



06 OCCASIONAL PAPERS  
SOCIAL WATCH

BEIJING AND BEYOND

# Putting gender economics at the forefront

15 years after the IV World Conference on Women

**Natalia Cardona, Elsa Duhagon & Amir Hamed (Eds.)**

March 2010

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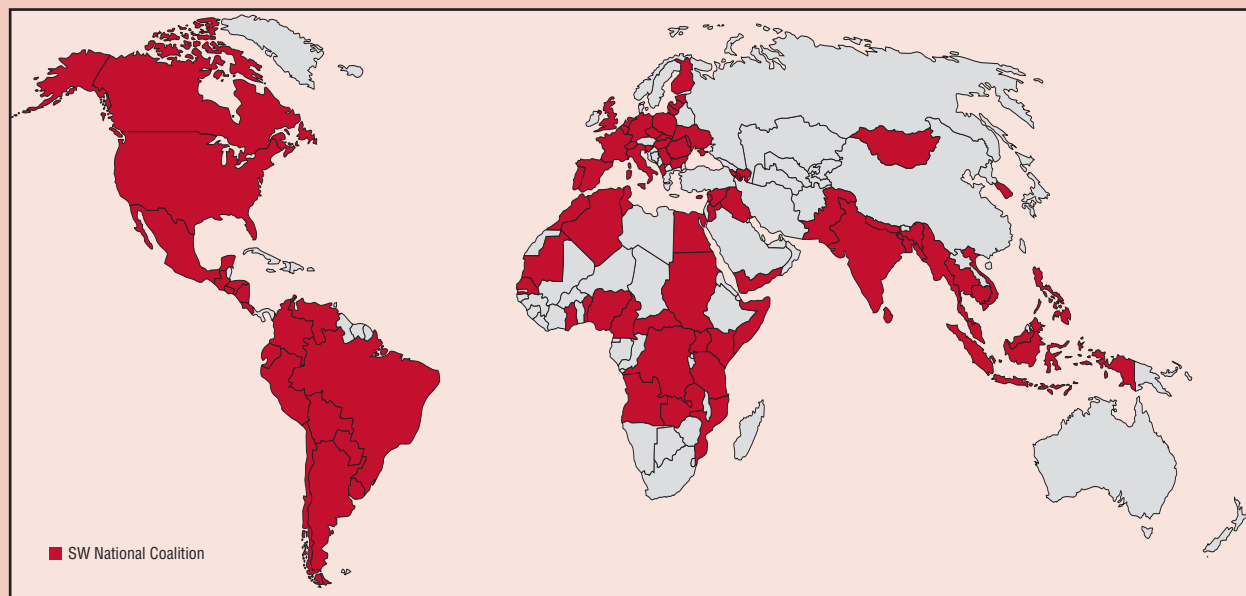
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# Time to move forward

Thirty one years ago, the governments of the world made it their legal responsibility to ensure women's rights by signing into the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Fifteen years ago, the Beijing World Conference on Women adopted an ambitious plan of action towards gender equality. This Social Watch paper *Putting gender economics at the forefront* goes into print in coincidence with the review by the Commission on the Status of Women of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPFA). This occasional paper includes thematic reports showing women's experiences and analysis from civil society organizations from different regions and countries. It also includes the Social Watch's Gender Equity Index (GEI) plus statistical tables on specific gender issues and examines achievements and setbacks on the status of women and girls since 1995. The different articles, statements and figures highlight women's global struggle for gender equality and respect of their human rights and freedoms.

This paper demonstrates that, notwithstanding some advances since the Beijing Conference and the adoption of CEDAW, the UN member States still have not fully implemented their commitments to gender equity as an essential condition for sustainable economic and social development. Also, the evolution of the gender statistical indicators, along with the narratives included in this publication, prove that there is an evident gap between gender legislation and its implementation of actual policies.

Furthermore, the GEI uncovers a staggering wipe out of the economic gains made by women at the global level and the negative impact of the global financial crisis on them. They draw attention most specifically to the financial crisis as its effects are widespread and exacerbate already existing inequalities. They also highlight the gendered nature of the crisis and its effects on women and women-depending economies. Moreover, as Elsa Duhagon points out in her article *Feminist Economics and the New Development Paradigm* included here, social policies and state involvement are of vital importance in times of crisis since social indicators take twice as long as the economic ones to recover, while many people are left by the wayside. This means that human capital is lost, and that the equation "when the economy recovers, the social indicators will recover" is not valid. A change must come in economic theory and this must be reflected in practice. It is not a question of aiming for growth and formulating some policies for women, but of designing and implementing a new development paradigm with equal rights and equal opportunities for everyone without any kind of discrimination whatsoever.

The needs of women and girls today go beyond advancing the Beijing Platform and implementing CEDAW to including a call for sustainable development that places human well being at the core of policy making. Regional fora such as the Asia Pacific NGO

Forum –included here– point out to the need for sub-regional economic integration processes and national development plans that rest on the principles and practices of ecological sustainability, food sovereignty, financial inclusion, universal social protection, economic solidarity and fair trade.

Despite advances across the globe in legislation geared towards gender equity and judicial processes it is important to note that all around the world the women's movement has expressed its disappointment with the fact that states are very quick to sign onto human rights instruments and endorse different policies at the international and regional levels but extremely slow in delivering on their commitments and implementing legislation. Women's NGOs in Africa met in November 2009 in The Gambia for the African regional conference on Beijing +15. Ms Norah Matovu Wing, Executive Director of The African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET) said "The change achieved in the political, social, economic status and situation of African women cannot be denied. However the concern is that those enjoying these benefits remain a minority."<sup>1</sup> And changes in the daily lives of women are few and far between specially for those living in rural areas and those who are forced to migrate within countries and abroad.

## A quick overview

In Asia, Latin America, The Middle East, Africa and Europe women and women's movements have acknowledged the positive effect of international instruments on the lives of women and girls. They have underscored the ratification of CEDAW in all but eight countries as a positive step. Additionally, some countries have implemented national action plans to combat violence against women. Also, quotas or other affirmative measures were adopted to increase women's representation in political decision-making in a number of countries. Moreover, some countries took steps to improve health outcomes for women and girls and implement measures to reduce gender gaps in literacy and in primary and secondary education.

There is a diversity of challenges within geographic and ethnographic areas in each region and country and these obstacles must be taken into account when analyzing advances and setbacks in achievements related to women's status. In the Muslim world which is often portrayed as a single homogenous region, despite the common culture, there is a marked difference between countries as to the extent of the achievements of the platform for action of Beijing. This difference can be traced back to several factors, including the position of every country from the interpretation of religious texts in relation to women which reflects clearly in the personal status laws and the responsibilities

<sup>1</sup> "African Women NGO Review Beijing +15", Foroyaa online, <[www.foroyaa.gm/modules/news/article.php?storyid=3913](http://www.foroyaa.gm/modules/news/article.php?storyid=3913)>.

that they are allowed to exercise outside the boundaries of their home and family.

However, some regions are also registering increasing dynamics of religious extremism and/or right-wing conservatism that is linked to the perpetuation and propagation of discriminatory laws against women. A particular concern arising from the reports contained in this publication is the fact that many states and certain political parties resort to manipulating the right of people to cultural and religious diversity as a pretext for violating human rights, including the rights guaranteed to women, girls, HIV AIDS survivors, and persons with diverse sexual orientations.

Furthermore, political oppression of women and their rights is compounded by conflicts and an unbalanced focus on militarization as a form of security rather than human well being. Millions of dollars are spent across the world by governments of different political tendencies on “securing” their countries as basic needs of the most vulnerable and poor, many of whom are women and girls. As the article “Codifying Impunity” included in this publication shows, Burma’s 2008 Constitution provides a dangerous example of how militarization and political oppression threaten the future of women. This Constitution, approved in a referendum steeped in fraud and conducted in the disastrous aftermath of Cyclone Nargis, provides a glimpse of what Burmese women’s rights will look like after the 2010 elections. Burma’s lopsided militarization is but one extreme example of a global trend by states in prioritizing military spending at the detriment of essential social services upon which many women rely.

Across regions women emphasize the significant impact of the current economic and financial crisis on women. The economic position of women at the start of the global recession was by no means equal to that of men. And state responses to this crisis have focused on male dominated sectors like the car industry and the construction sector. In Latin America and the Caribbean very few of the measures taken by the countries to confront the crisis mention women, despite the fact that its impact is greater on them, with regard to both unemployment and the growth of precarious work, or access to jobs with lower

productivity and no social protection. In short, such measures do not call into question present forms of employment, or the relation between paid and unpaid labour. As a result of deficient, exclusive or even practically non-existent social protection systems, jobless people are not only poor but also marginalized; they are socially excluded and are pushed towards an informal or illegal economy. Women’s participation in the informal economy and in “voluntary” work has seen an increase as social protection measures are removed and their unemployment levels increase due to outmoded gender conceptions and the States’ effort to cut spending in public services – a sector where women tend to be employed – rather than guard the well being of their citizens in times of crisis. This has a doubly negative impact on women as it increases unemployment among them and increases the burden of unpaid care labour.

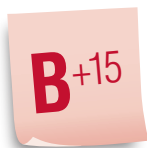
Variants of this phenomenon are visible in Africa and other regions in the developing world where the crises reached through various channels of transmission. And it’s become necessary to encompass a gender perspective during this crisis in order to decode situations within households, since people who share the same space maintain asymmetric relationships and authority systems tend to prevail.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, despite current changes in roles, the division of labour by sex within households is still very rigid. The limitations placed on women by the division of labour by sex and the social hierarchies based on this division determine a socially unequal situation mainly within these three closely-linked systems: the labour market, the welfare or social protection system and the household.

However, the global economic crisis also provides an opportunity to debate and to improve the policies States undertake. This global recession is a time for historical transformation in which gender must have a central role. It is necessary to redefine macroeconomics and recognize that monetary economy rests on an extensive *care economy* in which the main work force is female. As the articles in this publication show the time has come for a new development paradigm with equal rights and equal opportunities for everyone. ■

NATALIA CARDONA  
Social Watch Secretariat  
February 2010

<sup>2</sup> Social Watch Research Team, Gender and poverty: a case of entwined inequalities, 2005.

# Feminist economics and the new development paradigm



Women around the world work longer hours, participate less in labour markets than men, receive lower incomes and are more involved in unpaid work. Feminist economics demands a new development paradigm that is not based on economic growth and whose indicator is not the average GDP which conceals the half of the economy that is non-monetary. The classic model ignores essential activities that take place outside markets, such as maintaining a household, voluntary work, child rearing, caring for the elderly and a large part of food production and crop maintenance.

Elsa Duhagon

The economic and financial crisis has shown once again that we need an economic analysis that takes gender inequalities into account and that adjusts some of the basic assumptions of classical economics. To the current economic conception, growth equals economic development and the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the most used indicator to measure the “wealth” generated. However, feminist economics has shown that over 50% of all human work is unpaid and therefore is not recorded in GDP. If this invisible work were considered we would see that nearly 2/3 of wealth is created by women.<sup>1</sup>

The traditional divisions of tasks by gender, such as women’s “specialisation” in domestic work and other unpaid activities, do not take into account the fact that this “specialisation” is a social construction based on hegemonic practices that have an impact in the economy. A progressive redistribution of wealth and income which considers women in this light is an element that usually does not appear in the economic policy debate because of the “invisibility” of the unpaid economy (non monetary). However, when the analysis is based on hours of labour (not in terms of finance and money) we see that it is women who bear the heavy burden of the global economy.

In classical economics, activities that are essential for the existence of the family and community are ignored as they take place outside markets. These include maintaining a household, voluntary work, child rearing, caring for the elderly and a large part of food production and crop maintenance. Since these activities are carried out in the context of the family, without any exchange of money, they are considered “non-economic activities”, not only in the economics textbooks but also the in the very United Nations System of National Accounts (the indexes of Gross National Product (GNP) and Gross Domestic Product (GDP)).

Therefore, it is necessary to redefine macroeconomics and recognize that the monetary economy is just the tip of the iceberg that rests on an extensive *care economy* in which the main work force is female, and that women account for at least half the total work force.

1 Hazel Henderson, *Root causes of poverty, inequality and ecological degradation: the need to redesign the creation of money and credit allocation, and restructure the financial systems*. July 2009. See in Spanish: <[www.eclac.org/mujer/noticias/paginas/5/36595/Henderson\\_espanol.pdf](http://www.eclac.org/mujer/noticias/paginas/5/36595/Henderson_espanol.pdf)>

The evolutive economist Hazel Henderson says that human behaviour ranges from conflict and competition at one end of the scale to cooperation and exchange at the other. She points out that only market economics functions at the competition end and that all the other social sciences are interested in cooperation and exchange, and consequently the theory of games is more and more the model to be applied.<sup>2</sup> She adds, “In fact, new economics and even the mainstream of economic theory are beginning to recognise the limitations of classical economics or microeconomics and its assumptions when it comes to explaining individual and group behaviour and the way economic life itself works”.<sup>3</sup>

## The crisis, gender blindness and the role of the state

The global crisis that began in September 2008 gave rise to numerous analyses about macro and microeconomics. But gender equality received less attention in initiatives by governments and decision-makers in the field of economics. For example, the gender perspective should be kept in mind when the time comes to examine the relations between the state, the market and society, national budgets or the impact of fiscal policies. All of these have an impact on how women are able to exercise their rights and on their quality of life in a differentiated way since the repercussions in the labour market are different and this applies in particular to changes that occur in the unpaid work sector.

The Costa Rican economist Rebeca Grynspan, who is director of the UNDP regional branch for Latin America and the Caribbean, says “Paid and unpaid work constitute a fundamental element of analysis and of public policy because it is one of the major factors affecting women’s insertion in the labour market”<sup>4</sup>

Society takes it for granted that women have to do unpaid work and at the same time take on new responsibilities and the freedoms that they have con-

2 Economists have used the games theory to analyse a wide range of economic problems including auctions, duopolies, oligopolies, the formation of social networks, and voting systems. This kind of research is normally geared to particular groups of strategies known as solution concepts.

3 Analysis of the economic and financial crisis from the gender perspective: “Understanding its impact on poverty and women’s work”. Presentation at ECLAC, Specialists’ Meeting. *The crisis and its impact on women’s global work*

4 Presentation at ECLAC, *The crisis and its impact on women’s global work*.

quered. To cope with this new situation, society must organise itself around a family model different from the traditional one of “man as provider” and “woman as housewife”. Today many families are headed by women or by men and women where both have paid jobs. For this reason, Grynspan proposes programs of reconciliation between work and family in a way that involves reconciling men and women, with this relation now being seen as one of co-responsibility in the family and one that transcends the private sphere and connects with the public in areas ranging from the labour market to state policies.

According to an International Labour Organization (ILO) report, world growth in terms of real wage fell dramatically in 2008 as a result of the economic crisis, and is expected to fall still further in spite of signs that economic recovery may be on the way.

According to this report, the current deterioration of wages has come after ten years of wage moderation prior to the outbreak of the crisis, and it is thought that years of wage stagnation in times of increasing productivity – together with increasing inequality – helped to bring on the crisis because households were unable to raise their consumption capacity except by going into debt. “The continuing fall in real wages worldwide raises serious doubts about the real extent of economic recovery, especially if governments prematurely terminate their measures to stimulate the economy”.<sup>5</sup>

In another ILO report, from June 2009,<sup>6</sup> it is noted that “Respect for fundamental principles and rights at work, the promotion of gender equality, free expression, and participation in social dialogue are also of vital importance for recovery and development”.

Although many countries have given importance to the promotion of employment, in the measures they have taken they are still “blind” to the gender aspect. For example, Brazil reduced taxes on the automobile industry from 7% to 0% for small cars to stimulate sales and keep the labour force employed, and while this is an important measure we can still ask just how many of these jobs are for women, and what general impact these measures will have on women.

5 *ILO Global Wage Report 2008/09*. See: <[www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/—dgreports/—dcomm/documents/publication/wcms\\_100786.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/—dgreports/—dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_100786.pdf)>

6 *Recovering from the crisis: A Global Jobs Pact*, adopted at the 98th International Labour Conference, Geneva, 19 June 2009. See: <[www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/—ed\\_norm/—relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms\\_108456.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/—ed_norm/—relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_108456.pdf)>

## BEYOND THE CRISIS AND BEYOND BEIJING: KEY ISSUES AS WE MOVE FORWARD

**Dra. Gita Sen**

**Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN)**

Capitalism and crisis are like two sides of a coin. There is no capitalism without successful and systematic crisis every now and then, every few years; this is the nature of capitalism as a system of production and reproduction in itself. Within the nature of the capitalist crisis there are two kinds of crisis: there is the crisis that you can write in small letters and then there's the crisis that one has to write in capital letters.

The crises that one writes in capital letters are those that typically go with the decline of an empire. The current crisis goes hand in hand with huge changes in systems of economic production and in distribution systems. The nature of economic life itself has changed dramatically, to the point where the financialization of the economy has become immense. However, this has not happened in a political vacuum; it has happened in a context where the ruling dominant economy of the last half century or more – at least since World War II, and one could argue even from before World War II – the U.S. economy, has in fact been steadily going downhill.

This is a recipe for crisis with a capital C, because it means that the economic power that is losing its economic position in the world attempts desperately to retain and hold it through other mechanisms, be those political or military. And this becomes crisis with a large C precisely because this is the time that presents the biggest risks for major wars and catastrophes, for social catastrophes of different kinds, and at this point we are going through a time like this.

The American hegemony is clearly under enormous stress and will not hold any longer. The harder decline in the value of the dollar that everybody is speaking about is a clear recognition that it is on its way down and out. But what kind of new world economy gets created in this place is the major challenge the world faces today. Now, in this brave new world – or as some people have called it, and as in DAWN we now have begun to call it, the Fierce New World – that we are engaged in, what is the role for social movements? What's the role for identity politics? And what is, of course, the role for the women's movement?

### **Moving beyond Beijing**

One could ask, as we've been asking in DAWN in this context, what is the social project of the women's movement? Can we go beyond identity politics? Some would argue we have always been about both a mixture of identity politics as well as something beyond identity politics. But in the world of today, what is the social project of the women's movement? What is the nature of the economy and society that we want to see? And, in what ways will that economy and society take hold of the kind of issues that the women movement has raised, be able to integrate them in a central way in the creation of a new society, and a new economy as well?

This is one of the most critical questions for the Fierce New World that we are living today. The women's movement is to see beyond Beijing and is to go beyond Beijing. We need to go beyond the 12 chapters and the 12 key teams of Beijing.

A great deal of the energy of the women's movement comes from its willingness to grab hold of and grasp very difficult issues that have to do with personal life, specifically those issues dealing with sexuality. Now we know that Beijing – although the famous 96<sup>1</sup> Plan was much better than anything we have up to that point in the area of sexuality and sexual rights – was far from adequate.

And since then the struggle to understand and create politics around sexuality is inherent and intrinsic to the women's movement, and is I think still an ongoing and incomplete struggle. It is a struggle where identity, politics actually, is a central question and a central issue, but in a period where, increasingly in the world, sexuality and reproduction – for the first time in human history – are not inextricably bound together, is an issue that has to be addressed particularly for young people, because of demographic changes.

People simply do not marry at the age of nine as my grandmother did, or at the age of fourteen; they may marry at the age of 27, they may not marry at all, they may have children through artificial assisted reproductive technologies, they may have children in all kinds of ways, families may be created in all kinds of ways. The women's movement is at the forefront of grappling with these issues, but it is not alone, there are others as well. But it is extremely important that we try to think of how we move beyond and integrate identity politics with the politics of social movements more broadly, and that we hold on and bring these issues into the center of the discussion.

### **The key issues**

The three issues that I would pick on as the core ones we need to be working together collectively in moving beyond Beijing would be: firstly the implication of the financial crisis for the kind of new world that is being created in production, in the economy and politics. What is the woman's place, what is the role of our identities in that?

The second is the critical question about the social project of our movements: What is that? And what does it translate into, in terms of the nuts and bolts of development and of transformation?

And thirdly – dealing with the personal in its most fundamental sense – the issue of connections between sexuality, identity, reproduction and human life. ■

Extracted from "Beyond the Crisis: Forging Ahead with Development Alternatives", Dr. Sen's intervention in the Asia-Pacific NGO Forum on Beijing+15 held between 22-24 October 2009.

