In Namibia, a quarter of girls with incomplete primary education report having no say over decisions, compared to 15 percent of girls with secondary education or higher.
- In Peru, 10 percent of the poorest women report having no say, compared to just 1 percent of their richer counterparts.<sup>48</sup>

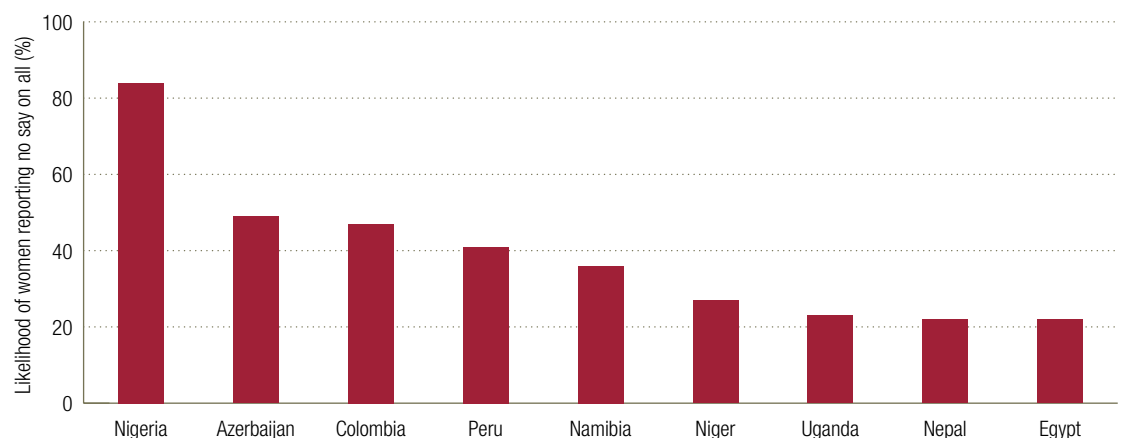
Women are often not able to negotiate using a condom. In Haiti, a quarter of women report that they could not ask their partner to use a condom. This figure is 72 percent for women in Mali.<sup>49</sup> More than four-fifths of new HIV infections in women occur in marriage or in long-term relationships with primary partners.<sup>50</sup>

Early marriage has the biggest impact, disempowering girls throughout their lives. In Nigeria, for example, women who married young (under the age of 18) are over 80 percent more likely to report having no say on decisions within the household than women who married later (see figure 10).

In the developing world, more than one third of women between 20 and 24 report that they were married or in a union by age 18. Early marriage curtails girls' opportunities for education and exposes them to the risks of early pregnancy and childbirth, the leading causes of death for girls aged 15 to 19 in developing countries.<sup>51</sup> Ethiopia and Bangladesh have had success in encouraging girls to access education by providing economic incentives conditional on them delaying marriage.<sup>52</sup>

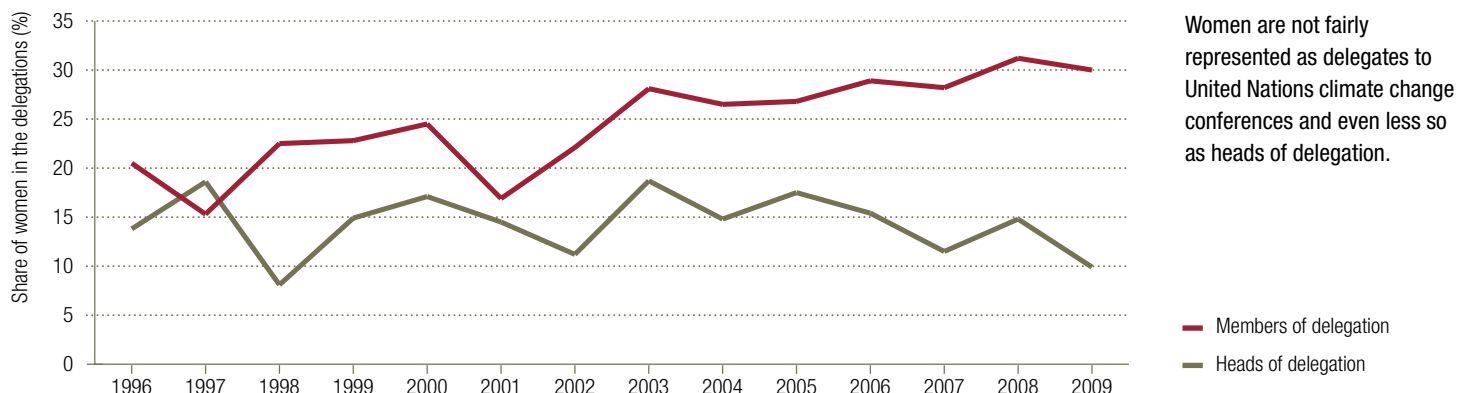
FIGURE 10: The lifetime impact of early marriage on decision-making in the household

No matter what their current age, women who married before they were 18 are far more likely to report that they have no say in decisions than those who married later. For example, in Colombia, women who married young are 47 percent more likely to report having no say, compared to women who married later.



Source: UNFEM estimations based on Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS). Notes: Data refer to most recent year available (2003-2008).

FIGURE 11: Female delegates to United Nations climate change conferences



Source: GenderCC - women for climate justice (2010).

## Women in policymaking

Women's participation is essential to gender-responsive governance. Where women's voices are heard, policy better reflects their lives. Where under-representation persists, women's interests are repeatedly ignored.

On HIV/AIDS, climate change and peacebuilding, areas critical to advancing gender justice and achieving the MDGs, women are often absent:

- Women make up only a third of the chairs and vice-chairs of the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria's Country Coordinating Mechanisms for HIV/AIDS.<sup>53</sup> A UNIFEM review identified stigma, lack of access to information and the burden of care-giving in the home as barriers to women participating in HIV/AIDS policymaking.<sup>54</sup>
- While women's participation in delegations to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of Parties has increased slowly since 1996, the proportion of heads of delegation who are women has declined slightly (see figure 11).<sup>55</sup>
- In 24 peace processes over the past two decades, according to available information, women formed less than 8 percent of negotiating teams. Some of the features of war that most directly impact on women are absent from peace negotiations. In a sample of 300 peace agreements in 45 conflicts since the end of the Cold War, only 18 include a mention of sexual and gender violence.<sup>56</sup>

- In the USA across 10 key sectors, including politics, business, law, the media, and the military, women make up an average of just 18 percent of leaders.<sup>57</sup>

Reserving spaces for women in policy-making forums and putting in place measures for them to participate meaningfully is essential if women's voices are to be heard.

### BOX 3

## Women in corporate decision-making

Quotas have been shown to rapidly increase female representation in corporate decision-making, as well as politics. In 2003, Norway introduced a quota of 40 percent to increase women's representation on corporate boards. Since then the proportion of women has increased by more than seven times to 44 percent.<sup>58</sup> Spain and the Netherlands have introduced the same quota, while the French parliament is considering taking action. In the UK, where women make up just 12 percent of the membership of the boards of the 100 largest quoted companies, an influential parliamentary committee argued that low female representation may have played a part in the financial crisis: "we believe the lack of diversity in many, if not most, of our major financial institutions may have heightened the problems of 'group think' and made effective challenge and scrutiny of executive decisions less effective."<sup>59</sup>

## Women in politics

The importance of women's representation in politics is recognized with the inclusion of an indicator in MDG 3. In 1995, the Beijing Platform for Action called for a gender balance in governmental bodies, while CEDAW mandates the use of temporary special measures, including quotas, to increase the voice of women in political decision-making.<sup>60</sup>

To date, globally women only make up 18.6 percent of parliamentarians. However, 29 countries have now reached or exceeded the 30 percent mark (figure 12).

The impressive strides of some the world's poorest countries — including those emerging from conflict — in increasing the number of women in parliaments show that progress has more to do with political will than level of development. Of these 29 countries, at least 24 have used quotas.<sup>61</sup>

Globally, women occupy 16 percent of ministerial posts. Of these posts, 35 percent are in social sectors, compared to 19 percent in finance and trade roles (figure 13).

FIGURE 12: As of June 2010, twenty-nine countries have reached or exceeded the 30 percent mark in women's representation in parliament

Of the 29 countries that have reached or exceeded 30 percent women's representation, at least 24 have used quotas.

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union (2010). Women in National Parliaments: Comparative Data by Country; IDEA Global Database of Quotas for Women (2008).

Notes: The trend line shown is a simple average for the 29 countries that reached or exceeded the 30 percent mark as of 30 June 2010. Information on quotas and year of implementation is shown for a sample of countries.