1 Since 1996 the Commission on the Status of Women has been monitoring Beijing's Platform for Action, based on a series of conclusions on the 12 critical areas of concern.

Another revealing example comes from Spain (although there are parallels in almost every country). The first anti-crisis measures taken by the State Local Investment Fund involved allocating funds to the construction sector, in which 93% of the workers are men, rather than helping women to progress towards equality in employment.

In many countries there are programmes to support employment such as Conditional Cash Transfer Programs (income granted to poor households conditional upon children going to school and having health care). While it is true that these are an important form of social security for the poor, these programs still fail to consider women's work time, even though the success of these programmes depends on this very factor.

From what has been learned from previous crises, it is clear that social policies and state involvement are of vital importance in times of crisis, but we also know that social indicators take twice as long as economic ones to recover and many people are left by the wayside. This means that human capital is lost, and that the equation "when the economy recovers, the social indicators will recover" is not valid.

A change must come in economic theory and this must be reflected in practice. It is not a question of aiming for growth and formulating some policies for women, but of designing and implementing a new development paradigm with equal rights and equal opportunities for everyone without any kind of discrimination whatsoever.

### **The impact on employment and work**

Macroeconomic policy, when referring to the crisis and its impact on the world of women's work has focused mainly on inflation therefore employment has been largely left to one side. In 2005 novel approaches to the question of employment began to emerge internationally, including the fruits of the ECOSOC meeting in 2009.

Some of the impacts of the crisis on women at work are quantifiable and others are invisible, and

among the latter there are the responses of women in relation to paid and unpaid work.

Women, in their strategies to cope with the crisis, put themselves second so as to give priority to the family's survival; they accept lower wages, work all day, they do more unpaid hours or they enter the informal economy. It is important to know which sectors of the economy women work in, and not to fall into generalizations as if they were all in one uniform category called "workers". For example, government spending cuts will always tend to cause an increase in unpaid work.

Women's employment recovers much more slowly, and a country's growth rates recover before its employment rates. For example, six or seven years after the 1997 crisis in Asia, GDP had again reached considerable growth rates but employment levels have still not recovered even today.

In the developed countries, when we examine the total of all paid and unpaid work done by women it is clear that they work more hours than men but earn less. According to the economist Rania Antonopoulos, this situation has led to a great paradox, "In the good times or the bad times, in times of prosperity or times of crisis, there is high unemployment and hence an increase in unpaid work. Unpaid work is necessary for people to survive, and it becomes more widespread at times when governments do not do all they should to satisfy the population's basic needs. Women do unpaid work in conditions in which this is not recognised, they are not paid and they do not have social protection. In other words, women pay a tax with their time."<sup>7</sup>

In the face of this contradiction, Antonopoulos asks whether it might be possible to find a mechanism that yields benefits for both sides, one that increases employment and also reduces unpaid work. One such scheme was proposed in South Africa, and the Government put an adapted version into operation. The idea was that the Government became the employer of last resort, creating jobs for people who were doing 'voluntary work'—although it was not in fact voluntary.

### **Instruments to achieve a more equitable economy**

Even though we must recognize the importance of social protection networks, like Conditional Cash Transfer Programmes for example—which aim at breaking the transmission of poverty from one generation to the next—these programmes are being asked to achieve the impossible in the sense that on their own they cannot serve as a whole social policy for a country. To go further, we need systems of social protection that are universal and holistic. Gender discrimination is not just a matter of poverty, it is also a question of equity and citizenship, and the problems that emerge from inequality cannot be solved by these Conditional Cash Transfer Programmes alone.

In addition, women must be involved institutionally in budget decision-making. Follow-up, monitoring and evaluation are important too, to prevent the impact of budget resources allocated to improving women's lives and the quality of their jobs from being lost or minimised.

The current development model is not centred on people but on profits and other elements in the world economic system. To acknowledge this forgotten pyramid structure we need to return to the concept of people as the priority. As men and women, we have to change our approach to how society is constructed.

In all the areas we have been discussing, a key input in the decision-making process is the generation of statistical information. It is vital to have quantitative indicators, and as far as possible qualitative ones too, to be able to bring a whole range of things into the light, including unpaid women's work.

In view of the fact that indicators like GDP do not reflect the contribution of women through unpaid work or the care economy, we need new indicators that will enable us to strengthen assertions about gender inequality, and these indicators should be used as a basis for less arbitrary decision-making. ■

<sup>7</sup> Presentation in *The crisis and its impact on women's global work*.



# The road map to prosperity for all is to invest in people and gender equality

**B+15**

The following statement was submitted by the Third World Institute (ITeM), a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council, to the Fifty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, 1-12 March 2010.

## Third World Institute (ITeM)

The Secretary-General of the United Nations has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

Thirty years after adopting the CEDAW and 15 years after the Beijing World Conference on Women, women all around the world still struggle for gender equality and respect of their human rights and freedoms. Despite certain progress, discrimination against women still prevails in all spheres of public life. The UN Member States still have not fully implemented their commitments for gender equality as an essential condition for sustainable economic and social development.

ITeM is the host organization of the international secretariat of Social Watch, a network of civil society coalitions in over 70 countries monitoring anti-poverty and gender equity policies since 1995. The Social Watch reports are based on the findings

of citizen organizations around the world monitoring their own governments and the analysis and processing of international statistics. Social Watch computes yearly a Gender Equity Index to provide an internationally comparable benchmark of progress towards equity in education, economic empowerment and political voice for women.

The evolution of the Gender Equity Index shows that in most countries, notable achievements have been accomplished as regards women's political participation and establishing gender quotas, inclusion in the labour market, developing institutional mechanisms for gender equality and legislation to address gender equality and violence against women, in particular domestic violence and trafficking. However, there is evident gap between legislation and implementation. The Social Watch national coalitions report on setbacks in the struggle against poverty and for gender equality. The current financial and economic crisis has exacerbated gender inequalities throughout the world. This regression is also stressed in the UN Millennium Development

Goals Report 2009. It concludes that the crises may also hold back progress towards gender equality, by creating new hurdles to women's employment. Their weaker control over property and resources, over-representation in piece-rate or vulnerable employment, lower earnings and lower levels of social protection make them, and their children, more vulnerable to the financial and economic crisis.

The reactions to the economic crisis have involved cutbacks in financing social services, as health care, child care, social protection and education in many countries. These cuts have contributed to increasing risk of feminization of poverty. The estimates are that women will enter the post-crisis period with a heavier burden of unpaid work in a family and more difficult access to decent jobs and social services, if their rights and needs are not effectively and fully protected, as demanded by the international human rights documents.

What is also worrying is the absence of women's participation in solving the crisis and in economic decision making. Gender equality machineries, women's groups and women-experts are, by a rule, excluded from the process of shaping economic decisions and context at both national and international level.

The Social Watch national reports indicate that both the national and the international responses to the global crisis present gender-blind, business-as-usual approaches including a further deregulation and liberalisation of markets and trade as solutions to dilute the crisis. The lack of reference to the states' accountability for their commitments to implement international human rights standards suggests that states consider that they may lessen them in times of crisis.

The CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action, as well as the other human rights standards, should provide a binding framework for accountability of states and non-state actors, as well as international financial institutions. The accountability mechanisms should include gender based statistics, gender responsive indicators, and gender responsive budgeting for use along with a human rights-based approach to strengthen women's empowerment and contribute to achieving gender equality and social justice. The road map to prosperity for all is to invest in people and gender equality. ■

## WOMEN AND THE UN REFORM

In 2006 the United Nations announced the appointment of a new High-Level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence in areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment. This panel was tasked with recommending changes to the UN in a wide range of structural, operational and policy issues. Gender and women's rights were not included as cross-cutting issues.

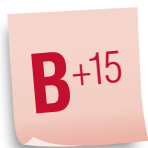
The work of the UN on women's rights has been and is important, but is based on fragmented structures within different bodies, with minimal budgets and limited country presence. Furthermore, leadership of women's agencies are irrelevant within the UN structure and therefore have no possibility to influence significant instances.

Given this, in that same year, civil society organizations carried out a Campaign for the Reform of Gender Equality Architecture (GEAR), a global initiative calling for a stronger, more powerful UN agency to defend women's rights. Thus GEAR was born, a coalition of over 300 organizations in 80 countries.

On 14 September 2009 the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution that addresses this call: the creation of a new single entity for women. According to the GA resolution, this new body will comprise the four UN agencies specialized in gender issues: UNIFEM, the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and the Office of Special Adviser on Gender Issues (OSAGI).

The head of the new entity, with a status comparable to the UN Fund for Children (UNICEF), will have the rank of undersecretary general, the highest administrative hierarchy within the UN after the secretary general. However if its objectives are to be achieved, this new entity needs the political commitment of all governments, as well as immediate and substantial funds to ensure results. ■

# Gender and poverty: a case of entwined inequalities



Although poverty and gender are inextricably linked, the methodologies commonly used to measure poverty do not allow gender to be reflected in official statistics and consequently in poverty reduction strategies. Gender is frequently mentioned as a cross-cutting theme in many strategies, but when it comes to action plans and specific development projects it receives very little attention. The gender approach to the study of poverty has led to the review of more conventional measurement methods and to the exploration of alternatives.

Social Watch Research Team<sup>1</sup>

Poverty affects men, women, boys, and girls, but it is experienced differently by people of different ages, ethnicities, family roles and sex. Due to women's biology, their social and cultural gender roles, and culturally constructed subordination, they face disadvantageous conditions which accumulate and intensify the already numerous effects of poverty.

## Poverty indicators are gender blind

The study of poverty from the point of view of gender has gained importance since the 1990s. Studies within this framework "examine gender differences in the poverty-generating results and processes, particularly focusing on the experiences of women and asking whether they form a disproportionate and growing contingent among the poor. This emphasis implies a perspective that highlights two forms of asymmetries that become intersected: gender and class."<sup>2</sup>

The studies that confirm gender inequalities, particularly in access to and fulfilment of basic needs, support the claim that "female poverty cannot be comprised under the same conceptual approach as male poverty."<sup>3</sup>

Poverty indicators are usually based on household information, without acknowledging the large gender and generational differences that exist within households. From a gender perspective it is necessary to decode situations within households, since people who share the same space maintain asymmetric relationships and authority systems tend to prevail. Gender inequalities within family contexts, which cause differentiated access to resources of the domestic group, worsen women's poverty, particularly in poor households. Further, despite current changes in roles, the division of labour by sex within households is still very rigid.

The division of labour by sex assigns women to domestic work and limits their access to material and social resources and participation in political,

economic and social decision-making. Women are at greater risk of poverty because they have relatively limited material assets and also more limited social assets (access to income, goods and services through social connections) and cultural assets (formal education and cultural knowledge). The consequences of this disparity persist throughout a woman's entire life in diverse forms and in different areas and social structures.

The limitations placed on women by the division of labour by sex and the social hierarchies based on this division determine a socially unequal situation mainly within these three closely-linked systems: the labour market, the welfare or social protection system and the household.

Applied to families, the gender perspective improves the understanding of how a household works. It uncovers hierarchies and patterns of resource distribution, thereby questioning the idea that resources within a household are equitably distributed and that all household members have the same needs. The gender approach to the study of poverty unmasks both public and household discrimination by identifying power relationships and unequal distribution of resources in both spheres.

The definition of poverty determines what indicators will be used for its measurement as well as the type of policies that should be implemented to overcome it. As Feijoó puts it, "that which is not conceptualized is not measured."<sup>4</sup>

Since poverty is measured according to the socio-economic characteristics of households as a whole, it is impossible to identify gender differences in relation to access to basic needs within the household. Household surveys are also limiting in the way they obtain information since the only resource considered is income, while time devoted to household production and social reproduction of the home are not taken into account.

Naila Kabeer<sup>5</sup> proposes making up for limitations in poverty measurement by disaggregating information to take into account the differences between "beings" and "doings" in the household. According to Kabeer, there is a need for indicators which recognize that the lives of women are ruled

by different and sometimes more complex social restrictions, titles and responsibilities than men's, and that women live their lives to a large extent outside the formal economy.

This broader concept of poverty would include dimensions like economic autonomy and gender violence, which are rarely taken into account in poverty studies.

## Measurement of poverty from a gender perspective

Poverty measurement not only helps make poverty visible but also plays a crucial role in policy development and implementation. Measurement methodologies are closely linked to specific conceptualizations of poverty and therefore measurements may differ, since they address different aspects of poverty. No methodology is neutral; not even gender-sensitive ones, since all include subjective and arbitrary elements that limit their accuracy and objectiveness.

The gender perspective contributes to widening the concept of poverty by identifying the need to measure poverty in a way which accounts for its complexity and multidimensionality. The debate on poverty measurement methodology does not propose the development of a single indicator which synthesizes all the dimensions of poverty. On the contrary, the idea is to explore different measurement proposals geared to improving the more conventional techniques while noting their advantages and limitations, as well as to creating new measurements.

## Measuring household income

The measurement of poverty according to household income is currently one of the most widely used methods. It is a very useful quantitative indicator to identify poverty situations, and as far as models of monetary measurement are concerned, there is no method that is more effective. Also there is greater availability of country data that measure poverty in monetary terms than by using other approaches (capabilities, social exclusion, participation). Measuring poverty by income therefore allows for country and regional comparisons and helps policy makers by estimating how many people are poor.

The main deficiency of income measurement is its inability to reflect the multidimensionality of poverty. It emphasizes the monetary dimension of poverty, and therefore ignores cultural aspects of poverty like power differences, which determine access to resources; and above all, unpaid domes-

1 Publicado originalmente en el Informe *Social Watch 2005: Rugidos y susurros*. El equipo estaba integrado por: Karina Batthyány (Coordinadora), Mariana Sol Cabrera, Graciela Dede, Daniel Macadar e Ignacio Pardo.

2 Kabeer, Naila. *Reversed Realities: Gender hierarchies in development thought*. London: Ed. Verso, 1994.

3 *Ibid.*

4 Feijoó, María del Carmen. "Desafíos conceptuales de la pobreza desde una perspectiva de género". Paper presented at the Meeting of Experts on Poverty and Gender Issues, ECLAC/ILD, Santiago de Chile, August 2003.

5 Kabeer, *op cit.*

tic work, which is indispensable to the survival of households.

Another frequent critique of this poverty measurement is that it does not take into account that people also satisfy their needs through non-monetary resources, such as community networks and family support.

Measuring income per capita by household presents serious limitations to capturing intra-household poverty dimensions. It fails to account for the fact that men and women experience poverty differently within the same household. This is because households are the unit of analysis, and an equitable distribution of resources among household members is assumed. By this measurement all household members are equally poor.

Unpaid work within the household is not counted as income. Yet domestic work can make a considerable difference in household income. Male-headed households are more likely to count on free domestic work performed by the female spouse and therefore avoid incurring expenses associated with household maintenance. This is less likely to happen in female-headed households, which generally incur the private costs of doing unpaid domestic work: less rest and leisure time, which affects levels of physical and mental health; less time to access better job opportunities and less time for social and political participation.

Further, the income method does not show the differences between men and women in their use of time or their expenditure patterns. These aspects are central to the analysis of poverty from a gender perspective. Time use studies confirm that women spend more time than men in unpaid activities, with the result that they have longer workdays to the detriment of their health and nutrition levels.

Individual measurements of economic autonomy and ability to fulfil each person's needs are necessary to study intra-household poverty.

It is not about replacing one measurement with another, but about working with both, since they serve different purposes. Individual poverty measurements allow us to identify poverty situations which remain hidden to traditional measurements, such as the poverty of people living in non-poor households but without their own incomes. Those studies expose the greater limitations faced by women in becoming economically autonomous.

### Unpaid work

Unpaid work is a central concept in the study of poverty from a gender perspective. Even when not valued monetarily, that work satisfies needs and allows for social reproduction to take place. There is a strong relationship between unpaid work and the impoverishment of women. The need to measure women's work has been highlighted and has led to different proposals which suggest assigning monetary value to domestic work and its inclusion in national accounts. The measurement of unpaid work would also show an important difference in household income between households with a person devoted to domestic work and care giving (male-headed households) and households that must pay

the private costs associated with this work (female-headed households).

### Measurement of time devoted to "unpaid work"

Another way to measure and visualize unpaid work is through time use studies. Unpaid work is divided into subsistence work (food and clothing production, clothing repair), domestic work (purchasing household goods and services, cooking, laundry, ironing, cleaning, activities related to household organization and task distribution, and errands such as bill payment among others), family care (child and elderly care) and community service or voluntary work (services provided to non-family members through religious or lay organizations).<sup>6</sup> By taking into account the time women spend doing each one of these activities, they become visible and acknowledged, facilitating the perception of gender inequalities in families and society. Also, time use studies allow us to calculate total workload volume, which is a concept that includes both paid and unpaid work.

Time use surveys help generate better statistics on paid and unpaid work and are an essential tool in developing a greater body of knowledge about different forms of work and employment.

There are precedents for this type of systematic study from countries such as Canada, Cuba, France, Italy, Mexico, New Zealand, Spain and Venezuela.<sup>7</sup> In Italy "the increase in female participation is not matched with a fairer distribution of family activities: unpaid childcare and social reproduction activities fall almost entirely upon women whose total working hours, paid and unpaid, are on average 28% more than men's. Some 35.2% of men do not dedicate any hours to family care activities."

Other countries' efforts—although not systematic—have permitted specific studies of these dimensions. This is the case in Uruguay where a 2003 survey on male and female time use was carried out with the objective of generating indicators which would report on and display asymmetric gender relationships in families.<sup>8</sup>

Paragraph 206 of the Beijing Platform for Action 1995 recommends:

"f) Develop a more comprehensive knowledge of all forms of work and employment by:

- i) Improving data collection on the unremunerated work which is already included in the United Nations System of National Accounts, such as in agriculture, particularly subsistence agriculture, and other types of non-market production activities;
- ii) Improving measurements that at present underestimate women's unemployment and underemployment in the labour market;

6 Aguirre, Rosario. "Trabajo no remunerado y uso del tiempo. Fundamentos conceptuales y avances empíricos. La encuesta Montevideo 2003", ECLAC, Santiago de Chile, 2004.

7 For more information on these studies see Araya, María José "Un acercamiento a las Encuestas sobre el Uso del Tiempo con orientación de género", Unidad Mujer y Desarrollo, ECLAC, Series Mujer y Desarrollo No. 50, Chile, 2003.

8 Aguirre, op. cit.

iii) Developing methods, in the appropriate forums, for assessing the value, in quantitative terms, of unremunerated work that is outside national accounts, such as caring for dependants and preparing food, for possible reflection in satellite or other official accounts that may be produced separately from but are consistent with core national accounts, with a view to recognizing the economic contribution of women and making visible the unequal distribution of remunerated and unremunerated work between women and men;

g) Develop an international classification of activities for time-use statistics that is sensitive to the differences between women and men in remunerated and unremunerated work, and collect data disaggregated by sex. At the national level, subject to national constraints:

- i) Conduct regular time-use studies to measure, in quantitative terms, unremunerated work, including recording those activities that are performed simultaneously with remunerated or other unremunerated activities;
- ii) Measure, in quantitative terms, unremunerated work that is outside national accounts and work to improve methods to assess and accurately reflect its value in satellite or other official accounts that are separate from but consistent with core national accounts."

### Final summary

The gender approach has made valuable conceptual and methodological contributions to the study of poverty. In conceptual terms, it has provided a more comprehensive definition of poverty, proposing an integrated and dynamic approach which acknowledges the multidimensional and heterogeneous aspects of poverty. The gender perspective strongly criticizes definitions of poverty based only in income and highlights the material, symbolic and cultural components as those which influence power relationships which in turn determine gender access to resources (material, social and cultural). Without a gender perspective poverty cannot be sufficiently understood.

The gender approach to the study of poverty led to the review of more conventional measurement methods and an exploration of alternatives, thus making a significant contribution to the ongoing debate.

Household income measurement does not capture the intra household dimensions of poverty, including gender inequalities, since it assumes a fair distribution of resources among members, thereby homogenizing each person's needs and considering everyone to be equally poor. The method has limitations for measuring gender inequalities because it fails to acknowledge, in monetary terms, the contribution of unpaid domestic work to the household. Finally, income measurement fails to capture gender differences in terms of time use and expenditure patterns, two dimensions that contribute to fully characterize poverty and to design better policies. ■

# Gender equality and the financial crisis\*

B+15

Equality between women and men has to be a key element in the development of anti-crisis measures and policies, since the financial crisis is starting to take hold in sectors dominated by female workers and rates of violence against women are increasing. A gendered analysis is required in order to understand the depth and scope of the crisis, as well as to design appropriate responses. However, in addition to the challenges, the economic crisis is also presenting opportunities for women's empowerment and leadership, as has been seen already in countries in which women have emerged as leaders.