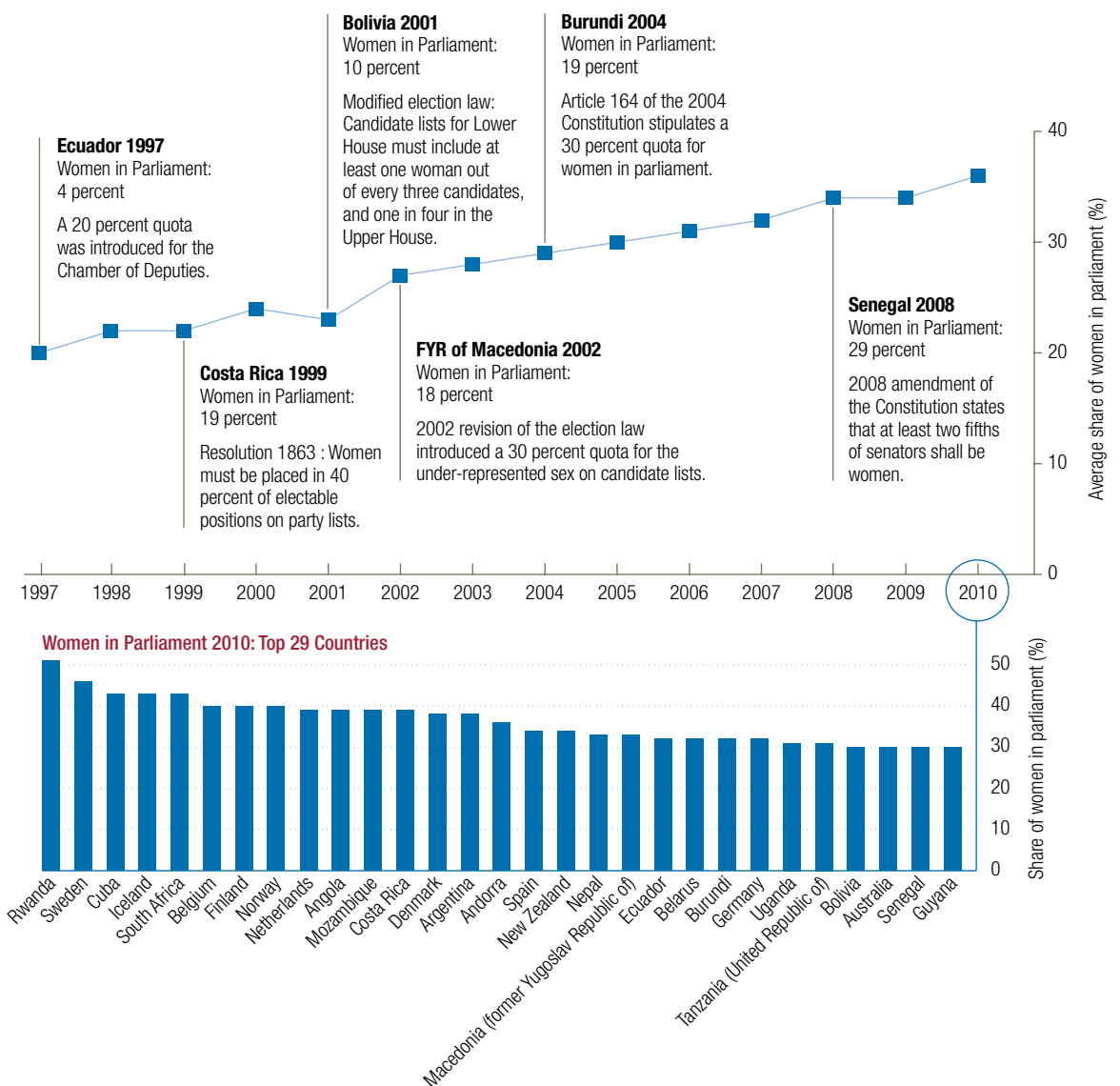
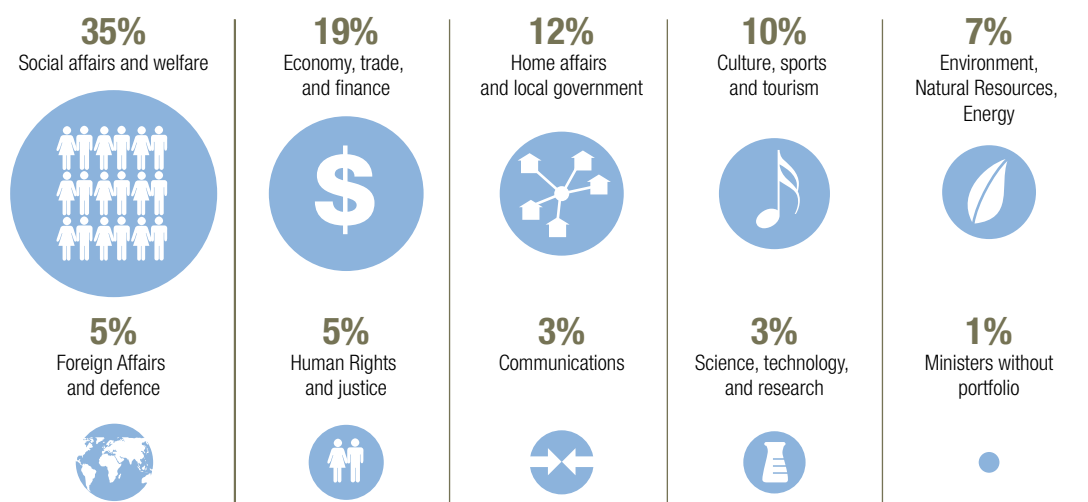