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**Emily Sikazwe**  
Women for Change

Gender inequality is not a new phenomenon; however, the current economic crisis has exacerbated gender inequalities throughout the world. As the global recession persists, bailouts and equity loans are being negotiated between governments and private industry; public services are increasingly being privatized to "protect" government coffers; and corporate taxes are being cut to benefit corporations and the wealthy. In all of this, it is increasingly clear that women stand to be profoundly disadvantaged by the global recession and national responses to the crisis.

The UN reports that while men's job losses initially increased faster than women's, men's job loss rate is now slowing down, while that for women keeps going up. The global unemployment rate for women could reach as high as 7.4% compared to 7.0% for men.<sup>1</sup> While the financial crisis first hit the US and Europe in the mostly male-dominated financial and manufacturing sectors, its effects are starting to take hold in sectors dominated by women, namely the service industry and retail trade.

Women in the developing world are particularly disadvantaged due to the financial crisis. Their weaker control over property and resources, over-representation in piece-rate or vulnerable employment, lower earnings and lower levels of social protection make them, and their children, more vulnerable to the financial crisis. As a result, women are in a much weaker social and economic position than men in terms of their ability to cope with the recession. Women may have to work longer hours and take on extra forms of employment while maintaining primary household care responsibilities.

The Women's Working Group on Financing for Development has noted that the financial crisis offers

a critical opportunity to change the global financial architecture to adhere to rights-based and equitable principles. The group calls for an alternative to the G-20 decision to replenish the International Monetary Fund. Such a move would only perpetuate failed neo-liberal economic policies; reinforce past structural inequalities; and increase the indebtedness of developing countries. This scenario continues the antiquated and unjust approach of a few rich nations working on behalf of many nations of varying circumstances. The Women's Working Group calls for solutions and remedies for the financial crisis coming from a broad, consultative, inclusive process, not a process housed in the IMF, but in the United Nations, where women's human rights are enshrined and where each member state has a voice at the table.<sup>2</sup>

Government approaches to addressing the economic and financial crisis are not, for the most part, based on human rights or equality principles. Many countries in the global North have negotiated huge bailouts using public money to prop up major industries. Many are also investing in infrastructure projects, focused primarily on male-dominated trades (construction, transport, etc.) rather than investing in soft infrastructure where women traditionally are the principal beneficiaries (health care, child care, income supports, etc.). Unemployment insurance programmes, where they exist, generally cover only full-time workers and rarely take into account the part-time workforce in which women are traditionally over-represented. Reports of violence against women are increasing; lacking economic and social security, women have a more difficult time escaping violent situations.

The just-released US Department of State report on human trafficking<sup>3</sup> notes that the global

economic crisis is contributing to labour and sex trafficking, as increasing unemployment and poverty make people more vulnerable to traffickers and there is a growing demand for cheap goods and services. The report predicts that the economic crisis will push more businesses underground in order to avoid taxes and labour protection laws while hiring non-union labour, which will increase the use of forced, cheap and child labour by cash-strapped multinational companies.

According to Amnesty International, the economic crisis is aggravating existing human rights problems and some very important issues are not getting the attention and resources they need, including poverty, reproductive rights and violence against women. Governments are investing in setting the market straight again, but the market is not going to address human rights problems. In the past governments used security as a means to undermine human rights, now the economic crisis has produced another imperative for governments, and they are again ignoring human rights.

The reactions to the economic crisis involve cut-backs in financing for gender equality mechanisms and the implementation of gender equality legislation, which will jeopardize gender equality legislation and inevitably reinforce existing gender stereotypes. Related to this is the decreased financial support for women's organizations which are an essential part of the global women's movement.

Some regional trends in the gendered impact of the economic crisis were identified at a European Commission conference on "Equality between Men and Women in Times of Change" (15-16 June 2009). The problems identified are similar to the global trends: in Europe, women are overrepresented in insecure, part-time and short-term jobs, in large part due to their disproportionate household and caregiving responsibilities. Despite the EU standards on gender equality in employment, the problems of unequal pay and need to balance work with family life remain. Although the crisis has affected both women and men in Europe, it has affected them differently.

Among other things, the conference concluded that there is a need for additional measures to encourage women to participate in the labour market; equality between women and men must be a key element in the development of anti-crisis measures

\* Originally published in the *Social Watch Report 2009: People first.*

1 See: ILO. *Global Employment Trends for Women.* Geneva: International Labour Office, 2009.

2 The Women's Working Group on Financing for development is coordinated by Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) and includes the following networks/organizations: African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND), Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), Feminist Task Force-Global Call to Action against Poverty (FTF-GCAP), Global Policy Forum (GPF), International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), International Gender and Trade Network (IGTN), International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), Network for Women's Rights in Ghana (NETRIGHT), Red de Educación Popular entre Mujeres para América Latina y el Caribe (REPEM), Third World Network-Africa (TWN-Africa), Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), and Women in Development Europe (WIDE).

3 US State Department. *Trafficking in Persons Report.*

Washington, DC, 2009. Available from: <[www.state.gov/g/tip/rts/tiprpt/2009](http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rts/tiprpt/2009)>.

## GENDERED IMPACTS OF THE CRISIS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

While in the industrialized countries companies have been bailed out, in the South, the crisis has led to the intensification of privatization and to relaxing the collection of revenues from foreign investors. In many Sub-Saharan African countries, companies have taken advantage of the situation by further freezing wage increases and redundancies and even closing down operations in the name of reducing overhead costs. For instance, in Zambia in order to address the effects of the global financial crisis, the Government first and foremost removed windfall taxes on mining, in a bid to prevent investors in the mining sector from closing their operations. All of these measures have narrowed revenue collection. Consequently Governments in the South have continued to cut down on the provision of social services such as education and health.

Women continue to be the first to lose their jobs and are increasingly finding themselves engaged in petty informal trading of vegetables and tomatoes as a coping mechanism.

What is more worrying is the absence of women's voices in the resolution to the crisis. Male-biased decisions continue to be taken to resolve the crisis, in order to serve men's interests first. There is therefore a need to increase women's participation in decision making, in order for their issues to be included in national measures to address the global economic and financial crisis. ■

and policies; the participation of women in private sector leadership positions should be encouraged; businesses must adopt family-friendly policies; and it is essential to invest in women's education and training. Furthermore, the importance of gender equality laws and mechanisms in time of crisis was outlined.

### Strengthening women's rights during the crisis

An important initiative which was recently announced by the ILO Director-General Juan Somavia is the creation of an emergency global jobs pact designed to promote a coordinated policy response to the global jobs crisis and to the increase in unemployment, working poor and those in vulnerable employment.<sup>4</sup> This response is aimed at avoiding global social recession and mitigating its effects on people. The pact will help both the extraordinary stimulus measures together with other government policies better address the needs of people who need protection and work, in order to accelerate combined economic and employment recovery.

Amnesty International recently launched a *Demand Dignity* campaign to fight for rights threatened by the economic crisis, and for those neglected in the response to it. The fundamental issue is empowering people living in poverty. The campaign focuses on strengthening their voice along with government transparency and accountability, so that they can hold governments accountable for commitments to gender equality and women's rights, and can participate in decisions that affect their lives. Special emphasis is put on women's rights and the participation of women in decisions related to their rights.

Besides these initiatives, special attention is to be paid to the challenges and opportunities that the

global crisis presents for women's empowerment and leadership. We are witnessing positive examples of women emerging as high level leaders as a result of the global economic and financial crisis, most notably in the case of the new Prime Minister of Iceland and the new President of Lithuania, both of whom were elected in large part due to voter frustration with the failed economic policies that contributed to the impact of the crisis in those countries.

According to the Women's Working Group for Financing for Development, the rights-based response to the crisis requires, *inter alia*, immediate reform of the global financial architecture to effectively manage liquidity shortages and balance of payments imbalances, and ensure that policy responses do not shift the burden of family welfare and service provision to the care economy. The Women's Working Group advocates setting in place national, regional and international measures and processes that respect national policy space, and are consistent with internationally agreed standards and commitments, including those regarding women's rights and gender equality. Trade policies and agreements should enable countries to move away from the imbalances of the WTO regime and the failed Doha round. Moreover, these measures should be accompanied by the cancellation of the illegitimate debts of developing countries and the creation of a debt workout mechanism with the participation of debtor governments, women's rights groups and other civil society organizations.

At the UN High Level Conference on the Global Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development (24-26 June 2009), the Women's Working Group reminded UN Member States that women cannot wait, and that this is the time to act on fundamental reform of the global financial architecture.<sup>5</sup> Despite the unanimous call to action by

civil society organizations, the conference outcome document did not meet expectations. In order to safeguard a fragile consensus, Member States have shown only weak commitment to reforming the financial architecture, while the central role of the UN (the so-called "G-192"), in economic governance nearly vanished.

Women's rights advocates welcomed language in the document that recognizes women as facing "greater income insecurity and increased burdens of family care" (para. 3) and the recognition that women and children had been particularly impoverished by the crisis (para. 7). The document further recognized that responses to the crisis need to have a gender perspective (para. 10), mitigation measures should take into account gender equality, among others (para. 21), and leadership appointments in the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) should take gender balance into account (para. 49). The big disappointment was the lack of any strong commitment to follow-up. The consistent reference to a "United Nations Development System" throughout the text represents a narrowing of the UN role to a limited arena of humanitarian assistance and development cooperation. The conclusion of civil society groups was that the outcome document represented a clear attempt to keep the G-192 out of the global economic governance system.

Looking forward, however, the Women's Working Group has stressed that women will continue to demand economic justice and gender justice within the UN arena, despite the continued resistance of the IFIs and the G-20 to put people, instead of profit, at the centre of development. Despite proven failure of their neoliberal policy prescriptions and irresponsible financial governance system, the IMF and the World Bank continue to promote their flawed policies and impose conditionalities on developing countries, acting not as special agencies of the UN, but as if the UN were their special agency. In the UN system, in which all Member States should be equal, some—now widened to 20—are more equal than the remaining 172. The Women's Working Group statement states its strong opposition to this practice, and demands that all the Member States have equal votes, equal rights and equal obligations at the decision-making table.

Civil society organizations, including women's organizations and networks, call for a rights-based approach to development. A review of the implementation of this approach by UN agencies shows that it can be effective in eradicating poverty, developing democracy and human rights, and supporting vulnerable groups, particularly women, to participate in decision-making. The application of this concept contributes to the realization of states parties' commitments derived from the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action.

However, there is a need to improve this approach in order to address effectively the needs of

<sup>4</sup> ILO projections of working poverty across the world indicate that 200 million workers are at risk of joining the ranks of people living on less than USD 2 per day between 2007 and 2009. See: ILO. *Global Employment Trends Update*, May 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Women's Working Group on Financing for Development (WWG-FD). "Time to Act: Women Cannot Wait. A call for

rights based responses to the global financial and economic crisis," June 2009.

## GENDER AND THE THE CRISIS IN EASTERN EUROPE

Global trends in the impact of the global crisis on women are characteristic also of countries in Eastern Europe, as seen in the national reports included in this volume. In the Czech Republic, for example, the reforms in public finances, such as lower taxation for the richest and increasing Value Added Tax (VAT) on basic articles, have put the largest share of the burden on the most deprived, women included. The same happens with the introduction of fees for services and the attempts to decrease social insurance taxes, especially for the richest taxpayers. Even before the crisis, unequal pay and discrimination based on gender and age continued to be important issues. Additional gender equality problems in the Czech Republic are due to the Government's conservative policy and lack of support for childcare institutions. Discrimination against female immigrants, particularly from Asia, has also been exacerbated as a result of the crisis.

In Hungary, one of the Eastern European countries most affected by the crisis, the new Government has agreed to a number of measures, including cutting pensions, public sector bonuses, maternity support, mortgage subsidies, energy subsidies and public transport subsidies as a condition of the IMF rescue package to address the impact of the economic crisis. All of these will negatively impact women and increase their care-giving burden, as will some of the additional measures being planned, including reductions in childcare support and childcare benefits, as well as assistance to young couples with children.

In Poland, the decrease in family incomes resulting from the economic crisis risks the pauperization of whole social groups, particularly among the lower and middle classes. It is very likely that this will in turn have a more significant impact on women, since they are traditionally responsible for the family's well being. According to some analysts, the crisis is also likely to amplify the grey zone in the Polish economy, as many, especially small entrepreneurs, try to minimize labour costs and avoid taxation and other costs associated with formal employment. Consequently, it seems very likely that the growth of the grey economy will affect women more than men, as they are more often engaged in low-paid jobs, especially in the private service sector (e.g., in retail). Other gender equality issues are: the shrinking of the highly feminized garment sector and the limited labour market mobility due to higher housing rental costs, especially in small towns in economically depressed areas.

In Bulgaria, NGOs and trade unions would not agree with what they saw as a Government policy shift towards accepting the need to reduce social expenditures in times of crisis. These expenditures were already scarce at the beginning of the currency board arrangement and any further reduction could rupture the country's social peace. Unemployment is increasing (it should be noted that the unregistered unemployed equal – or even exceed – the registered) and will affect mainly young people that lack an employment record,

low-skilled workers, elderly workers, people with disabilities and women.

In Serbia, trade unions have accepted the Government's proposal to postpone the implementation of the General Collective Bargaining Contract, and to delay some of the employers' financial obligations towards workers, including paying worker benefits, "to assist the private sector to get out of the economic crisis". Workers' rights are openly violated under the excuse of maintaining economic stability, while big companies and tycoons are free to refrain from paying taxes, salaries and other benefits. It was recently announced that maintenance of the new stand-by arrangement with the IMF, worth USD 3.96 billion, will lead to cuts in pensions, education and health care, all of which will further deteriorate women's social position. And in Slovakia, despite initial predictions that the country would not be affected, official estimates of job losses topped 30,000 in April 2009. In these conditions, discrimination against women in the labour market persists.

As a rule, in all the countries of the CEE/CES region, women constitute the majority of temporary, seasonal, and contract labourers as well as low-skilled workers, who are unlikely to be covered by formal unemployment insurance or social protection schemes. As the July 2009 *Development & Transition* report warns, the crisis seems likely to affect women in such areas as employment and social safety nets, unpaid care work, education, migration and gender based violence. For example, in Kazakhstan, limited access to the financial resources necessary for formal business activities pushes women into self-employment and small-scale commercial activities in the informal sector. Women's vulnerability could easily deepen as the crisis unfolds. The scale of female labour migration is often under-reported, and with it the impact on families dependent on their wages for survival. On the other hand, women may find themselves in an even more vulnerable position when they return home, rejected by their communities and families and perceived as prostitutes.<sup>1</sup> ■

1 Spertl, L. "The Crisis and its consequences for women", in *Development & Transition*, No.13, 2009.

women and to improve gender equality relations. There are a number of shortcomings that derive from excessive generality, weak implementation mechanisms, and insufficient application of the human rights concept. The rights-based approach to development is grounded in the principles of participation, responsibility, non-discrimination, equality, special attention to vulnerable groups, empowerment, linkage to human rights standards, progressive realization, non-regression, and rule of law. However, this approach to development does not target the dismantling of the social, economic and political relations that are based on discrimination and unequal distribution of wealth, power and resources. The human rights frame-

work is not sufficient by itself to change the neoliberal ideology that significantly undermines the realization of human rights and women's rights, as the majority of human rights standards are not binding and there is to date no binding mechanism established to oblige states to put their commitments into practice.

A gender analysis shows that such an approach requires developing good analytical tools for understanding the inequalities inherent both in the neoliberal market economy and in gender relations. Feminist economists have analysed gender inequalities in macroeconomic policy-making and have developed such tools as gender-specific indicators, gender-responsive budgeting

and gender-sensitive statistics for use along with a rights-based approach to strengthen women's empowerment in the process of development and demand corporate responsibility of international financial institutions. ■

# Women and the economic crisis: the urgency of a gender perspective

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In September 2009, the European Women's Lobby (EWL), the largest coalition of women's organisations in the European Union representing 2000 direct member organisations in 28 European countries, analyzed the multi-layered dimensions of the financial crisis and their impact on women, and urged policy makers at all levels of decision making to recognise women's role in shaping the post crisis framework which, one year after the collapse of the financial markets, continues to ignore the gender impact of the crisis on the real lives of women and men.

## The European Women's Lobby<sup>1</sup>

The initial crisis and subsequent recovery plans at different levels – European, national and international (G20) – have failed to acknowledge, understand, analyse and rectify the gender impact of the financial crisis.

Continuous denial of the gender impact of the crisis coupled with the exclusion of women as part of the solution runs the risk of returning to a 'business-as-usual' recovery strategy which, in the long term, will have detrimental consequences on the real lives of women, men, girls and boys as well as the environment in which we all live. Equality between women and men is one of the objectives of the EU – enshrined in the treaties – and must therefore be an inherent part of European, national and international recovery plans as well as the transition towards a long term holistic vision of the post-crisis era.

The financial and economic crisis is gendered in its nature and in its effects. The global crisis is also impacting on women in other regions of the world with consequences on economies that depend on women's work and income, including remittances. The European Women's Lobby (EWL) has the duty to ensure that an informed and balanced awareness of this feeds into policy-makers' elaborations of appropriate responses and that women are included in the recovery and transition phases.

This current economic crisis is unlike previous recessions. One area where this is certainly the case is how this recession has had – and will continue to have – a much higher, albeit differentiated, impact on women. Indeed, the European Commission, in its 2009 *Report on equality between men and women*, asserted that 'the economic slowdown is likely to affect women more than men'. Understanding and dealing with the gendered aspect of the impact of the crisis, in its various dimensions, represents a challenge for European and national policy makers.

<sup>1</sup> The European Women's Lobby is the largest non-governmental women's organisation in the European Union, representing 2000 direct member organisations in 28 European countries. Working with its members at national and European level, the EWL's main objective is to fight for equality between women and men, ensuring the integration of a gender equality perspective in all EU policies.

In contrast to past periods of economic downturn, women today are the single biggest – and least acknowledged – force for economic growth on the planet. This is no arbitrary claim, but one made by *The Economist*, which suggests that, over the past few decades, women have contributed more to the expansion of the world economy than either new technologies or the emerging markets of China and India. This fact is being completely ignored. Furthermore, the unprecedented numbers of women on the labour-market means that they contribute to household incomes far more than ever before. Their integration into the work-place will mean not only a greater direct impact of the crisis on women themselves, but also on households, where incomes will be significantly affected by female job losses.

But more importantly, the economic position of women at the start of the recession was by no means equal to that of men. With employment patterns characterised by gender segregated labour-markets, gender gaps in pay, higher levels of part-time work and high concentration in the so called informal sector with lower earnings and less social protection, women are not in an advantageous position to weather the crisis.

## The multi-layered dimensions of the financial crisis and the impact on women

The global and all-encompassing nature of the current crisis makes reductionist analyses tempting, but it is important to acknowledge the interdependent and multi-layered dimensions of the financial/economic crisis in order to understand the complexity of its impact on women and on gender relations now and in the future.

### Economic crisis

Media and political attention in dealing with the crisis has largely focused on male-dominated sectors such as the car industry and construction. More generally throughout the economy, the gender dimension of the crisis is also easily overlooked. Official unemployment predictions for example give similar figures for women and for men. These figures nevertheless fail to take into account the over-representation of women in part-time work, an area which is excluded from unemployment statistics. In 2007 the percentage of women working part-time in the EU was 31.2%, four times higher than for men. Women

are also the main providers of public services, providing up to two-thirds of the workforce in education, health and social care; it can therefore be expected that female unemployment will rise disproportionately as public sector cuts are made. Furthermore, surveys show that women are more likely to be fired as, when jobs are scarce, men are seen to be the legitimate breadwinners.

The World Global Survey in 2005 found that almost 40% of those interviewed agreed that in such a situation, men have more right to a job than women. Pay differentials mean men are also more likely than women to be in an advantageous position in relation to savings and income. The average gender pay gap in the EU is currently at 17.4% – to the disadvantage of women – with figures ranging from 4.4% in Italy to 30.3% in Estonia. In some countries this differential is increasing. Finally, women have limited social protection income replacement benefits due to social security models which are focused on the concept of an uninterrupted career over a 40 to 45 year time-span, a pattern which rarely corresponds to a woman's working life cycle.