FIGURE 13: Portfolios of women ministers, January 2010



Women are almost twice as likely to be ministers for social sectors and welfare, than for the economy, trade and finance.

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Women in Politics: 2010* (2010).

Notes: Data as of January 2010. The values are based on the portfolios of 611 women ministers and does not include information on portfolios held by male ministers. Because in some cases women ministers have more than one portfolio, the number of portfolios (1,056) is higher than the number of women ministers.

## Women in local government

Local government provides opportunities for women to participate in decision-making at community and district levels, and can build valuable skills for more senior office.

India has had remarkable success in increasing women's representation in its 265,000 *panchayat* village councils which administer public services and resolve disputes on matters ranging from marriage to property. Since the Constitution was amended in 1992 to reserve at least one third of seats for women, more than a million women have been elected into *panchayats*.<sup>62</sup> This quota has recently been increased to 50 percent and in March 2010, the Upper House of the Indian Parliament voted 186 votes to one for a 30 percent quota to be introduced at the national level.<sup>63</sup>

Female representation in local government has been shown to make a difference on issues that matter to women. Research on *panchayats* in India found that the number of drinking water projects in female-led councils was 62 percent higher than in male-led councils.<sup>64</sup> In Norway, a direct causal relationship between the presence of women in municipal councils and childcare coverage was found.<sup>65</sup>

## Women's organizing

Supporting women's participation in local politics and community organizing can help to increase women's decision-making within the home, and also prepare and encourage women to participate more visibly in their communities and in political decision-making.

One example is the Bangladeshi non-governmental organization, *Nijera Kori* (NK). With a quarter of a million members, over half of whom are women, NK actively engages its members to save on a regular basis and carries out training on rights and social justice. Female NK members are more likely to take decisions on their own regarding household issues, including children's education, health care, income allocation, the purchase of land and large assets, and family planning. The women also have greater autonomy in travelling unaccompanied in public.<sup>66</sup>

Despite their critical role in community development and mobilizing for gender equality, women's organizations receive only a fraction of official development aid. According to OECD figures, in 2008, women's organizations received just 0.3 percent of such aid.<sup>67</sup>

## 4 Ending violence against women and girls

Violence against women and girls, one of the most widespread human rights violations in the world, continues to cost lives and stunt social and economic opportunities for women, communities and nations. Gender justice will remain out of reach unless this scourge is addressed and eliminated.

Ending violence against women is widely regarded as a missing MDG target, undermining efforts to reach all of the goals. For example:

- Violence against women has enormous direct and indirect costs for survivors, employers and the public sector in terms of health, police, legal and related expenditure as well as lost wages and productivity. In Australia, violence against women and children costs an estimated US\$11.4 billion per year.<sup>68</sup>
- Violence against girls at and on the way to school is a major barrier to increasing girls' enrolment and retention. In South Africa, in 1999, a third of reported rapes among girls under 15 were perpetrated by a teacher.<sup>69</sup>
- Violence severely restricts women's ability to exercise their reproductive rights, with as many as one in four women experiencing physical or sexual violence during pregnancy.<sup>70</sup>

- Violence is both a cause and consequence of HIV and AIDS. It limits women's ability to protect themselves from infection, and those who are HIV-positive are often targeted for stigma and abuse upon disclosure of their status.<sup>71</sup>

In recognition of the far-reaching implications for MDG progress, in 2008 the Secretary-General launched a global campaign, UNiTE to End Violence against Women.