### Social crisis

The greatest risk in the current economic downturn is the development of a two-tier system dividing European populations and widening the gap between women and men. State income and expenditure are gendered; while men tend to be the main contributors to State revenue in terms of taxation due to their higher earnings, women tend to be the prime beneficiaries of State expenditure through the provision of services that are also gendered: childcare, dependent persons care, housing, education and health and in particular sexual and reproductive health. Reductions therefore in public expenditure are far more likely to impact directly on women.

Gender impact analysis prior to public spending cuts is crucial to understanding the effects on women of such policies both in the short and the long term. Activation (aiming to lower benefits payments by making employment an attractive option) and active inclusion policies that seek to engage women and men in the labour-market are also gendered as these depend on the provision of subsidised services such as childcare/dependent persons' care. Women represent a majority of those living in poverty: between 85% and 90% of single-parent households are

headed by a woman. Reductions in public expenditure will undoubtedly result in the transfer of services such as care back to women, preventing them further from fully participating in all aspects of life. Similarly the impact of expenditure cuts to support services in socio-economically disadvantaged communities will result in a greater reliance on women both within families and in the community.

### The governance crisis

The financial architecture, made up of financial institutions and practices that govern the creation, circulation and distribution of capital, has thus far operated in a deregulated and opaque environment which is also gendered. Such practices have a direct impact on women and gender inequality, resulting for example in objectifying women's bodies as commodities of the 'sex-industry'.

They have also facilitated the criminal laundering of funds, and have a direct impact women and girls trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Practices characterised by a lack of transparency and governance have also an impact on wealth redistribution mechanisms and the gendered consequences thereof.

### Banking crisis

In the context of the financial and economic collapse, women are starkly absent from these decision-making circles. Not one governor of the central banks of the EU Member States is a woman. Only one of the six members of the executive board of the governing council of the European Central Bank is a woman. As governments bail out the banking sector across Europe, they are now in a position to establish transparent ethical codes of conduct that mirror the values for which the EU stands, namely: equality between women and men, human rights, anti-discrimination, democracy, and the rule of law, which includes good governance.

### Ideological crisis

The economic crisis, if it is allowed to cause a setback in terms of gender equality, risks causing an ideological crisis at the heart of European society. Equality between women and men cannot be a luxury to be addressed only in times of economic growth; it is a legal and moral obligation as well as a founding block of the EU. It is crucial that gender equality be a core guiding principle now and in the future to avoid a setback in terms of the gains women and society as a whole have made over the previous decades.

### Recommendations

In light of the above considerations, the European Women's Lobby calls for political recognition that this recession is a transformative moment in history, a moment of opportunity to reassert that another

vision of the world is possible, in which the core values of the EU are inherent encompassing equality between women and men. And accelerating the process of gender equality is vital for sustainable solutions to the crisis. This requires a set of policies, actions and strong political engagement on a variety of fronts.

Firstly, there is a need to implement a systematic gender-sensitive analysis of the impact of the crisis and the responses thereof including analysis in relation to the multiple identities of women throughout their life-cycle. And gender budgeting must be a central and standard methodology of all public budget processes.

Secondly, investment in social infrastructure, particularly in education, health, child and dependent persons care is necessary and makes economic sense as it would have a double impact.: on the one hand, creating jobs in the public sector where a high number of women are represented; and on the other hand, easing the disproportionate burden on women to enable them to participate in all areas of life.

Thirdly, employment patterns that are based on women's experience in the labour-market—namely flexible work, job sharing and other part-time arrangements—must be enhanced and normalized as a means of preventing companies and organisations from firing women and men employees.

Fourthly, the outmoded assumption that men are the 'family breadwinners', which determines labour-market participation and social protection related benefits, in particular pension schemes must be revised. Consequently, it is imperative that sustenance of the European Social Model broadens its scope of funding for the sustainability of social security systems – which rely heavily on workers' contributions and which, in the current economic downturn coupled with demographic trends – be funded through less labour-intensive sources. Additionally, it is pertinent that a State Pension System be guaranteed, particularly as women's pension levels result in the feminization of poverty as they age. Equally necessary is the guarantee of the individualisation of social security and taxation rights in order to break women's dependency on their partners and/or the State.

Lastly, a political commitment to a more equal division of caring responsibilities and domestic labour between men and women to help women stem the double burden placed women through work and family. And working towards parity democracy, in political and economic decision-making, private companies and in the financial sector so as to harness women's economic potential and ensure the diversity and balance among decision-makers which engenders better governance. ■

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# Immigration, integration and asylum policies from a gender perspective\*

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A new gender-based migration approach is urgently needed to address the inequalities and discrimination that migrant women suffer. It is mandatory to overcome the dominant perception of female migrants as 'unskilled' migrants, to link the immigration debate to the problem of aging western societies and to relate the increasing restrictions imposed by family immigration policies and their gendered-nature.

Amandine Bach  
European Women's Lobby (EWL)  
With input from the members of ENoMW<sup>1</sup>

While migration and gender has for a long time remained an invisible issue in policies, especially at the EU level, since the 1980s research projects have been flourishing at the local, national, European and international levels. These research projects have challenged both mainstream research and immigration policies, which have for a long time focused on the male migrant worker, reinforcing a model of migrant women as only expected to assist their husbands and children, rather than seen as active in their own right. This representation of migrant women does not reflect the reality of women's migration, as argued by Kofman et al., who point out that "women were present almost from the beginning of post-war migration both as primary migrants and working alongside male partners".<sup>2</sup> However, this representation has been at the heart of the different migratory regimes, which are highly gendered.

## Challenges to reframing immigration policy

### *Stereotyping female migrants as unskilled migrants*

The first challenge towards a reframing of immigration policies is to challenge the dominant perception of female migrants as 'unskilled' migrants: they are indeed rarely seen as having the skills needed to contribute to the knowledge economy, which is restricted to occupations dominated by men in areas such as finance, science and technology. This perception is even more dominant in relation to women who come under the auspices of family immigration. However,

the share of women immigrants holding a tertiary degree in Organization for Economic Co-operation and development (OECD) countries is only three percentage points below that of men and, in some countries, there is an equal share or even higher proportion of foreign-born non-OECD female migrants in skilled occupations than native-born. However, immigration regulations have an impact on the ability of highly qualified women to migrate compared to the modes of selection of highly qualified migrants from a gender perspective and in relationship to that of men. The sectoral and earnings based selection practiced in most European countries implicitly favours men, while the Canadian system, under which immigration is based on education and language attainment, has led to an increase in highly qualified female migrants.

### *Linking aging Western societies to feminized care labour*

The second challenge is to link the immigration debate to the matter of aging western societies, the issue of care provision and feminized care labour, and to the difficulty of recognizing and regulating the informal economy of cheap and flexible labour. This link is essential to deal with the increasing migration of female domestic workers who are providing indispensable care services to a growing number of EU citizens who need support: families with children, those with disabilities, the elderly and others. While their labour is "instrumental for liberating us from the responsibility of reproductive labour and rendering us fit for the gender-blind framework of the workplace"<sup>3</sup>, these 'reconciliators' are usually excluded from protection under national labour codes and do not have access to labour visas, or face specific barriers to having their status regularized, which results in many of them being undocumented and with virtually no social protection rights.

### *Restrictions imposed by family immigration policies*

The third challenge is related to the increasing restrictions imposed by family immigration policies and their gendered-nature. Kraler and Kofman

point out that the criteria (in particular the income requirements) for family reunification make it more difficult for women to qualify. In order to meet the income requirements, women need to work fulltime, which makes it difficult for those who have childcare responsibilities and no access to subsidized childcare, and is often dependent on having long-term residence status. The fact that women in Southern Europe are concentrated in informal work is an additional barrier to family reunification.<sup>4</sup>

## Dealing with these challenges

There is firstly a need to take steps to frame gender-sensitive labor and immigration policies. This line of thinking is in line with recommendations made by the organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE, 2009), stating there is an urgent need that requires the development of enabling environments which provide equality of employment opportunities and access to benefits to both migrant men and women.

The OSCE also highlighted following a 'two-way' approach, and encompassing general migrant protection provisions (those specifically targeting female migrant workers) in order to empower them with choices, to access resources and to claim rights. As well as the need to introduce temporary special measures to compensate for past discrimination that may adversely affect female migrants' current status.

Conducting needs assessments is also important. Member States should ensure that labour market needs assessments carried out in their countries take into account the need for domestic and private care labour. Additionally, emphasis should also be placed on performing gender-impact assessments of bilateral labour agreements and migration policies including family reunification, to ensure that these policies do not discriminate indirectly or directly against migrant women.

## The need to apply the UNHCR gender guidelines on international protection

Women's experiences of political activities and of persecution may differ from those of men. Both politics and persecution have historically been interpreted

\* Originally published in the *European Social Watch Report 2009, Migrants in Europe as Development actors: Between hope and vulnerability*.

1 This article has benefited from key inputs from all the members of the European network of migrant Women (ENoMW) <[www.migrantwomennetwork.org](http://www.migrantwomennetwork.org)> through the project "equal rights. equal Voices. migrant Women in the European Union", carried out by EWL in partnership with ENoMW. We would also like to thank Eleanor Kofman, Middlesex University, for her valuable comments.

2 E. Kofman and Praghuram, "Skilled female labour migration", *Focus migration Policy Brief no. 13* (Hamburg: HWWI, 2009)

3 This issue has been highlighted by organisations such as the Mediterranean institute of gender Studies (MIGS) in Cyprus <[www.medinstgenderstudies.org](http://www.medinstgenderstudies.org)>, Kalayaan in the United Kingdom <[www.kalayaan.org.uk](http://www.kalayaan.org.uk)> and the European network RESPECT <[www.respectnetwork.eu](http://www.respectnetwork.eu)>.

4 A. Kraler and E. Kofman, "Civic stratification gender and family migration policies in Europe", *IMISCOE Policy Brief no.15*.

by member states through the framework of male experience, thus often excluding women's political opinions on gender roles and acts of gender-based violence and/or discrimination by either state or non-state actors. The 1951 UN Convention on the Status of refugees does not specifically refer to gender as a ground for persecution, but each of its principles must be analyzed from a gender perspective as asylum is not gender-neutral. The European Women's Lobby (EWL) and other organizations, such as the refugee Women's resource Project at asylum aid in the United Kingdom, are calling on EU member States to apply the United Nations High Commission for refugees (UNHCR) gender guidelines (2002) on international Protection with regards to gender-related Persecution (see EWL and refugee Women's resource Project at asylum aid, 2007) in order to tackle this void in gender sensitive immigration policies.

Without such guidance it is very difficult to ensure that the gendered nature of persecution, of which women are the prime victims, is fully understood and those women's asylum claims are given equal and fair assessment. This dynamic refers to situations where heterosexual, bisexual and lesbian women fear various forms of gender-based violence and discrimination by state and non-state actors, including where they are in danger of being killed or subjected to physical and mental violence by their husband/partner, family or the state; persecuted for opposing gender-discriminatory norms or laws; raped in situations of conflict and war; and along with their girl children subjected to practices that are carried out in the name of 'culture', such as female genital mutilation or forced marriage. Without guidance there is also a risk that some asylum-seeking women struggling for their human rights and those of others will be depoliticized and regarded as passive victims of abuse, instead of being recognized as agents in their own right and as women human rights defenders. Similarly, it is crucial that asylum procedures are gender sensitive to ensure that women benefit equally from a non-discriminatory process, for example, through the choice of the gender of the interviewer and ensuring that country information relating to the status of women is taken into account.

### Dealing with the void of gender sensitive guidelines

This void requires the creation of new gender entities in the European Asylum office as well as the promotion of gender guidelines as already stated previously. The European Asylum Support Office must establish a gender Unit, such entity would prove vital in providing an institutional framework to coordinate gender specific issues within the broader asylum support system. In addition member States should adopt, and the European Commission should promote, gender-sensitive asylum guidelines. Within

the framework of practical cooperation, there is a need for an EU ad-hoc gender expert group to establish and promote EU gender-sensitive asylum guidelines with the aim of assisting asylum determining authorities in interpreting gender-specific asylum claims.

Gender disaggregated data and research is necessary to assess the status of immigrant women within the immigration system. It is particularly urgent in the context of the Dublin system to undertake a study on the disparities between member States concerning the granting of protection on the basis of gender-based persecution and the forms this protection takes. To aid this process it is important that country of origin information (COI) is disaggregated by gender and that it include information regarding the status of women in countries of origin, both legally and de facto.

### Removing the main obstacles to migrant women's integration

At the EWL seminar in 2007 on "Equal Rights, Equal Voices: Migrant Women in the European Union", migrant women's organisations (which are now working together in the framework of the newly created European network of migrant Women) identified five main areas crucial to migrant women's integration. Firstly, an important feature of family migration policies because the spouse is dependent on the sponsor. And this dependency is reinforced in countries where spouses' access to the labour market is barred. This is an additional obstacle to women who have experienced domestic violence if they are to make an official complaint and can result in 'brain waste' with highly qualified migrant women remaining unemployed or in occupations far below their qualifications. Finally, because of the gendered nature of labour migration, as we have seen above, many migrant women are undocumented in Europe, do not have access to fundamental rights and face additional barriers to regularization because of the informal nature of their work.

Secondly, in the employment and education sectors the gendered nature of labour migration results in many women entering European countries through family immigration regimes or in sectors such as domestic work, working below their qualifications. The process of recognition of qualifications of non-EU country nationals is a major obstacle to labour integration, as well as the lack of support structures (such as professional, affordable and accessible language courses and childcare facilities). Additionally, multiple discriminations entrenched in the workplace must also be tackled.

Thirdly, with regards to sexual health and reproductive rights migrant women are facing limited awareness and lack of access to sexual health education. This situation is compounded by the lack of

cultural sensitivity and understanding by service providers of the health needs of migrant women. And the situation is worsened by the conditionalities placed on access to health care which must be removed.

Fourthly, migrant women are not free from violence and very often their experiences are further exacerbated by their lack of language skills, extended family and knowledge of the existing support system. Furthermore, they may face specific forms of violence such as female genital mutilation or honour-based violence. In developing a specific approach to this dynamic it is essential to not fall into the trap of stigmatizing and to remove obstacles such as conditional access to shelters based on legal status.

Lastly, the rights to vote and to access European citizenship are essential to ensuring migrants' full participation in public and political life. However, migrants face additional obstacles to exercising these rights such as lack of information on the host country's political system in different languages, and also lack of migrant women role models or capacity-building programmes for migrant women activists. Migrant women are particularly underrepresented in public and political life.

### Overhauling the European immigration system

The European immigration system requires an overhaul to become gender sensitive and to deal with gender inequities. This overhaul needs to encompass a series of changes with regards to legal status, access to health services and the ability to exercise reproductive rights, guaranteeing freedom from violence, and the ability to exercise the right to participate in public and political life.

#### Legal status

- Automatically grant independent status and a work permit to the spouse of the principal legal status holder at the earliest opportunity in order to fully guarantee and protect their rights and to facilitate their social integration.
- The law of the country of residence should be applied when it comes to personal status.
- Undocumented migrant women should have full access to their basic fundamental rights and gender-sensitive channels of regularization need to be developed.
- All migrant women, whatever their status, should have access to professional, affordable and accessible language courses, and care services for all dependants (children, older people, disabled persons).
- Recognize qualifications acquired abroad and ensure access to life-long learning.

### *Sexual, health and reproductive rights*

- Migrant women, irrespective of their legal status, should have access to public funds to ensure safe, equal, culturally sensitive health services
- Educational health tools on migrant women's health need to be developed for service providers.

### *Violence against migrant women*

- Guarantee all migrant women, regardless of their status, access to designated services and shelters for victims of domestic and sexual violence, and further develop the existing infrastructure if necessary.
- Statutory agencies need to involve experts from migrant communities and service providers should be provided with training.
- Specific legislation needs to be implemented that guarantees that abused migrant women do not remain legally and economically dependent on the perpetrators of violence.

### *Participation in public and political life*

- Clear, simple and gender-sensitive procedures to acquire permanent status and citizenship rights need to be made available.

- Funding should be made available for migrant women's NGOs to provide training to migrant women activists.

### **The European Union's failure to integrate a gender perspective in immigration policies**

Despite the requirement that the European Community should "eliminate inequalities and promote the equality between women and men in all its activities"<sup>5</sup> (i.e., gender mainstreaming), in practice most of the member states and the European Union have failed to integrate a gender perspective into their policies on immigration, integration and asylum. There has, nevertheless, been increasing acknowledgement of the need to integrate a gender perspective in recent policy papers, but how this will be done still remains to be seen and is one of the main challenges.

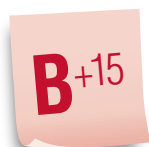
The gender bias of current policies needs to be urgently addressed and lessons could be drawn from the Canadian example where a gender-based analysis of immigration, settlement and integration programmes has been instituted. It is also important for civil society to play a key role in supporting the implementation of these commitments. Consultation and funding are essential in this regard. Migrant women's organizations should be included in consultative bodies and in framing research and impact

assessments at local, national, European and international levels. This is not possible without funding for migrant women's organizations and organizations supporting migrant women, as well as for gender equality, social and antidiscrimination policies. This is even more important in times of economic crisis, as progress towards women's rights is at risk of being jeopardized.

Finally, it is essential to note that reframing immigration, integration and asylum policies from a gender perspective is an essential step to ensure gender-fair policies, but this needs to be accompanied by a reframing of all policies from a women's rights-based approach to ensure a coherent policy framework, as pointed out by Jean-Michel Baer of the European Commission, "migration, labour market or education policy initiatives will have only limited success in removing barriers to inclusion and economic growth if they are not articulated with policies that address wider economic and social inequalities" (EC, 2009). This would mean looking at the gendered and fundamental rights impact of not only social and economic policies within the European Union, but also of external relations, development and trade policies. ■

5 A consolidated version of the treaty establishing the European Community (2002) is available at: <eur-lex.europa.eu/en/treaties/dat/12002e/pdf/12002e\_en.pdf>.

# Bulgaria: women's efforts are big, government efforts are scarce



Despite the overall positive trend, important gender equality issues related to the implementation of CEDAW persist in Bulgaria and are still waiting for legislative and policy solutions. These issues include the prevalence of formal equality versus substantive equality; the lack of appropriate temporary special measures; the absence of a special gender equality law and gender equality mechanisms at national and local levels; minimal mechanisms for the implementation of reproductive rights of women; and challenges in achieving equal participation in decision-making and violence against women.

**Milena Kadieva**  
Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation

NGOs in Bulgaria have been submitting reports to the CEDAW Committee since 1998. In 2002, non-governmental organizations from Bulgaria and the Western Balkans (Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Albania, Croatia, and Montenegro) prepared a joint report on the implementation of CEDAW in the region. In the case of Bulgaria, the report was elaborated in the absence of a governmental periodic report and was focused on the level of compliance of the national law and practice with regards to the convention and, more specifically, with the recommendations made in 1998 by the Committee. The compilation was broadly disseminated in the Balkans and it was a worthwhile effort to produce “unsolicited” alternative CEDAW reports from civil society.

## The implementation of CEDAW recommendations

In the 10 years that followed the consideration of the Bulgarian report, positive changes in the national legislation took place such as the adoption of the Protection against Discrimination Act in 2004, the passing of a Law on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in 2004, and the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence in 2005 (LPADV), the criminalization of the non-implementation of the orders for protection issued under the LPADV, the adoption of some anti-discrimination provisions in the Labour Code, among others.

Women's NGOs have constantly insisted on the importance of mainstreaming the Convention and its Optional Protocol as well as giving CEDAW clearer status in national legislation. Despite their lobbying efforts before the relevant state institutions, however, mainstreaming did not take place. Consequently, domestic legislation contradicts the CEDAW standards.

The Law on Protection against Domestic Violence, which was enacted in March 2005, provides for administrative and policing measures in cases of domestic violence. In particular, the relevant court may issue injunctions to remove the perpetrator from the common home, ban him from approaching the victim's home, workplace or place of social contacts, temporarily remove the child from the

custody of the perpetrator and impose compulsory education programs.<sup>1</sup>

The Law provides for a special urgent civil procedure of court administration in cases of domestic violence. It is a *sui generis* procedure although similar to the quick civil procedure.<sup>2</sup> The regulation also contains elements of the criminal procedure but remains within the framework of the civil procedure. The essence of the decree is centered on the regional court's ability to issue special orders for protection of victims of violence which contain restraining measures for the perpetrators. Under the LPADV, domestic violence is not recognized as a crime.

Since the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence was adopted its practice reveals that aside from the positive effect of the new legislation there are a number of problems arising within the established legal framework and in following the rules determined by the legislator. Women are still afraid to complain about domestic violence because of stigmatization and the generally negative reaction of society with regards to the discussion of “family matters” in public. This leads women, to more often than not, avoid seeking judicial protection. And in cases where women apply to the court for legal protection the latter does not offer them adequate safeguards due to the shortcomings of the Law and the inadequacy of some of its procedures.

In January 2008, due to the pressure from women's rights NGOs working in the area of domestic violence (mainly members of the Alliance against Domestic Violence) and the increase in cases of domestic violence over the years, the Ministry of Justice established a working group to prepare a draft law to amend the LPADV. The draft law was prepared in the summer of 2008. However, due to administrative obstacles and the lack of prioritization of the legislation by the Council of Ministers the draft regulation was only presented to the Prime minister in November of 2008. The draft act calls for: greater protection for victims of domestic violence during court proceedings; extension of the circle of persons eligible for protection under the act; greater protection for children and people with disabilities; as

well as the assignment to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of coordination functions and a special budget for the implementation of the act.

The Alliance of non-governmental organizations for protection against domestic violence advocated for an effective implementation of the LPADV and in particular the financing of the delivery of services to victims of domestic violence, as well as the incrimination of the violation of the judiciary protection orders.

Due to the lack of serious interest of the Government in VAW and its focus and use of Structural funds from the European Union for political and personal gain, the draft law was only voted on by the Council of Ministers in June 2009. Subsequently, Parliamentary elections took place (in July 2009) and prevented the implementation of any new law including the amendment to the LPADV. Today, the amendment awaits implementation and it is not clear when this will take place.

It should be noted however, that thanks to the efforts of women's human rights NGOs the Parliament adopted amendments in Article 296 (1) of the Penal Code on 10.04.2009 stipulating that non-implementation of the courts' protective orders under the LPADV constitutes a crime punishable with up to 3 years imprisonment or a fine of 5000 Bulgarian leva (2500 euros).<sup>3</sup>

Unfortunately, there are still norms in the Penal Code exempting certain types of assault, if committed by a family member, from State prosecution although the same act if committed by a stranger would be punishable by law. The State does not assist in prosecuting domestic assaults unless the woman was killed or permanently maimed. And even in cases where the woman is permanently injured the state does not always prosecute.

## Underrepresentation of women in decisionmaking

The issue of gender equality in political participation is a basis and guarantee for equality of women in all other spheres, and, *vice versa*, the inequality of women in other areas reflects on inequality in political participation.

Historically unequal treatment of women in the realm of political participation was “justified” by their reproductive functions and subordinated role in the

<sup>1</sup> See Article 5 of the Law.

<sup>2</sup> In instances where the life or health of the victim is in imminent danger, the victim may apply for an emergency order. The emergency order can also be applied for via the nearest police department. (Article 18 and Article 4 paragraph 2 of the Law)

<sup>3</sup> State Gazette No27/10.04.2009 paragraph 58.

family and society. These stereotypes are still alive today when the electoral laws and party systems consolidate men's power within a hypocritical framework of formal equality.

In political participation, the discourse in favor of affirmative action and the introduction of a quota system for encouraging women's participation is particularly relevant for Bulgaria for there is no quota system for enhancing women's political participation in the country and the general requirements of the Constitution and the relevant laws (the Law on the election of members of parliament, Law for the local elections) do not contain such provisions ensuring real women's participation in politics on equal footing with men.

### **Discrimination against women and affirmative action**

At the end of 2003, a Law on Protection against Discrimination was adopted by the Bulgarian Parliament. According to the Law, the prohibition of discrimination shall be binding upon all, in exercising and protecting the rights and freedoms set by the Constitution and the laws of the Republic of Bulgaria. Aside from this general and broad scope of protection, the law provides for special rules for protection against discrimination in the exercise of the right to work, the right to education and training, etc. However, according to the law, discrimination based on gender is just one of the grounds enlisted and there is no national mechanism for dealing with this type of gendered discrimination and no affirmative actions provided.

It should be noted that it is the EU accession process and the constant women's NGOs efforts which motivated the Government to adopt a special anti-discrimination law. In the period 2000-2003 – the Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation (BGRF), for instance, worked on draft legislation related to

women's rights in Bulgaria and participated in the working groups on the elaboration of a Draft Act on Equal Opportunities and a Draft Act on Protection against Discrimination (in force since 2004).

### **Non-existence of an institutional mechanism for gender equality and women's rights**

Up until now and despite human rights NGOs efforts, there is no specific legislation on gender equality adopted by the Bulgarian Parliament.

Three national assemblies witnessed attempts to promote such a law but without success. The main debates developed around two main issues: whether such a law is needed if Bulgaria already has a comprehensive anti-discrimination law (in existence since the 1 January 2004), as well as the debate regarding the most appropriate mechanism for gender equality for Bulgaria and the related considerations regarding budgetary restrictions. This debate occurred despite existing proposals to create the position of a specialized ombudsperson and an agency for gender equality... The results of these debates are the numerous efforts to produce a better law. About six drafts have been elaborated so far and none of them adopted. The most recent draft was introduced in the National Assembly at the end of November 2008.

Although there is an Advisory Council on Gender Equality to the Council of Ministers, which is chaired by the Minister of Labour and Social Policy and a small unit within the ministry, existing institutional mechanisms are insufficient for ensuring a continuous policy on gender equality:

The Government claims that the equality body, the Commission for Protection against Discrimination has the functions of a mechanism for ensuring gender equality but this is not the case. There is lack of dissemination of the Convention and the obligation to report periodically as well as lack of

training and education on how to implement the Convention.

There is no special focus on CEDAW in the educational system in Bulgaria, and, more specifically the way lawyers are educated. As a whole, the compliance with CEDAW is not given priority in government policy. One of the reasons for that is the high priority placed on implementing EU standards in the process of transition for the country and EU accession. EU standards which are often lower than the standards set by CEDAW are used as a basis for legislative and policy changes in the field of gender equality in Bulgaria.

Moreover, in spheres where the EU has no binding requirements, such as affirmative actions for women's participation in decision-making, the lower EU standard on positive action is applied instead of the broader possibilities for temporary special measures envisioned in Art. 4 of CEDAW. Despite the decision to implement the EU's lower standards it's important to highlight that some positive progress was made due to the harmonization of these standards.

Since 2004, BGRF, for instance, is the convener and main organizer of the Women's Human Rights Training Institute (WHRTI) for young lawyers from Eastern Europe focused on building litigation skills on three main issues: employment discrimination, violence against women and reproductive rights, with special focus on multiple discriminations. This training institute is focused on preparing young lawyers on how to use CEDAW successfully (and related documents) in national-level advocacy and litigation work towards eliminating gender discrimination and achieving equality.<sup>4</sup> Progress in legislation and practice on gender issues is a result of this type of processes along with a combination of the factors mentioned above and the active campaigning and lobbying of Bulgarian women's NGOs. ■

<sup>4</sup> <[www.institute.bgfrf.org](http://www.institute.bgfrf.org)>

# Women's status in Poland: a permanent crisis

B+15

Polish women today face disproportionate levels of unemployment and are pushed into the informal economy due to outmoded perceptions of women's roles. Moreover, the economic and financial crisis worsened an already critical situation and led to the pauperization of entire sectors of society in which again women were most negatively affected. In addition, gender-related institutions face a significant loss in resources. To deal with the situation it is crucial that gendered-budgeting becomes a standard methodology of all public budget processes and that investments are made in social infrastructure, particularly in education, health, and care of children and dependent persons.

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Network of East-West Women, Poland

The last 20 years have been a period of economic struggle for Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The transition from planned economies and authoritarian regimes to democracy and market economies significantly affected the region. Gender equality was also affected by this transition and women bore the brunt of the negative effects.

Since 1995 when the United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women took place, many countries in the CEE/CIS (Central Eastern Europe/Commonwealth of Independent States) region have made some progress in the 12 areas of the Platform for Action, although this progress was uneven and insufficient.<sup>1</sup> However, there are some worrying trends in the CIS since the economic status of women has deteriorated as a result of job losses, there is a move towards low-wage jobs in both the formal and informal sectors, and cuts in social protection. Also, access to health services and social support worsened which led to a substantial rise in poverty. Furthermore, a renewal of traditional views of women's roles is occurring in a number of countries and gendered-based violence is a key concern throughout the region.

## Crisis as a permanent condition

Because of the current economic and financial crisis countries in the region reporting on the advances and setbacks to CEDAW are making the economic status of women a priority. Nevertheless, the situation in Eastern Europe and particularly in the CIS illustrates the fragility of women's economic position in times of crisis. Although the level of women's entrepreneurship and self-employment has increased, their employment opportunities declined drastically.<sup>2</sup>

1 The 12 areas of the platform of action include: Women and Poverty; Education and Training of Women; Women and Health; Violence against Women; Women and Armed Conflict; Women and the Economy; Women in Power and Decision-making; Institutional Mechanism for the Advancement of Women; Human Rights of Women; Women and the Media; Women and the Environment; The Girl-child.

2 UN Economic Commission For Europe (2004), *Review of implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the UNECE Region*

Today women's employment is increasing in low wage sectors, like housekeeping, public health or lower education and in areas of work without any social benefits such as part-time jobs or jobs in the informal sector. "Financial and economic crises and a rapid loss of existential security are nothing new for women and men in the former socialist block countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). These crises have been a permanent condition of everyday life for the majority of populations in the region".<sup>3</sup>

For a majority of women in the region the transition has been difficult and is characterized by insecurity and inequalities in access to resources, paid work, and other sources of income. The new EU countries and the countries that emerged from the former Yugoslavia faced instability and struggle for survival, which led to a loss of security. As E. Charkiewicz has pointed out, "[t]he paradox is that the new crisis comes exactly at the time when the transition has been at last declared completed, and women's and men's lives have gained stability for good and bad".<sup>4</sup>

## Poland, a case study

In 1995 the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was signed and endorsed by many countries in Central and Eastern Europe and just two years later the Polish Government approved the "First National Program for Action on Behalf of Women". The first reporting period occurred in 2000. The "Second National Program for Action on behalf of Women" was implemented in 2003-2005. But, "in 1989 and 1990, when Poland embarked on the free-market road, the first casualties were women garment workers, as inefficient factories closed and nothing replaced them. Today the revamped garment sector, where women again predominate, is shrinking as import orders (mainly from Germany) fall and local subcontractors downsize or close, resulting in an estimated net job loss of 40,000".<sup>5</sup> The social costs of transition are disproportionately borne by

3 Charkiewicz, E. *The impact of the crisis on Women in Central and Eastern Europe* (AWID: 2009). See: <[www.awid.org](http://www.awid.org)>

4 Ibid.

5 M. Czepczynski, "An even gloomier development Picture", *Making finance work: People First. Social Watch Report 2009*.

women. In particular in countries like Poland and Russia, where the poorest 10% of the population account for less than 2% of the total income, and the richest 10 percent account for approximately 40 percent of the total income.<sup>6</sup>

There is no gender disaggregated data regarding the poverty level in the country. The Central Statistical Office does not disaggregate data by gender among the poor. The official statistics state that the percentage of people living in poverty rose from 4,3% in 1996 to 5,6% in 2008 (however if one used the newly formatted indicators in gathering these statistics the level of poverty in 1996 would have been 9,5%!!).<sup>7</sup> This dynamic is worsened by the current global economic crisis. Decreasing family incomes may lead to the pauperization of entire sectors of society and most likely will impact women who are traditionally employed in low wage jobs and responsible for unpaid family care.<sup>8</sup>

## The grey economy and job losses among women

According to some analysts, economic crises amplify the grey (informal) sector in the Polish economy as many, especially small entrepreneurs, try to minimize labor costs and avoid taxation and other costs associated with formal employment. It seems very likely that the growth of the grey economy will affect women more than men, as they are more often engaged in lower wage jobs, especially in the private service sector (e.g. in retail).<sup>9</sup> In 2007 the percentage of women working part-time in the EU was 31.2%, four times higher than for men.<sup>10</sup>

Women are also the main providers of public services, providing up to two-thirds of the workforce in education, health and social care. It is expected that, as the public sector experiences cuts due to the economic crisis, female unemployment will rise disproportionately. Furthermore, surveys show that women are more likely to be fired when jobs are scarce, since there is a widespread perception that

6 Charkiewicz. *Op. cit.*

7 P. Szumlewicz, *Rzad nie widzi ubogich kobiet*. Polish Women Lobby materials for Beijing +15 review meeting In New York, non-published

8 "An even gloomier development Picture".

9 "An even gloomier development Picture".

10 EWL report.

## DEFICIT IN SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

There is large deficit regarding sexual and reproductive rights in Poland: sexual education is non-existent, access to contraception methods is very limited, and abortion, besides being severely restricted by law is criminalized in most circumstances. While it is permitted only in rape situations, if the fetus has severe abnormalities or if the woman is at risk of death, the law also protects doctors who refuse to perform an abortion for reasons of 'conscience'.

The European Council has ordered the 46 Member States, including Poland, to ensure access to abortion procedures wherever it is not prohibited. The country has received several observations from different international agencies in this regard. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women ordered Poland to implement measures aimed at expanding women's access to health care, and urged that research be carried out on the extent, causes and consequences of illegal abortion and its impact on women's health.

There are many reasons to understand why the anti-abortion law was introduced in the country. In a process of political transformation of the State, radical conservatives lobbied to introduce the abortion debate on the political agenda. The climate during the transition from the communist regime to democracy, allowed the Catholic Church to present the existing laws favorable to abortion as the remnant of the 'godless communism'. The commitment of the Church in Rome and the Pope's support played a key role in exerting political pressure to criminalize abortion. The society was not prepared to face the anti-abortion rhetoric. ■

### Sources:

The Struggle for Abortion Rights in Poland (Wanda Nowicka)  
Reproductive Rights in Poland (Polish Federation for Women and Family Planning)

men are the legitimate breadwinners.<sup>11</sup> All the indicators show that poverty in Poland is not abating and in fact, as the economic crisis advances the situation is worsening. The Government is not doing much to prevent the deterioration of the status of women or to create mechanisms which could improve the situation.<sup>12</sup>

### Enterprising woman: an answer to economic woes?

According to Polish sociologist Piotr Szumlewicz, in spite of the fact that women's poverty is considered a priority for the Polish Ministry of Work and Social Policy, actions to deal with the effects of the economic crisis and the increase in poverty among the female population have not been implemented. The only action the Ministry of Work and Social Policy has undertaken is the implementation of the program "How good it is to be an enterprising woman!" which aims "to promote entrepreneurship among women and to stimulate their involvement in social and professional life".

11 European Women's Lobby, "Women, the Financial and Economic Crisis—the Urgency of a Gender Perspective". See: <stofnanir.hi.is/gendiv/european\_womens\_lobby\_women\_financial\_and\_economic\_crisis\_urgency\_gender\_perspective>

12 *Ibid.*

The Ministry perceives the promotion of entrepreneurship as the only one way to resist poverty among women, although it is not supporting this idea since there are no financial resources or programs available to those who chose to take this route. Women's entrepreneurship is very often a part of ministerial rhetoric, as well as major events on women's status such as the Women's Congress<sup>13</sup> where women's entrepreneurship becomes a catch all for promotion of the status of women. During the Women's Congress many panel discussions took place about women in business, the labor market, politics and government but there were no discussions about poverty, social exclusion, access to healthcare, or change of pension plans.<sup>14</sup>

13 The Women's Congress took place on 20-21 of June 2009, in Warsaw. The Congress was organized as the major event on the occasion of 20th anniversary of 1989 transition, and its aim was to present the systemic transition from female prospect. Many celebrities and VIP from polish political scene were invited, like Jolanta Kwa niewska, Magdalena Sroda and Henryka Bochniarz.

14 European Women's Lobby. *Women, the Financial and Economic Crisis—the Urgency of a Gender Perspective*. 2009. <stofnanir.hi.is/gendiv/european\_womens\_lobby\_women\_financial\_and\_economic\_crisis\_urgency\_gender\_perspective>

In Poland, "women in the retirement age group can access their entitlements enshrined by legislation from the pre-transition period. However, women approaching retirement age – who are covered by new legislation linking pension level to earned income and to the overall performance of private pension funds – receive pensions below minimum wage level – an extremely small amount. Additionally, there are now women and men without health care or pension entitlements. The effects of rapid mass privatization (as opposed to more gradual restructuring), such as that performed in Russia, point to an increase of 12.8% in mortality rates among men in Russia with the burden of providing for and provisioning for children falling exclusively on women".<sup>15</sup>

### Hard times for women's organizations and gender institutions

The impact of the economic and financial crisis is also widespread among women's non-governmental organizations. NGOs were already experiencing a loss of funding from foundations and individuals in 2009 when the drop in GDP led to a loss of government funding also. "The budget of the Civic Initiatives Fund, a government-run program that supports non-profit organizations was cut by half. While it prioritizes a neo-liberal agenda (diversity management, discrimination, entrepreneurship) and shifts NGOs to the role of service providers as the state withdraws from the social sector, the Fund has provided important resources for sustaining NGO activities. It is very likely that the local authorities' funding for NGOs will diminish as well. Furthermore, the economic crisis is already having a negative impact on the ability of women's NGOs to raise money, from both private and public donors, for their own share in a project co-funded by the European Commission. This is particularly alarming since, while the EU funds created new opportunities for NGOs in Poland, neither the State nor local authorities have developed the required mechanisms for financially supporting NGOs that secure EU funding".<sup>16</sup>

### Government's response is lacking

It is worrisome that policy makers at all levels of decision making continue to ignore the impact of the crisis on women and men's livelihoods. The initial crisis and subsequent recovery plans at different levels – including European, national and international (G20) – have failed to acknowledge, understand, analyze and rectify the gender impact

15 Charkiewicz, E. (2009). *The impact of the crisis on Women in Central and Eastern Europe*. Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID).

16 Czepczyński, M. (2009). "An even gloomier development Picture", *Making finance work: People First. Social Watch Report 2009*.

of the crisis' – stated the European Women's Lobby (EWL).<sup>17</sup> The European Commission, in its 2009 Report on equality between men and women, asserted that 'the economic slowdown is likely to affect women more than men'. Furthermore, it stated that understanding and dealing with the gendered aspect of the impact of the crisis, in its various dimensions, represents a challenge for both European and national policy makers.

To deal with this imbalance and the pursuing inequities the EWL in its statement on the occasion of the Beijing +15 meetings in Geneva recommended that European, national and international policy

makers guarantee continuous financial and human resources for existing institutional mechanisms, policies and programmes for gender equality and women's rights at all levels including supporting women's organizations. Additionally, the EWL called on states to address the current loss in resources for gender equality institutions with strong political engagement given the current financial and economic crisis.<sup>18</sup>

In light of the above considerations, it is crucial that gendered budgeting becomes a standard methodology of all public budget processes; and that investments be made in social infrastructure,

particularly in education, health, child and dependent persons care. These investments make both social and economic sense because these would firstly create jobs in the public sector (where a high number of women are represented) and secondly ease the disproportionate burden on women to enable them to participate in all areas of society. There is also an urgent need to revise the outmoded assumption that men are the 'family breadwinners' given this dynamic's effect on women's participation or lack thereof in the labor-market, and women's access to social benefits specially their access to pension plans.<sup>19</sup> ■

17 European Women's Lobby (2009). *Women, the Financial and Economic Crisis—the Urgency of a Gender Perspective*. <stofnanir.hi.is/gendiv/european\_womens\_lobby\_women\_financial\_and\_economic\_crisis\_urgency\_gender\_perspective>.

18 European Women's Lobby (2009). EWL Statement on the occasion of the Beijing+15 Meetings in Geneva, 29 October – 03 November 2009. See: <www.womenslobby.org>

19 European Women's Lobby (2009). *Women, the Financial and Economic Crisis—the Urgency of a Gender Perspective*. <stofnanir.hi.is/gendiv/european\_womens\_lobby\_women\_financial\_and\_economic\_crisis\_urgency\_gender\_perspective>



# Latin America and the Caribbean: no solution to the crisis without gender policies

**B<sup>+15</sup>**

The economic and financial crisis had a strong impact on Latin America and the Caribbean, with its most visible expression in the increase of unemployment and poverty. A variety of measures were implemented in the region in order to mitigate the devastating effects of the crisis, but these measures suffer from gender blindness, only increasing inequity. Such deficiencies are linked to the – not yet sufficiently robust–role of the state regarding the mechanisms for the advancement of women.