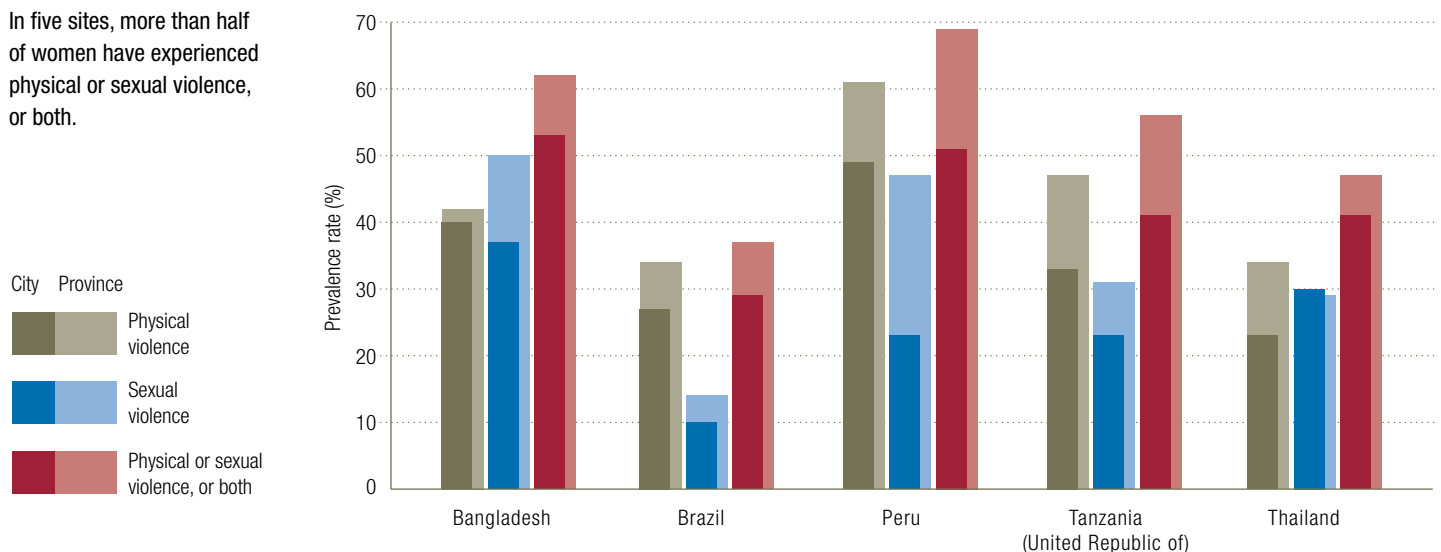
Data on violence against women is scarce, but the best available data show that between 15 and 76 percent of women are targeted for physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime. Most of this violence takes place within intimate relationships, with many women reporting their husbands or partners as the perpetrator (see figure 14).<sup>72</sup>

While increasing numbers of countries have legislation in place to tackle violence against women, implementation of these laws continues to be a challenge in many contexts.<sup>73</sup>

Adopting multi-sectoral national action plans, with adequate funding for implementation is critical. These plans should include effective public services to provide a holistic response to all aspects of violence against women. For example, women's police stations, which have been established in at least 13 countries in Latin America, have increased the visibility of violence against women and reporting rates have gone up.<sup>74</sup>

FIGURE 14: Lifetime prevalence of physical and sexual violence by an intimate partner