The decrease in trade – both in volume and in value –, the drop in remittances and unemployment along with an increase in poverty are the principal negative consequences of the global economic crisis in Latin America. Over two million people entered the ranks of urban unemployment in the region in 2009 and according to the warnings issued by the International Labour Organization (ILO) it will be difficult to recover those jobs in 2010, despite forecasts of greater economic growth.<sup>1</sup> This is compounded by the revelation made by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) that 2009 exports dropped by 24% as a result of the crisis.<sup>2</sup>

So far, responses to the crisis in the region focused on stabilizing the financial sector and on actions to sustain demand, employment and care for vulnerable populations. Amongst them, the most noteworthy are: a) the extension of unemployment benefits, restricted to formal workers; b) the extension of non-contributive programmes (support provided for schooling, health care, etc.) amongst the poorer populations, particularly conditional cash transfer programmes; c) the implementation of subsidy policies for productive sectors, aimed at maintaining levels of employment; d) facilitation of credit and the reduction of social security contributions on the condition that employment is maintained; e) the establishment of public investment plans with the purpose of generating jobs in the sector.

## Accumulation and gender inequality

Although distributive policies have improved, constituting the basis of the success of many of the governments of the region in this period, the primary-extractive model has also been strengthened. While this generated a surplus for redistribution and the improvement of social policies, it also created environmental and social problems in certain areas, connected with dams, monoculture, water shortage, privatizations, etc. These negative effects – foreseeable in the short term – brought social organizations together in order to reinforce a strategy linked to the recovery of sovereignty over natural resources, along with attention to the impact that this model has on poverty and inequality.

1 2009 Labour Overview for Latin America and the Caribbean, ILO, January 2010.

2 International trade in Latin America and the Caribbean 2009: crisis and recovery. ECLAC, January 2010.

Very few of the measures taken by the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean to confront the crisis mention women, despite the fact that its impact is greater on them, with regard to both unemployment and growth of precarious work, or access to jobs with lower productivity and less social protection.

Gender inequality is a basic issue to be taken into account in these policies since accumulation of profit is not only based on the exploitation of natural resources, but also on the basis of cheap labour, women's labour being the cheapest of all. The production process includes, though it is not formally acknowledged, placing a double burden on women within the household (or "voluntary" work) and through lower wage employment in order to increase profits and reduce salaries. During the last decade salaries went down in most of the countries of the region, due largely to the inclusion of women in the labour market.

## Employment

From the perspective of the employment sector, the measures taken so far are limited in the sense that they focus on formal employment and on specific groups of beneficiaries. They reproduce unsuccessful policies that were implemented before the 1990s – such as subsidies for private enterprises and the reduction of employer contributions – which also had a leading role in the depletion of social protection systems. A further weakness is that they do not take caregiving work into account, nor other specific targets of gender equity. In short, such measures do not call into question present forms of employment, or the relation between paid and unpaid labour.

With regard to formal employment, the impact of unemployment in this sector is greater than in the past, amongst other things because many of these jobs – mainly in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean – are linked to external economies. Along with the loss of these jobs, saturation occurs in the informal sector of the economy. ECLAC and the ILO have estimated that in 2009 unemployment will reach about 9% in the region, with women suffering a greater degree of unemployment than men, which means that three million more people will be unemployed.

According to Rebeca Grynspan<sup>3</sup>, the relation between paid and unpaid labour is an issue of joint social responsibility, not just of joint responsibility between men and women, but also within the world of work and in the design of public policies. Large infrastructure programmes do not generate female employment. Social and community infrastructure programmes do. However, most of the programmes in Latin America focus on large physical infrastructure projects.

## Social protection

With regard to gender equity in social protection and the organization of care, it should be pointed out that in Latin America the rate of female participation in the labour market is still low, despite the fact that the participation of women is important. The result of this disparity is a low level of social protection, as unprotected employment is mainly female.

Although there was growth in the region, it has not been possible to wipe out the negative impacts of 1990s structural adjustment policies. The central features of that process with regard to social protection were the withdrawal of the State and the commercialization of social protection.

In most of the countries in the region, people who lose their jobs also lose access to social protection, health care and education. As a result of deficient, exclusive or even practically non-existent social protection systems, jobless people are not only poor but also marginalized; they are socially excluded and are pushed towards an informal or illegal economy. The percentage of poor informal workers doubles that of formal workers.

## Caregiving work

With regard to caregiving, gender inequity is evident as a result of the weakness of such services provided by the state, commercial segmentation and the predominance of unpaid caregiving labour. Use of time surveys in the region shows how inequitable the distribution of this kind of work is between men and women: women devote a large amount of their time to such work and this resulting in the deterioration of their quality of living.

3 Analysis of the economic and financial crisis from the gender perspective: understanding its impact on poverty and women's work. Intervention at ECLAC, Meeting of Experts.

*The crisis and its impact on the global work of women.*

## A 15-YEAR OVERVIEW

During the forty-third meeting of the Board of the Regional Conference on Women of Latin America and the Caribbean held in June 2009, an analysis was made of the regional challenges identified by the governments in the questionnaire on the application of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), and the final document arising from the twenty-third extraordinary sessions period of the General Assembly.

It was determined that large gaps persist on the issue of gender equality in the region and that they are ever more evident after the crisis as a result of the structural inequalities between men and women.

Maternal mortality rates are still high in most of the countries and only in those countries which already displayed low rates before Beijing were there any signs of progress.

With regard to reproductive health policies, whilst some of the countries have moved forward, others are in the same situation or have even regressed in connection with therapeutic abortion legislation, exposing women to maternal mortality and illegal abortion. In Nicaragua the interruption of ectopic pregnancies has been prohibited.

Such regressions go hand-in-hand with the onslaught of conservative Catholic and Evangelical religious sectors which systematically oppose contraceptive measures, sexual education and the approval of laws aiming at sexual and reproductive health.

Although there is in the region a legislative framework which contemplates the rights of women, its effects with regard to its application in everyday life are weak, which constitutes a threat to the slight progress achieved which could be lost if additional efforts are not made.

Women's access political decision-making positions has grown in the last decade, but it is still far from achieving parity. Women do not occupy

more than 20% of national parliamentary seats, supreme courts or higher judicial power courts and municipal government. Although they represent 29% of the executive branch's ministerial cabinet, at municipal levels they do not exceed an average of 7%. Legislative increases are a result of the reform of electoral systems or quota laws which were enforced in 12 of the 18 countries in Latin America, according to information compiled by the Observatory for Gender Equality in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Violence against women has diverse aspects and dimensions,—including psychological ones—but the status of policies against violence is an indicator of the level of democratic development and the type of social development of a country.

According to a report arising from the governments' response at the forty-third meeting of the Board of the Regional Conference on Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, the social, political, economic and cultural inequality which is perceived in the region is the most favourable breeding ground for the abuse of power in the domestic arena and by institutions.

Within this framework, it should be pointed out that significant efforts do exist, such as those made by Chile's Observatory for Gender Equity in Health, Uruguay's Observatory for Criminality and Delinquency, Argentina's legislation for comprehensive protection which legally stipulates the generation of information and the creation of a bureau for women at the Supreme Court, the work of the Municipality of the Metropolitan District of Quito, in Ecuador, Paraguay's Secretariat for Women, the joint work carried out in the Dominican Republic by the Department of Statistics at the Attorney General of the Republic's Office and the National Bureau of Statistics (ONE, in Spanish), which keep a record of the murders of women. ■

In light of this situation, it should be remembered that the importance of caregiving work is implicitly acknowledged in human rights treaties and in many of the national laws in the region, and was expressly espoused by the governments which participated in the Quito Consensus.<sup>4</sup> Governments agreed at the time to “adopt all necessary measures, especially of an economic, social and cultural nature, in order to ensure that the States assume the social reproduction, care and well-being of the population as an objective of the economy and a public responsibility that cannot be delegated”. This is a very important commitment which the States have not begun to fulfill.

### The role of the state

The inability to enforce commitments made in the Quito consensus demonstrates deficiencies in gender equality policies which are linked to the weakness of the State's role in enforcing mechanisms for the advancement of women and to the predominance of skewed “welfare” policies.

Democracy has also shown deficiencies; while élites have shown themselves to be more open to acknowledging the lack of equity, it will still take nearly forty years to set targets for advancement unless immediate action is taken. In this regard,

the forty-third meeting of the Board of the Regional Conference on Women of Latin America and the Caribbean in June 2009 pointed out that the institutional weakness of these policies “extends to other areas: social policies and particularly the encouragement of employment have not been able to revert labour segmentation, the salary gaps which are linked to it and the excess burden of unpaid caregiving work amongst women. The main government programmes aimed at women reinforce the sexual division of labour, either because they make women the intermediaries or the receptors of transfers or because they care for the reproductive needs associated with maternity, neglecting comprehensive health care and because positive action measures with a rights-based approach are few or nonexistent”<sup>5</sup>.

In order to reverse this situation a new fiscal pact is also essential: if the region maintains an average taxation of 16%, it will never be possible to implement social welfare policies. Also in this respect it is important to consolidate the mechanisms for a new financial architecture. For example, the Southern Bank or UNASUR can reinforce proposals of regional integration to which the civil society networks and organizations of the region are committed.

The 11<sup>th</sup> Regional Conference on Women of Latin America and the Caribbean will be held in Brasilia from 13 to 16 July 2010. Its purpose is to discuss public policies which favour gender equality as well as the model of economic development and democracy necessary for the existence of equity between men and women. Once again, the contribution of society's networks and organizations will be significant.

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4 Consensus achieved during the tenth ECLAC Regional Conference of Women of Latin America and the Caribbean.

5 Forty-third meeting of the Board of the Regional Conference on Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, June 2009.

## HAITI: AID MUST BE HUMANITARIAN, WITH A FOCUS ON WOMEN

According to the Pan American Health Organization, women have less access to resources and decision-making positions which are essential for preparation, mitigation and recovery from natural disasters and are taken the least into account when establishing aid plans.

"Immediately after a disaster, the 'tyranny of the urgent' prevails and gender concerns are ignored or cast aside as irrelevant. The unique opportunity provided by a disaster to change traditional gender roles is wasted if women do not take advantage of it or if decision makers do not take it into account".<sup>1</sup>

In the case of Haiti, the earthquake which devastated the country in January 2010 has highlighted the country's vulnerability to natural disasters. According to ECLAC the fragility displayed by the country's economy has added to this vulnerability. Haiti is the country with the highest number of dead and victims per event in relative and absolute terms in the region. It suffers a yearly loss of nearly 350 million dollars as a result of the destruction of property and the loss of economic flow and extraordinary expenses required for the partial recovery from the effects of the impact.<sup>2</sup>

Before the earthquake, Haiti was in the 148<sup>th</sup> place in the United Nations' Human Development Index (HDI); 76% of its population subsists on less than two dollars a day and 56% subsists on less than one dollar a day. Remittances, on which there is a great reliance, constitute 52.7% of the Gross Domestic Product. According to Stephen Lendman of the Centre for Research on Globalization with headquarters in Montreal, Canada, one per cent of the Haitian population controls half of the country's wealth, five per cent owns seventy-five per cent of the arable land and six families control industrial production and trade.

The country imports 48% of the food it consumes and the rest arrives via the World Food Programme and other sources of cooperation to supplement domestic production. One third of new-born babies are underweight. In under-fives acute malnutrition affects 9% of the children and chronic malnutrition, 24%. Anaemia affects 50% of pregnant women and two-thirds of children below the age of five. One in five Haitians dies before the age of 40; nearly 2.5 million people suffer food insecurity. One in five Haitians suffers mental deficiencies caused by pregnancy insufficiencies and the maternal mortality rate is 523 women per 100,000 births.

Structural aspects on their own, however, do not explain the country's instability and economic weakness. There is a historic process to which countries in Latin America and the Caribbean owe much; the country has been made invisible and crushed by a multitude of invasions and blockades carried out by colonizers of all periods; by massacres carried out by the Trujillo dictatorship against Haitians in his insane desire to "whiten" the society of the Dominican Republic; for multiple invasions and blockades in the twentieth century, and so on.

### Humanitarian, not military aid

The concept put forward by the United States and accepted by the countries which are part of the UN stabilization mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) places the focus on military aspects. The earthquake has shown how wrong such a policy is and how far from meeting Haiti's most urgent needs.

What is required at present is for international aid to become humanitarian aid and promote sustainable development. To this end it is necessary that the Haitian people be guaranteed the right to self-determination and to exercise their sovereignty, which is constantly violated by coups d'état, dictatorships, foreign military invasions and the debts brought about by international financial organizations.

Humanitarian ethics consists in saving the lives of the neediest and, at the same time, respecting the dignity of individuals. Humanitarian ethics, when applied, is guided by two principles: neutrality and independence. These principles constitute the foundation for a code of conduct for humanitarian aid which over 200 organizations throughout the world have espoused.

### Women on the frontier, aiming towards the centre

In this country women are the poorest and most discriminated sector of the population, a situation which will get much worse as a result of the disaster. Women are the heads in 43% of Haitian families and are responsible for domestic chores and caregiving. As usual, they have a central role in the reconstruction of the country and of the families affected by natural disaster.

This is why civil society networks and organizations are demanding that governments, United Nations agencies and other multilateral bodies which are channelling aid to this Caribbean country should pay particular attention to the support provided for women and guarantee that aid should reach them and their families directly. This can be achieved in a variety of ways, such as channelling funds to the civil organizations working directly with women in Haiti and bearing in mind the strengthening of organizations of defenders of human rights. However it is not enough to guarantee that women receive aid; they play a leading role in the design and implementation of work carried out in support of their communities.

On the Jemaní border between the Dominican Republic and Haiti remarkable collective efforts have made it possible to establish the Feminist International Solidarity Camp for the transfer of resources and communication. This is a great collaborative effort which has the support of regional and international organizations and initiatives which have undertaken to empower women from a perspective of human rights, contributing to the human mitigation of the disaster, the reconstruction of the social tissue and infrastructure, and establishing links of solidarity which at the same time aim at overcoming inequalities which make it impossible to acknowledge the value of women and their contributions. ■

1 Gender and natural disasters (Pan American Health Organization, PAHO).

2 Preliminary overview of the economies of Latin America and the Caribbean 2009 (ECLAC).

# Progress and limitations in El Salvador

**B+15**

Fifteen years after the Beijing Conference Salvadoran women have made little progress. The achievements gained thus far are owed to the determination of the feminist and women's movement as well as the political will of some women within the political parties.

Lic. María Dina Sales de Rodríguez  
CIDEP – Social Watch El Salvador – 2010

Proof is available that a large number of legal instruments exist in the country to promote progress in the status of women. However, these instruments are mere diplomatic formalities in the case of Conventions and legislative responsibilities required by bilateral cooperation and international organizations.

The Government of El Salvador made no effort to reduce the gender gap despite its commitment in 1995 in Beijing to promote gender equity in its institutions. Today, management positions are mostly occupied by men and women's participation in the Legislative Assembly is only 9% – that is, 91% of the members are men.

Progress in women's representation in mayoral sities and municipal councils is also scant. Although the women's departments created in some of the municipalities constitute progress in terms of municipal management, they are confronted with a lack of resources and limitations which hinder their administration. This shows up most clearly in the obstacles encountered by cross-cutting gender policies in their internal structures.

Official reports on the progress achieved by Salvadoran women's representation in decision-making areas point to unfavourable results at all levels of government.

With regard to sexual and reproductive rights, El Salvador – along with Nicaragua – criminalizes abortion entirely and has extremely restrictive laws which criminalize all abortion with imprisonment, even when the life of the mother is at risk, or when the foetus is congenitally malformed. Although the Ministry of Health has birth control plans and strategies, political discourse is imbued with religious conservatism which denies the sexual and reproductive rights of women, criminalizes all forms of contraception and rejects all demands related to rights regarding sexual diversity and gender identity.

## An overview

Since 1995, the United Nations and its agencies, as well as the Inter-American Commission of Women of the OAS, the Council of Ministers for Women of Central America, and other organizations have given their support to the implementation of the gender focus in El Salvador in an attempt to achieve changes in the government's plans and policies, as well as in discriminatory attitudes and behaviour, so that

women are able to fully exercise their rights. Legal changes were achieved in this regard, in the areas of family law, civil law and criminal law.

Amongst the various objectives proposed was the breakdown of the barriers between the "public" and the "private", the acknowledgement of women as social and political subjects with economic, social, political and cultural rights on equal terms with men and with influence in the relations of political power.

At present, women continue to struggle, through various efforts at the local, national or regional level, for their full citizenship, generic democracy, their sexual and reproductive rights and non-sexist education, as well as the care and preservation of the environment, the recognition of reproductive labour, a life free of violence or discrimination, and sustainable development.

Official policy begun to respond to the demands of women, by starting with their inclusion in management and political settings and answering their petitions with the creation of several organizations: the Department for Women in the Office of the Attorney General of the Republic, the Women's Secretariat installed by FMLN, a leftist political party, the Institute for Research and Development for Women (IMU, in Spanish), the Salvadoran Institute for the Development of Women (ISDEMU, in Spanish) and the Assistant Attorney General's Office for the Defence of the Rights of Women and Families, amongst others.

## Differential impacts

Neo-liberal policy applied in the region in the 1990s along with structural gender inequalities and extreme religious conservatism increased the difficulties women faced in satisfying their demands. On the one hand, the media, formal education and health are used as ideological tools to prevent the implementation of women's human rights. On the other hand, the economic impacts of the crisis accentuate existing employment vulnerability in general and women's employment vulnerability in particular.

ECLAC indicated that as women face vulnerability with regards to access to social protection: "solidarity measures instituted with a social protection purpose in terms of the labour market need to be analyzed. Employment must not be expected to constitute a sufficient measure of protection for the greater part of the population, in view of threats related to the lack of income, health and old age. In times of crisis, it is necessary to rethink the framework for comprehensive solidarity, which blends

contributive and non-contributive measures of social protection".<sup>1</sup>

Measures which aim to generate mitigating policies in the face of this situation should bear in mind that, if development objectives are not to be put at risk, the differential impacts that economic policies have on men and women should be considered. In short, for whom and how these policies are designed, whom they impact, on whom falls the burden of economic recovery, to what extent are social inequalities strengthened, or to what extent is a window of opportunity opened which will prevent recurring crises.<sup>2</sup>

## The State's unfulfilled obligations

The State has only partially fulfilled its national and international commitments with regard to women's rights. Amongst these commitments are:

- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1996).
- The agreements of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 1995.
- Decree 902, the 1996 Intra-Family Violence Act, as stipulated in the Constitution, to provide the whole of the population with a decent life and show the political will to overcome the problem of violence.
- In 1999 the General Assembly of the United Nations approved the CEDAW's Optional Protocol, a complementary instrument for the Convention, which established minimum means of accountability. El Salvador has signed the Optional Protocol and yet so far the Legislative Assembly has not ratified it, which makes it difficult to obtain access to international means of protection for women's human rights, as well as designing public policies which make these human rights effective.
- The State fails to recognize the importance of women's productive and reproductive role in the national economy.

<sup>1</sup> ECLAC, "Central American Isthmus and Dominican Republic: Economic evaluation for 2008 and prospects for 2009 – Confronting the crisis". Available at: [www.unifem.org.mx/un/documents/cendoc/otras/eclac-crisis2009.pdf](http://www.unifem.org.mx/un/documents/cendoc/otras/eclac-crisis2009.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> "Las medidas anticrisis: posibles impactos en el empleo de las mujeres y en la conciliación entre el trabajo en el hogar y en el mercado" ("Anti-crisis measures: possible impact on the employment of women and on the compromise between work in the home and on the market"). Alma Espino, December 2009.

- Even though the existence of ISDEMU is acknowledged as an entity for the advancement of women, it has obviously not guaranteed the fulfilment of policies geared towards women. Funds devoted to the development of women are few and barely sufficient for investment in small projects. In addition, the presence of two representatives of women's organizations, and two alternate members, on the Board of ISDEMU has not led to an improvement in the status of women with regards to negotiations and on their influence on the Board itself, since the organizations' contributions are obscured because they are not credited in the documents produced, such as the Beijing +10 Report.