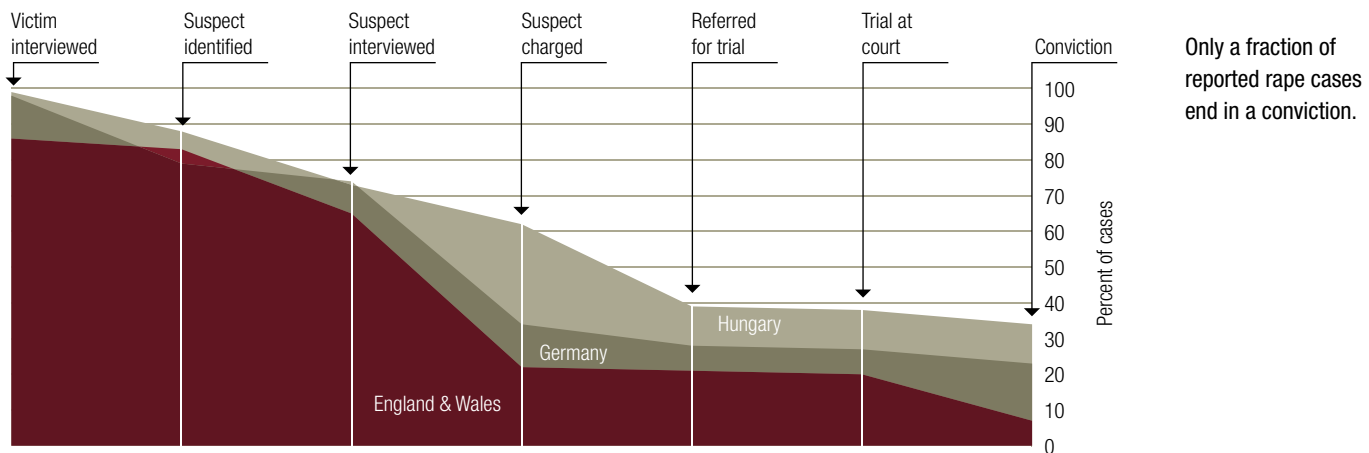
In five sites, more than half of women have experienced physical or sexual violence, or both.



Source: World Health Organization (WHO), *WHO multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women* (2005).

Notes: Global data on violence against women that is comparable across countries is very scarce. The WHO survey, which focuses on 10 countries, is regarded as one of the most robust sources. It does not attempt to document an exhaustive list of acts of violence, but instead asked a limited number of questions about specific acts that commonly occur in violent partnerships. Given that a conservative definition of violence is used, the estimates shown here are likely to underestimate the true prevalence.

FIGURE 15: Attrition rates in rape cases, England and Wales, Germany and Hungary



Source: Lovett and Kelly, *Different systems, similar outcomes? Tracking attrition in reported rape across Europe*, Child and Women Abuse Studies Unit, London Metropolitan University (2009).

In post-conflict Liberia, the deployment of a 130-strong all-women Indian police unit as part of the United Nations Mission in Liberia is also reported to have increased rates of reporting of gender-based violence in the areas they patrolled.<sup>75</sup>

As with other public services, the presence of properly trained female providers, including those staffing dedicated, specialized police units or desks can be beneficial. In the longer term, however, the response to gender-based violence should be institutionalized across the entire police system, so that women in need can seek prompt assistance from all police officers.

Another challenge of implementation in countries worldwide is tackling attrition in rape cases, whereby very few reported cases result in a conviction (see figure 15). In Cleveland, a district of the UK, rape conviction rates are reported to have increased by 10 percent since the opening of a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC), an integrated service offering rape survivors health care, counseling and support throughout the justice system.<sup>76</sup>

Joined-up, holistic approaches mean that penal responses are just one part of the solution. As well as ensuring adequate services for survivors, broad-based campaigns and advocacy using popular culture to mobilize communities, young people and men to join efforts to prevent violence are vital.

#### BOX 4

### UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women

The United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund) supports national and local action to address violence against women and girls.<sup>77</sup> Since 1996, it has supported 304 programmes in 121 countries and territories with over US\$50 million in grants. In 2009 alone, more than 1,600 applications were received, but the Fund can meet less than 4 percent of the demand.

Projects supported by the UN Trust Fund demonstrate a range of innovative and effective work to end violence against women and lay a foundation for achieving the MDGs.

For example:

- **Services for survivors:** Five regional councils have been established by *Refleksione*, the Albanian Women's Association, to coordinate a comprehensive multi-sectoral response to prevent and end domestic violence. For the first time, local governments in four of the five regions have allocated public funds to services for domestic violence survivors. This successful pilot is being scaled up to other regions in the country.
- **Addressing the links between violence and HIV:** SASA! is a methodology developed by Raising Voices. A comprehensive tool to address the link between violence against women and HIV and AIDS, this user-friendly kit develops local activism, advocacy and training to enable and structure community mobilization. The Trust Fund is providing support to scale up the programme in six countries in East and Southern Africa.
- **Preventing violence against women:** The VOICES programme of Equal Access in Nepal has trained community reporters from marginalized groups to produce radio broadcasts on violence against women. The broadcasts ran over 500 times on the main national radio station, reaching up to 90 percent of the population.

# Gender justice: Key to achieving the Millennium Development Goals

Tackling inequalities and discrimination holds the key to further progress on all of the MDGs and is essential to meeting the promise of social justice outlined in the Millennium Declaration.

Gender justice — which not only requires an end to inequalities between women and men, but also accountability to women and girls for tackling injustice and discrimination — is a central part of this vision.

Despite some important gains, progress has been slowest on the gender equality dimensions of the MDG targets. With five years left to reach the goals, it is clear that progress on each and every one can be accelerated by focusing attention on four key areas that are critical to achieving gender justice.

1

## Expanding women-friendly public services

Most of the MDGs are dependent on effective public service delivery. Data on progress on the MDGs for many countries show that there are significant gaps in access between poor rural and rich urban populations, particularly for women and girls. Action is needed to:

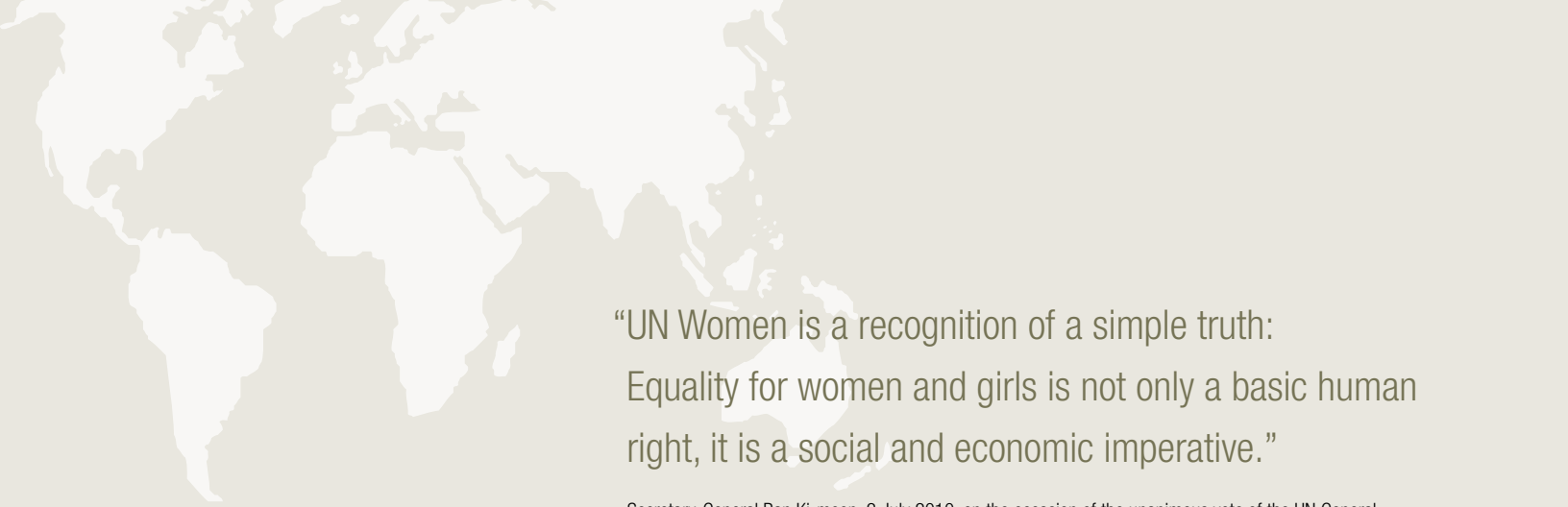
- Abolish user fees and use cash incentives to enable the poorest women to access public services. User fees are a major barrier to access to education and health care. Stipends that cover fees and other costs have been effective in increasing girls' access to secondary school, while fee removal has greatly increased access to reproductive health services, including HIV prevention and treatment.
- Increase the number of women at the frontline of service delivery, including in education, health care and agricultural extension. Access to these jobs creates economic benefits, increases women's uptake of services and offers positive role models for girls. These jobs should offer career advancement and decent pay to avoid gender segregation.
- Implement gender-responsive budgeting at national and local levels, in order to respond to women's priorities through planning and ensure adequate allocation and spending on public services that deliver for women and men in line with national priorities.