### Specific objectives pursued

Salvadoran women demand the implementation of the principles of gender equity and equality, throughout the whole of the economic, social, political and cultural system. Amongst other things, their objectives aim at non-sexist education, a change in the relations of power between men and women, the elimination of gender violence, the recognition of the value of reproductive work, of sexual and reproductive rights, sexual choice or preference and full citizenship.

### Women's demands (November 2009)

- That the Legislative Assembly should approve the Comprehensive Act for Women's Access to a Life Free from Violence.
- That the Legislative Assembly should ratify the CEDAW Optional Protocol, in order to be able to have access to international means of protection for the human rights of women, and the implementation of public policies which make the rights of women effective.

- That the Legislative Assembly should ratify the Ibero-American Convention on Young People's Rights.
- That the National Civil Police and the Public Prosecutor of the Republic should fulfil their role effectively with regard to the investigation of the murders of women and all acts of sexual violence against women and girls.
- That judges should apply justice swiftly on behalf of women and families affected by every act of violence.
- That women's murder be included in the Criminal Code and that the murders of all the girls, teenagers, young and adult women who have been the victims of violence should be solved and justice achieved through due legal process. The State owes these victims justice and such crimes continue to go unpunished.
- That the State should comply with the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (of the United Nations) in its 42<sup>nd</sup> sessions period – 20 October to 7 November 2008 – with regard to the Committee's Concluding Observations on El Salvador's 7<sup>th</sup> regular report (CEDAW/C/SLV/7), submitted during sessions 862 and 863 held on 31 October 2008.
- That the relevant institutions should undertake a greater commitment to eradicate violence and discrimination against women.
- That the government should implement greater transparency regarding the means used to supervise the fulfilment of labour regulations and policy which endeavours to ensure employment for women.
- That the government should bear in mind the comments made in 2004 by Ms Yakin Ertürk, Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women

to the Secretary General of the United Nations, who concluded that despite some significant achievements, *"the fact that the authorities fail to investigate, bring to trial and punish those responsible for acts of violence against women has contributed to the creation of a climate of impunity which has led to a lack of trust in the system of justice. The impunity of crime, socio-economic disparities and the machista culture favour a generalized state of violence in which women are submitted to a continuous series of multiple acts of violence, such as murder, rape, domestic violence, sexual harassment and commercial sexual exploitation."* ■

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- ISDEMU report on violence against women, November 2009.
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# A review of the African region

**B+15**

Over the last 15 years since the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) was adopted, progress in African women's position has on the whole been regrettably slow, with a huge and persistent gap between commitments and actual action. The state of insecurity, the longstanding conflicts, combined with other factors like the food and energy crises and the global economic and financial crisis, are all working against the pace of progress. However, the creation of the gender-equality entity in the United Nations provides new hope, as it promises to work closely with African Governments and citizens to centralize the Beijing agenda.

To date fifty-one African countries have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which is the international women's bill of rights, while Somalia and Sudan are still holding back their ratification.<sup>1</sup> During the period of 2000-2009, a number of legislative developments took place in the continent with the implementation of gender-sensitive laws and constitutional provisions in several African countries like Uganda and South Africa. There were judicial decisions that invoked the provisions of CEDAW at the national level in countries like Botswana for example. Many governments in Africa, including Uganda, Zambia, Tanzania, Nigeria and Ghana, developed national gender policies and action plans.<sup>2</sup>

The African Women's Rights Protocol<sup>3</sup> came into force in 2005, two years after its adoption, which is a record achievement compared to other Protocols and human rights instruments adopted by the African Union (AU). The Protocol influenced modifications in laws in several countries and judicial rulings upheld the responsibility of the state as the primary duty bearers in the protection and fulfilment of women's rights. In 2008 a landmark judgment was delivered by a court in Zambia in favour of a school-age girl child who was defiled by her teacher. And there is enthusiasm behind the 2009 resolution by the AU summit to declare the decade for women in Africa from 2010-2020.

## Gender equity: progress on paper, a standstill on the ground

Despite the advances in legislation geared towards gender equity and judicial process it is important to note that African women expressed their disappointment to governments in Africa for being very quick to sign onto human rights instruments and endorsing different policies at the international and regional levels but extremely slow in delivering on their commitments.

Women's NGOs in Africa met in November 2009 in The Gambia for the African regional conference on Beijing +15. Ms Norah Matovu Wing, Executive Director of The African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET) said "The change achieved in the political, social, economic status and situation of African women cannot be denied. However the concern is that those enjoying these benefits remain a minority."<sup>4</sup>

The Africa NGO Shadow Report on the Beijing +15 found that "the many practical steps taken over the last five years are a drop in the ocean when assessed against the many promises made by African governments on the fundamental issue of achieving gender equality, equity and women's empowerment. In short, African leaders are falling far short of the expectations of African women."<sup>5</sup>

As for political participation, African countries have not yet achieved BPFA's minimum target of 30% participation in leadership and decision making positions. As of June 2009 the percentage of women in parliament in sub-Saharan Africa was 18.6% and less than 10% in Northern Africa.<sup>6</sup>

Maternal mortality rates in the region continue to be unacceptably high, quality health services are still lacking, and there are widespread issues with drug shortages and barriers to accessing medication, and family planning services as well as information. Challenges were experienced in the HIV/AIDS pandemic responses which resulted in serious gender discrimination and violations of women's rights, particularly inheritance rights.

Current care strategies for HIV/AIDS have failed to address or reduce the double burden that is shouldered by women caring for sick relatives and contributing to the household income. "The slow process of integrating family planning with HIV services in most countries continues to lead to preventable deaths of many women and loss of millions of dollars that could be saved if there was political will to address this gap."<sup>7</sup>

On one level, state policies already reflect some elements of "gender equality" frameworks but on the

whole, these stop short of fully addressing issues of women's empowerment and in particular, sexual and reproductive health and rights.

## The global economic crisis and the effect on gender equality in Africa

The global economic and financial crisis reached Africa through various channels of transmission. The impacts of the crisis are expected to be felt in stock markets, banking sectors and in the reduction of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), while real sector impacts are to be experienced in shortfalls in remittances, trade, tourism and aid.<sup>8</sup>

Donor countries reviewed their priorities to focus more on bailing out their own financial institutions and leading economic giants through financial stimulus packages. The first people to lose jobs in the formal sector in Africa have been those at the lower levels, and the majority of these are women.

Typically, it is the survivalist sectors of the informal economy that grow in times of crises and it is in these spaces that women are predominantly located. Feminist economists have repeatedly noted that gendered impacts of the global crisis were raised under a political context that impinges upon the time burdens of women and forces women to absorb additional care burdens as market-based services or public services become less accessible. This context also includes higher unemployment rates for women and/or an increase in women's marginalization towards the informal sector, and potentially a worsening of working conditions.<sup>9</sup>

The coping strategies adopted by most African countries to respond to the global financial and economic crisis do not correspond with the needs of women who are already overburdened by the care economy.

As for the food crisis – which preceded the financial crisis – there is a recognition that it is a result of many years of neglect of the agricultural sector. Ms Zo Randriamaro from Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) points out that "as far as the African region is concerned, hunger

1 CEDAW, List of ratifications. < treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtmsg\_no=IV-8&chapter=4%E2%8C%A9=en >

2 Norah Matovu Winyi, "The Beijing Platform for Action: What has it delivered to African women?", Pambazuka Issue 458 (2009-11-18), < www.pambazuka.org/en/category/features/60350 >

3 African Union, Full text of the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa (pdf), < www.africa-union.org/root/au/Documents/Treaties/Text/Protocol%20on%20the%20Rights%20of%20Women.pdf >

4 "African Women NGO Review Beijing +15", Foroyaa online, < www.foroyaa.gm/modules/news/article.php?storyid=3913 >

5 FEMNET, "Africa NGO Shadow Report on Beijing + 15", page 10. < www.femnet.or.ke/news.asp?ProgrammeID=1 >

6 International Parliamentary Union (IPU), fact sheet.

7 "Africa NGO Shadow Report on Beijing + 15", page 9.

8 C.G. Ackah et al (2009); Global Financial Crisis Discussion Series, Paper 5 (Ghana, Overseas Development Institute (ODI).

9 Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), "Re-imagining Feminist Politics and Strategies in the Global South", DAWN Development debates. < www.dawnnet.org/resources-news.php?id=92 >

## LEARNING FROM THE SOUTH AFRICAN EXPERIENCE OF “VOLUNTARY” WORK AS PUBLIC SERVICE

Women of the world work longer hours, have less labour market participation, are much more involved in unpaid work and have lower incomes than men. South Africa is no exception, and many women from the lower classes are involved in the job of caring for people living with HIV / AIDS but receive no remuneration for this, which is misnamed ‘voluntary work’.

In connection with a meeting of specialists organised by ECLAC in Mexico DF on 23 and 24 July 2009, entitled “*Analysis of the economic and financial crisis from the gender perspective: understanding its impact on poverty and women’s work*”, the Greek economist Rania Antonopoulos explained a programme developed in South Africa for women in voluntary jobs.<sup>1\*</sup>

For many years that country has had unemployment rates of around 40%, and although there was great economic growth in the post-Apartheid period, the market did not succeed in improving the jobs situation. Among

\* See the presentation by economist Rania Antonopoulos “*Lessons learned from South Africa’s Public Job Creation Programme (EPWP)*”. <[www.eclac.org/mujer/noticias/paginas/5/36595/RaniaAntonopoulos.pdf](http://www.eclac.org/mujer/noticias/paginas/5/36595/RaniaAntonopoulos.pdf)>

some groups the unemployment rate is over 70%. Many people grow up in homes where nobody has had a job for 15 or 20 years.

Antonopoulos said, “A proposal was made and the government adapted it. The government became the employer of last resort, the creator of employment for people engaged in “voluntary” work, which strictly speaking was not voluntary at all, for extremely poor households affected by HIV / AIDS. It was not a brilliant idea, it was an obvious idea.”

This unpaid work was changed into a public service, skills improved, and this meant an improvement in the service, and as a consequence these people are included in society not just as consumers but also as producers.

The programme also created multiplying demand, and a good part of the cost of the programme was recouped. Antonopoulos explained, “It does not cost as much as we thought and it creates new jobs thanks to the snowball effect that has occurred with the increase in demand in the country.” The economist believes that in times of crisis what is needed more than ever are new state institutions geared to job security. ■

and famines have been around for a very long time and yet, no one called it a crisis.”<sup>10</sup>

The food crisis did not happen in a vacuum, but in a food system which involves power relations among many actors with different interests and varying political and economic power: smallholder farms and families; governments and global corporations, as well as global trade rules and financial institutions. “Women account for an average of 70% of food production in Africa, but all of these agricultural policy issues are happening at the expense of women’s rights.”<sup>11</sup> For instance, West Africa’s shea nut collectors, processors and traders are predominantly women and among the poorest in their communities.<sup>12</sup> The dramatic reduction in shea prices on the international market is being felt within West Africa. Price declines in Ghana are estimated at 50% to 75% and women have observed the absence of shea buying companies in their communities.<sup>13</sup>

10 Zo Randriamaro, “Food Crisis and Sovereignty in Sub-Saharan Africa”, DAWN. <[www.dawnnet.org/uploads/documents/PAPER\\_YVONNE\\_Environmental%20Education%20and%20Gender%20Justice\\_PEAS.pdf](http://www.dawnnet.org/uploads/documents/PAPER_YVONNE_Environmental%20Education%20and%20Gender%20Justice_PEAS.pdf)>

11 “Food Crisis and Sovereignty in Sub-Saharan Africa”.

12 Shea butter is used in Africa as a cooking lard, and also as a water proofing wax for hairdressing and candle-making.

13 Dzodzi Tsikata, “The Global Financial Crisis and Women in West Africa: Developing Impacts and the Implications of Policy Responses”, Association for Women’s Rights in Development (AWID). Brief 6 of “The crisis’ impact on women’s rights”.

Women still remain largely invisible in the formal economy, and women’s unpaid labour continues to be unrecognized and increasing as they are forced to shoulder the social and economic impact of macroeconomic policies. Despite all the policies and the resources invested in the processes of change over the last 15 years the status of rural and urban poor women did not change in many African countries.<sup>14</sup>

In addition, international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) continue to prescribe cutbacks for government spending in essential social services like education and the provision of healthcare as a condition for accessing concessional loans during these difficult times. This is likely to impact women’s social development gains. Additionally, safety net programmes such as cash transfers, food for work, public works, health insurance and basic free education – although more needed than ever – are subject to additional cuts if the expected cuts in Official Development Assistance (ODA) occur.<sup>15</sup>

14 “The Global Financial Crisis and Women in West Africa: Developing Impacts and the Implications of Policy Responses”.

15 Norah Matovu Winyi, “The Beijing Platform for Action: What has it delivered to African women?”, *Pambazuka Issue 458* (2009-11-18), <[www.pambazuka.org/en/category/features/60350](http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/features/60350)>.

African finance ministers called for a moratorium on debt servicing and the removal of aid conditionalities that prevent innovative solutions to the crisis. “This is an important call because the International Financial Institutions and bilateral donors have traditionally used debt and aid to leverage unpopular policies in Africa. The policy space promised to Africans whilst Europe and America focus on the global financial crisis is rapidly disappearing. Governments in Ghana, Nigeria and Burkina Faso, amongst others, are pursuing policies and austerity measures to reduce state spending under the tutelage of a resurgent IMF as chief doctor to countries suffering from the impacts of the crisis. This is paradoxical, given that the discussions in capitals of the North are about stimulus plans and astronomical bail-outs of companies accompanied by measures to cushion suffering families”<sup>16</sup> Despite this paradox women’s organizations in the region expressed renewed expectations in the newly created gender-equality entity in the United Nations and hope that this entity will work closely with governments and citizens of Africa, particularly women, to centralise the Beijing agenda for equality, peace and development.<sup>17</sup> ■

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16 “The Global Financial Crisis and Women in West Africa: Developing Impacts and the Implications of Policy Responses”, page 14.

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# The Arab region: 30 years of CEDAW

**B+15**

Despite the progress achieved in countries that have succeeded in lifting certain or all reservations to CEDAW, much work remains to be done in countries where its implementation is severely limited by strict reservations. National legislation and discriminatory national laws continue to be an obstacle to women in their struggle for equality. The global economic and financial crisis has greatly affected the region and the status of women placing a greater burden on them while forcing them in larger numbers into the informal sector and unpaid work. Gender-sensitive economic policies must address the issue of power relations at a middle ground that reaches between state institutions and women.

Far from the myth of a single homogenous 'Muslim World', experiences show that women's groups have been pushing for transformation from within their communities, pushing against conservative interpretations of Islam that deny equality and for gender justice at the local level.

Despite the common culture, there is a marked difference between the Arab countries as to the extent of the achievements of the platform of action of Beijing. This difference can be traced back to several factors, including the position of every country from the interpretation of religious texts in relation to women which reflects clearly in the personal status laws and the responsibilities that they are allowed to exercise outside the boundaries of their home and family.

It is worth noting that all Arab States have signed and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) but under so many reservations that the purpose of the convention is defeated. Other countries like Afghanistan, for example, have ratified the Convention but never submitted a report to the CEDAW Committee.

The amount of reservations has led women's rights activist in the region to believe that "Arab states have never meant to implement CEDAW hence the numerous reservations they have institutionalised to block any possible useful implementation. In addition, we believe that you simply cannot have any reservation on universal principles pertaining to human rights and equality. You simply cannot place equality under reservation".<sup>1</sup> A coalition of women's and human rights organizations from different Arab countries have come together for a campaign called *Equality without reservation* with the aim of promoting the withdrawal of reservations by Arab countries.

On the other hand, the region is by no means immune to effects of the global economic financial crisis which resulted in financial costs and affected people's ability to exercise their human rights as enshrined in international conventions and instruments including CEDAW.

Much has been said about the role religion plays in the region especially on the advancement of women. The use of the word "fundamentalisms" to refer to conservative interpretations of Islam has long been debated by feminists in the region (see box) and new initiatives are

emerging that aim to reform Muslim Family Law from within.<sup>2</sup> Organizations in the region acknowledge that the lack of political will – and not religion – is the main obstacle to increase women's participation in positions of leadership.

## Beijing +15 on the balance

On December 2009, in Cairo, Egypt, a number of women's organizations held a regional consultation meeting to evaluate the achievements and challenges faced in the Arab region since the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995. The regional meeting included 235 women's rights leaders and civil society representatives from fourteen countries and concluded by outlining future priorities in the Arab region towards the fulfilment of the Beijing Platform for Action.<sup>3</sup>

The NGO shadow report on Beijing +15 shows that generally speaking the Arab states have made progress in regards to the status of women since Beijing 1995<sup>4</sup>; however this progress differs according to areas and countries.

As for national laws and policies several countries have made adjustments, for instance, in Lebanon the government is discussing a new law criminalizing spousal abuse—a giant step forward in a campaign by women's groups for equal rights.<sup>5</sup> In the Palestinian territories, a draft law has been submitted before the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) to change the Personal Status Law, which amongst other issues governs the treatment of women before the law, to make it more gender equitable.<sup>6</sup>

The majority of the Arab states provide a variety of services to women. This includes the social security system and financial assistance to widows and their children, including the system of small and micro-credit loans. However, the disparity in the distribution of income

and resources in many Arab countries is an obstacle to the reduction of poverty in general and among women in particular. The services provided to poor women – and women in general – still have many shortcomings, and on occasions women ignore their very existence.

The report also noted that there is still a general climate in most Arab countries tainted by prejudice against women. There are concepts that still have not changed in the Arab community that do not allow the woman to own her body or have the freedom of control over it. For example, in Bahrain, an NGO report stressed that women do not have the empowerment to take the final decision when it comes to using family planning methods; such a decision lies within the hands of the husband (which men usually refuse as they regard the matter contrary to the principles of Islam).

In many countries in the region, laws regulating family life constitute a system of exclusion and discrimination against women. Such is the case where women are deprived of equal rights in marriage, divorce, custody of children and inheritance. In addition, the majority of women in the region cannot transfer their nationality to their children. In certain countries, the law permits, implicitly and in the name of honour, male family members to kill women, by allowing the man to benefit from mitigating circumstances, under provisions applying to so called 'honour crimes'.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is widespread in Djibouti where 98% of girls undergo this process in its four types. However efforts to eradicate FGM in the region took a step forward with a *fatwa* (or religious decree) against the practice in Mauritania and sanctions in Niger against mothers who subject their daughters to it.<sup>7</sup>

The Arab Human Development Report 2009<sup>8</sup> produced by the UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States says violence against women in the region is greatly promoted through marriage laws since most of them confirm a husband's custodial rights over a wife. However, steps to reform personal status laws were taken, especially in the Maghreb countries such as the Tunisian laws, the Moroccan code and, to a lesser degree, the Algerian laws.

"The lesson derived from the Arab Maghreb's legislation is that it is possible to develop Arab laws that would

1 Kathambi Kinoti, "Equality without reservation: An interview with Lina Abou Habib", *Equality without reservation*, (April 2009), <cedaw.wordpress.com/2009/04/28/equality-without-reservation-an-interview-with-lina-abou-habib-ctda/>.

2 See Musawah, For equality in the family: <www.musawah.org>.

3 Regional Beijing+15 NGO Shadow Report Issued by Women's Rights Experts, El-Karama, <www.el-karama.org/content/regional-beijing15-ngo-shadow-report-issued-women%E2%80%99s-rights-expert>

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## FOOD FOR THOUGHT ON “FUNDAMENTALISMS”

Anita Nayar

The link between global power dynamics and increasing inequality is evident but we also need to recognize that deepening inequality is a major cause of violent conflict and social unrest that can be linked to so-called ‘fundamentalisms’. But what does this term ‘fundamentalisms’ mean? Is it even an appropriate term to use? Many feminists from Muslim societies in particular have said the term is a misnomer. After all, anyone of faith who believes in the fundamentals of the faith could be considered a fundamentalist. The fundamentals of a faith of course depend on who is defining them and that is a contentious issue. But many people who believe in the fundamentals of their religion are not conservative or right wing. So would it not be more appropriate to use the term religious ‘conservatives’ or ‘religious right’?