2

## Guaranteeing land and jobs for women

Opportunities for decent work and the acquisition of assets are essential for gender justice and the MDGs. Currently, with women controlling only a fraction of the world's land and comprising more than half of those in vulnerable employment, decent work and economic assets remain out of reach for most women. Reducing poverty and hunger depends on action to:

- Legally guarantee women's land rights and ensure that such laws are implemented to strengthen rural women's livelihoods and economic security.
- Make the generation of full and productive employment and the creation of decent work the primary goal of macroeconomic, social and development policies, particularly in the context of the current economic crisis.
- Take steps to eliminate wage gaps between women and men, including by enabling women to access higher skilled jobs.
- Support governments to adopt a social protection floor, in line with the joint UN response to the global economic crisis initiative, which by implementing the universal right to social security and access to basic services would benefit women in particular.
- Develop ways to measure the type, extent and distribution of unpaid work, particularly work caring for dependants and unpaid work for family farms or businesses, and to assess its value quantitatively, for inclusion in accounts that are consistent with core national accounts, as recommended in the Beijing Platform for Action.



“UN Women is a recognition of a simple truth:  
Equality for women and girls is not only a basic human  
right, it is a social and economic imperative.”

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, 2 July 2010, on the occasion of the unanimous vote of the UN General Assembly to establish the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), of which UNIFEM is a part.

### 3 Applying special measures to increase women's voice in decision-making

The importance of women's political representation is recognized in MDG 3. But gender justice demands action beyond formal political representation to advocate for women's participation and influence in decision-making in all spheres and at all levels, from the household to the boardroom. Action is needed to:

- Apply temporary special measures, including quotas, in all spheres in which women are under-represented. This includes political processes, HIV policymaking, peace negotiations and corporate boards. There is solid evidence that these measures can quickly change the numbers. Less clear are the conditions under which women decision-makers can use their positions to advance gender justice.
- Invest in and track women's participation in local politics, political parties and community organizing. This is important preparatory ground to enable women to become more visible in their communities and in political decision-making.
- Legislate against and invest in programmes to delay early marriage. The capacity to participate in decision-making begins in the home, but early marriage disempowers women throughout their lives and, among other damaging impacts, reduces their autonomy within the household.

### 4 Ending violence against women and girls

Women's and girls' rights and opportunities cannot be fulfilled unless the violence and fear they face in daily life is eliminated. In line with the Secretary-General's global campaign, UNiTE to End Violence against Women, urgent action is required to:

- Adopt and enforce national laws to address and punish all forms of violence against women and girls.
- Adopt and implement multi-sectoral national action plans.
- Strengthen data collection on the prevalence of violence against women and girls.
- Increase public awareness and social mobilization for zero tolerance and prevention, including engagement of communities, men and young people.
- Systematically address sexual violence in conflict and its aftermath.
- Increase resources to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls, including meeting the target of a minimum of \$100 million annually by 2015 for the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women.<sup>78</sup>

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# Progress of the World's Women

*Progress of the World's Women* tracks progress towards gender equality, aiming to inspire bold action by governments and civil society to meet their commitments and accelerate the achievement of women's rights.



## 2010/2011 Women's Access to Justice

In recent years, there have been impressive gains in reforming laws to recognize women's rights. However, women still lack control over resources, access to services, voice in decision-making and protection from violence. *Progress* will identify effective actions and innovative strategies employed by governments and civil society worldwide to expand women's access to justice and rights.

*Publication forthcoming in December 2010.*



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Asking, 'Who Answers to Women?', this edition of *Progress* put forward a new framework on gender and accountability, stimulating global debate on moving from commitment to action on gender equality and women's rights.



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Showcasing new data on women working in the informal economy, *Progress* made the case that strengthening women's economic security, through ensuring access to decent work, is critical to efforts to reduce poverty and promote gender equality.



## 2002 Women, War, Peace

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## 2000 Women's Economic Lives

Analyzing the impact of globalization on women's lives, the first edition of *Progress* focused on women's economic security and rights, engendering governance and leadership, and promoting women's human rights, including through gender-responsive budgeting.





UNIFEM (part of UN Women) is the women's fund at the United Nations. It provides financial and technical assistance to innovative programmes and strategies to foster women's empowerment and gender equality. Placing the advancement of women's human rights at the centre of all of its efforts, UNIFEM focuses on reducing feminized poverty; ending violence against women; reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS among women and girls; and achieving gender equality in democratic governance in times of peace as well as conflict.





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