Feminists’ response to the religious right has been to insist on a secular state that is responsible for guaranteeing the human’ rights of all peoples. But is this a sufficient response given the complexities in some situations where the religious right is providing basic social services which the secular state is failing to deliver? Is this sufficient where there are patriarchal and undemocratic secular states?

We cannot just fight for a secular state without intentionally developing ways of addressing the economic basis for the growing attraction to religious extremism. We therefore need to ask, other than being secular or not, what does the State need to do economically? We may not have all the answers but we need to be mindful that one of our challenges is to envision an alternative economic system to capitalism that protects the rights of people and the health of the planet. ■

From: Anita Nayar, “Women’s Rights and Global Change”.

preserve the religious fundamentals while adopting interpretations that achieve greater equality between men and women and thus eliminate the historical injustice against women in family relations” states the report.

### Women in conflict situations

The region has many areas of conflict: whether it is Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq, Afghanistan or Somalia, war-time assaults on women take place in a context of lawlessness, displacement and armed clashes.

In June 2008, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1820 demanding the “immediate and complete cessation by all parties to armed conflict of all acts of sexual violence against civilians”. The resolution noted that women and girls are particularly targeted by the use of sexual violence as “a tactic of war”.

In this context of armed conflict, basic rights to self-determination and peace have been forcibly annulled. Women face threats to their lives, freedom, livelihoods, education, nutrition, health and physical environment from outside forces whose presence wreaks institutional, structural and material violence on them every day.

Palestinian women continue to suffer abuse and denial of basic human rights at the hands of Israeli settlers and soldiers in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. According to a report recently submitted by the Palestinian Women’s Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC) in Ramallah, Palestinian women continue to suffer abuse and denial of basic human rights.<sup>9</sup> In addition, the siege of Gaza in 2008 led to a sharp rise in the number of battered and sexually abused women. “Men in our patriarchal society are regarded as the heads of

the household, and because many men who used to be employed in Israel lost their jobs they feel emasculated and frustrated, and the easiest way to take out their anger and frustration is on women” said Manal Awad, director of the Gaza Community Health Programme (GCHP).<sup>10</sup>

### How is the economic crisis affecting women’s advancement in the region?

Financial and economic crises constitute a greater burden on women, especially the poor and the migrant, as they get fired from their jobs due to the perception that the man is the provider for the family. Furthermore, the unemployment rate for women is very high throughout the region whereas women are predominantly located in the informal sector.

Although women’s economic participation has increased, it is still very low compared to other regions, and there is a high level of economic dependency with all the social consequences this implies. Women are often employed in the informal sector, and when they own their own businesses, they do not actually manage them most of the time, having to leave this task up to a male family member. When they are employed, there are wage gaps between them and their male colleagues, but due to lack of data, there is no reliable statistical evidence for this.<sup>11</sup>

Experts say that the current crisis has granted governments the chance to change their macro-economic policies for investments to be directed at ensuring gender equality. On the other hand, women’s organizations and

feminist economists have questioned this strategy arguing that in Muslim contexts, national policies and programmes that are supportive of women’s empowerment cannot be effective if their implementation is blocked by forces located between women and the state institutions.<sup>12</sup>

The transformation of power relations is essential because what is ordained at this middle level (e.i. enhancing economic opportunities, spreading legal literacy, or increasing women’s access to political participation) will not automatically flow downwards to lower levels of governance. Feminist scholars also argue that gains made in one domain do not transfer automatically to other domains, for the simple reason that different power dynamics may be at work in different domains.

Access to and control over economic resources play a fundamental role in women’s economic empowerment in the formal and informal economy. Cooperatives and networking are seen as examples of women organising around economic resources as a means of changing gender relations. ■

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# Women's rights in Armenia

B+15

Women's rights have been granted in Armenia since ancient times. With the advent of the modern Republic, they were re-consecrated and, during the Soviet Era, they were expanded. However, The transition to democracy and a free market has deteriorated the situation of Armenian women in society. Today they face discrimination in every aspect of life. The Government has not realized the full extent of the problem and the attempts to comply with international commitments are feeble and under-funded.

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Women's equal rights have a long history in Armenia: Armenian ancient codes and legal regulations provide indirect evidence of the fact that in ancient times women were treated as equal members of society in issues of heritage, property and so on. For instances the code of Shahapivan (443 B.C.), provides "women a right to possess a family property in case the husband deserted his wife without any reason. It was mentioned also that a wife had right to bring a new husband home". The Armenian famous public figure, writer and philosopher of 18th century Shahamir Shahamirian states:

"Each human individual, whether Armenian or of another ethnicity, whether male or female, born in Armenia or moved to Armenia from other countries, will live in equality and will be free in all their occupations. No one will have the right to lord

over another person, whereas their manual labor shall be remunerated according to any other work, as required by the Armenian Law" (*Pitfalls of glory*, Article 3).

It is important to mention, in this context, that the First Armenian Republic of 1918-1920 was one of the first to give women the right to vote and to be elected and 8 % of the members of its Parliament were women. It is also important to emphasize that the first female-ambassador in the world was Dr. Diana Abgar (Abgaryan) Ambassador of Armenia in Japan (While Alexandra Kollontai – generally recognized to be the first female ambassador – was appointed as Ambassador of Norway as late as 1923).

During the Soviet Era equal rights for men and women in work, educational, social and economic life were declared, the State guaranteed free and obligatory school education, free and accessible University Education, free and accessible medical services, paid 24 days' vacation, allowances, prenatal and post-natal vacation etc. In 1920 the right to abortion was legalized and medical care in this field guaranteed.

Despite this advances women in Soviet Armenia carried a double load and faced structural discrimination. Although the Armenian Constitution states that men and women are equal, strong mechanisms to bring this about in the daily life of Armenian society are non-existent.

According to the law of Independent Armenia, Armenian women and men enjoy equal rights in political life, in work and in family. Legislative norms in Armenia mostly correspond to the major international standards. While the Constitution does not directly refer to gender equity, the principle is ensured by numerous laws. Participation of citizens in the establishment of democracy and decision-making are the most fundamental human rights.

## There is gender discrimination in every sphere

The transition to democracy and a free market caused deterioration of the status of Armenian women in society, as well as of their economic situation. Today there is no national policy addressing women's status. And there is a need for processes that deal

## THE BODIES CREATED FOR ASSISTING WOMEN LACK EFFICIENCY AND FUNDING

The following bodies that tackle social, health-related issues and employment concerns for women were created in the past decade. Regrettably they are under-funded or lack the power to either develop or carry out an effective policy to overcome obstacles facing the status of women's and to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men.

- In 2000, the Women's Council, a voluntary consultative body, was created under the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia. However the new Prime Minister eliminated it.
- In October 2002 the Committee on Trafficking in Women was established. The representatives of all interested ministries and agencies as well as non-governmental organizations were represented in this committee. The Committee elaborated the Concept of Fight against Human Trafficking and a National Action Plan was devised for the period 2004-2006. The Second National Action Plan was adopted in December 2007, for 2007-2009. It covers all aspects of policy making related to human trafficking including mainstreaming legislation, investigating trafficking issues their scope, the adoption of preemptive measures, information dissemination as well assistance to victims of human trafficking.
- In June 2005 the National Police created a Department on the Fight against Human Trafficking.
- In 2006 the UNDP published a *Gender Equality Briefing Brochure* and a *Gender and Change e-Newsletter*. The Brochure aimed at providing general information on gender and gender equality issues, national and international frameworks and mechanisms protecting and promoting women's rights. It was intended for policy makers at central and local levels, civil society organizations, gender advocates, researchers, as well as for anyone seeking basic information on equal rights.
- The Gender and Change e-Newsletter was jointly prepared by UNDP "Gender and Politics in Southern Caucasus" programs in Armenia and Georgia. These two UNDP offices were the first to fulfill the innovative approach of preparing the newsletter on a rotational basis. This Newsletter is envisioned as a forum for all UNDP country offices in our region.
- In 2004 the Institute of the Ombudsman was created. ■

with gender inequities. The Government has made no attempts to change this situation as it considers gender equality an issue that was resolved during Soviet times. The lack of effective mechanisms to ensure the proper implementation of legislation leads to discrimination of women in all spheres, including political participation.

Women are often left out of economic and political processes, resume traditional roles in society, and experience the disproportionate effects of a hazardous and thoughtless transition from a totalitarian society (with a centrally planned and rigid economy) to a free market economy-based on democracy. And today there are no women's representative bodies, parliamentary groups, or official gender advisors in Armenia. An exception was the appointment of a female Deputy Minister, in 2002, to the Ministry of Social Security she was charged with coordinate activities aimed at addressing women's issues. Nevertheless, she was dismissed soon after and another woman was appointed who in turn was removed. At present, women's issues are dealt with by the Department for Women's and Children's Issues created within the Republic of Armenia Social Security Ministry in 1997, as well as the Mother and Child Health Protection Division of the Republic of Armenia Ministry of Health.

This lack of effective gender entities surfaces in how the country reports to its international commitments. Armenia was one of the 191 countries to sign the Millennium Declaration. Respect for and commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women is recognized as one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Goal 3 of the MDGs to promote gender equality and empower women and eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary schooling, preferably by 2005 and no later than 2015. In 2005, Armenia published a first progress report on meeting the MDGs. The progress report had a notably strong degree of adaptation to the national situation, setting out broader goals than the global targets. Nevertheless, achievement of all of these goals is assessed as only 'possible' or 'likely'.

### Achievements and setbacks

- In the framework of the Beijing Action Plan implementation in 1997, the Prime Minister issued a decree on creating a Committee to carry out the 1998-2000 Gender Policy Development Program. This was a three-year program designed to improve the status of women, which was never implemented due to the lack of financing.
- The most important achievement was the approval of the "2004-2010 Republic of Armenia National Action Plan on Improving the Status of Women and Enhancing Their Role in Society". (Decree number N 645 - N dated 8 of April 2004 Of the Government of the Republic of Armenia). The Action Plan defines the principles, priorities, and key targets of the public policy that is pursued to address women's issues in the Republic of Armenia. It is based on the relevant provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia and is targeted at the fulfillment of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence against Women, the recommendations of the Fourth Beijing Conference (1995), the documents of the Council of Europe Steering Committee for the Equality between Women and Men, the UN Millennium Declaration requirements, and commitments of the Republic of Armenia under other international instruments.

The Action Plan comprises 8 sections:

- Ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men in decision-making and in the social and political spheres;
- Improving the Social and Economic Condition of Women;
- Education Sector;
- Improving the Health Condition of Women;
- Eliminating Violence against Women;
- Role of the Mass Media and Cultural Institutions in Reporting on Women's Issues and Building a Female Portray Model; and
- Institutional Reforms.

Some points, like advancing research and recommendations on violence against women and the gathering of statistical data – contained within this sections – were implemented the program as a whole remained unaccomplished.

Some entities were created over the past decade to tackle social, health related issues, and employment concerns. Regrettably they are under-funded or lack the power to either develop or carry out effective policy to overcome gender inequities and to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men. The reasons for this failure were lack of funding, the lack of coordination between the different agencies involved and the absence of mechanisms of accountability for implementation. Ultimately the low level of awareness among the population was a huge obstacle to their success.

### Women and civil society

It is worth noting that, after the Beijing Conference, the women's organizations became more active, new ones were founded and several international organization including UNDP, USAID, OSCE initiated research on the topic. These organizations, as well as other international donors, awarded numerous grants to women's NGOs. This contributed to the promotion of women's NGOs particularly and of civil society in general. Empowering women has been one of the main objectives of women's organizations. It serves as a unifying idea for all these organizations, regardless of the diversity of their fields of activity. In the beginning women's organizations were launched to promote women's civil rights or to address social problems affecting women. These organizations have been conducting a great work on women's rights, advocacy, leadership and confronting gendered-based violence and trafficking of women. ■

# Asia Pacific: putting people at the centre and promoting regional integration



In October 2009 movements from the Asia Pacific region representing a broad section of women and girls gathered at the NGO Forum on Beijing +15 and reaffirmed the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) as a strategic document for women and girls' empowerment, human rights, peace, human security and gender-inclusive development. The Forum affirmed the UN General Assembly's resolution for the establishment of a new agency dedicated to gender issues. It also identified the concurrent crises in development, debt, climate change, food security, conflicts and finances, and increasing violence against women as having the most severe impact on girls and women's rights across the region. The forum also asserted that the current development and market models need to be significantly rethought to increase human security rather than become an obstacle to it.

## The Asia and Pacific NGO Forum on Beijing +15<sup>1</sup>

The Asia and Pacific NGO forum acknowledged the positive effect of international instruments on the lives of women and girls. They highlighted the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in all but 4 countries – Brunei Darussalam, Nauru, Palau, Tonga – as a positive step. Additionally, several countries in the region such as Thailand, Cambodia and the Philippines in Southeast Asia; and India, Nepal and Bangladesh in South Asia now have National Action Plans to combat violence against women.<sup>2</sup> Laws and policies are being adopted to strengthen women's economic security and rights in such vital areas as decent employment, and access to credit and markets.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, in some countries quotas or other affirmative measures were adopted to increase women's representation in political decision-making in a number of countries, such as Afghanistan, Indonesia, and Timor Leste.<sup>4</sup> And some countries in the region took steps to improve health outcomes for women and girls and implement measures to reduce gender gaps in literacy and in primary and secondary education.

### Crises for women's status

Despite these advances, the forum recognized the enormous and complex challenges still facing women and girls in the region and the constant struggle to deal with surmounting crises. They were especially concerned by the impact of these crises on women's rights.

### Crisis in legislation

According to the forum concerns remain at the policy level, with the continued existence of discriminatory laws against women and the resistance of some

countries to ratify international instruments including the CEDAW, the Optional Protocol, and to fully implement the Beijing Platform for Action. Moreover, in some countries in the region, women's rights activists are being persecuted, harassed, detained and prosecuted for drawing attention to women's rights.

There is a particular concern that some governments and certain political parties resort to manipulating the right of people to cultural and religious diversity as a pretext for violating human rights, including the rights guaranteed to women, girls, HIV/AIDS survivors, and persons with diverse sexual orientations. The criminalization of women and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered community results in varied human rights violations including the penalization, discrimination and criminalization of homosexuality in a number of countries.

### Crisis in democracy and participation

The principle of participatory democracy is in distress across the Asia Pacific Region. Systematic persecution of legitimate dissenters and human rights defenders, especially women, and their families is widespread. Repressive political systems prohibit women's rights activists from sharing their experiences with the international community and media bans are an obstacle to accessing and distributing information. Women's NGOs and women's rights activists are subject to intimidation tactics which consist of shutting down NGOs and harassing rights activists to prevent them from playing their full role in supporting women's rights. Increasingly conservative laws and discriminatory regulations are being introduced that escalate rights violations and augment the number of women and girls without access to education, health, mobility, employment, and reproductive and sexual services.

Women continue to struggle for equal representation and engagement in the new e-technologies and media. Despite the explosion in this medium over the past 15 years women lack access to it and are discouraged from acquiring this knowledge. In many cases technology is used as a tool to subjugate and forge violence and discrimination against women. There is a need to democratize access to information and for governments to make this a priority if participatory democracy is to be fully available to women. In this area the media has a special role

and responsibility in affirming all aspects of women's lives and investing in research regarding their impact women's status.

### Political crises and conflict

Prolonged political crises, religious extremisms, fundamentalisms and military dictatorships in some countries in the region continue to disproportionately affect women and girls' rights and create critical situations and insecurity for this segment of the population. The magnitude of violence against women and girls during armed conflict lacks recognition from states and attention across the region. Furthermore, those affected by conflict remain marginalized within conflict resolution and peace building processes and impunity prevails for the violent perpetrators. Interstate and intra-state conflicts continue to pose a great challenge to the lives and socio-economic conditions of women and girls. This is exacerbated in politically unstable countries and areas where valuable resources are siphoned into militarization and military equipment as well as training despite the significant needs among women, girls and society as a whole.

Women and girls constitute some 80 per cent of the world's refugees and other displaced persons including internally displaced persons (IDP). And in the Asia Pacific region urgent national and international action is needed because these segments of the population in IDP and refugee camps remain unaddressed. Natural or man-made disasters such as armed conflicts, skewed economic policies and, so called, development initiatives are some of the causes for increasing internal displacements.

### The crisis of violence

Despite some advances in decreasing violence against women it continues to be a major concern across all geographic and demographic areas in the Asia and Pacific region. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) continues and damages young girls and women. There are increasing reports of violent sorcery killings, witch hunts and honor killings of women and girls and rape as an instrument of war or colonization. Growing issues include new and pervasive forms of violence that are emerging alongside new media and technology, with cyber bullying and violence becoming a rising problem for young girls.

1 This document is based on the Final Declaration – written with input from 700 women and girl participants – the Asia and Pacific NGO Forum on Beijing +15.

2 The Asia and Pacific NGO Forum on Beijing +15, Key Note Address, Dr. Noeleen Heyzer, October 2009, Manila Philippines.

3 Key Note Address, Dr. Noeleen Heyzer.

4 Key Note Address, Dr. Noeleen Heyzer.

### Threats to women and girls' rights

Threats to women and girls human rights take place amidst tremendous uncertainties and multiple crises in the financial, food, ecological, consumption, health and reproduction spheres and these emergencies led to widespread economic displacements. As a result today the limited targets set for poverty eradication within the Millennium Development Goals are almost certain to be missed especially for the most vulnerable including women with disabilities and those in indigenous and marginalized communities. This dynamic is worsened by sub-regional economic integration processes, including free trade agreements, which are based on unsustainable production and consumption, wealth concentration and growing social gaps and a disconnect between the productive and reproductive spheres of society.

### The development model and market driven economies

The dominant development paradigm continues to be guided by market ideology that favors growth of capital through privatization, trade liberalization, and rolling back the responsibilities of the State, at the cost of human well being of the poor, particularly women. As a result, there is food insecurity and unemployment all of which have drastic impacts on the livelihood of the poor. Inequalities have increased even as economic growth is recorded in many countries of the region. These situations lead to protests which are often violently suppressed and lead to greater despair among the more marginalized and vulnerable, especially women and girls.

### The debt burden and the global financial crisis

The brunt of the debt burden in the region is borne by women. Loans taken on by states, under the guise of national development and progress are not utilized

for the benefit of the population much less women. Billions of dollars appropriated annually for loan repayments could greatly finance much needed basic social services to support women, children, the elderly and people with disabilities. However, corruption and badly negotiated agreements means the money does not "trickle" down to where it is most needed.

Due to the worsening economic situation and global financial crisis girls and young women are forced to set aside their education to enter the labor force. Furthermore, in many cases they are pushed into domestic work, the entertainment industry and the sex trade. The desperate economic and violent situations are driving increasing numbers of women and girls to find partners through the internet where they are "married" into domestic and sexual slavery. Consequently, women find themselves in foreign countries with little or no access to services or legal representation. More needs to be done to address the root causes of human trafficking in its various forms including migration created by economic inequalities which to date has not been addressed in programs, policy, and legislative areas.

### Climate change

Women and girls are disproportionately affected by the increasing frequency in the region of extreme climate instabilities and natural disasters which total nearly 50 percent more than the global average. This region has already witnessed the first relocation of entire communities due to rising sea levels and climate change and it is expected that small island states in the region will be the most affected in the near future. Natural disasters involve complex interactions of factors – climatic, social, political, economic, institutional and technological. Moreover, corporate-induced calamities are causing havoc in entire communities. Many of these man-made disasters are driven by large-scale quarry-

ing, mining, deforestation, construction of dams, increased pollution from the burning of fossil fuels, and conversion for commercial crop cultivation or urban enclaves, including proposed carbon reduction schemes.

### Aid and gender

Finally, most actors in development cooperation have shown inadequacy in making true gender equality commitments and money and resources have failed to match rhetoric. Implementation and accountability towards promoting women's rights and gender equality through mainstreaming efforts have been ad hoc, unpredictable, inconsistent and are vulnerable to hostile reaction. This inadequacy is linked to the lack of understanding of the diverse social, economic, cultural and political contexts that exists for women and the lack of strong national and international mechanisms to bring about the desired changes in the current status of women.

### Forging the future

For women and girls present at the Forum much needs to be done to continue making advances on behalf of women and girls. First and foremost they recognize the women's movement is crucial and must be strengthened to move this process forward. Moreover, the participants in the Forum prioritized the need for governments and the United Nations to address the effects of the concurrent crises on women. The needs went beyond advancing the Beijing Platform to including a call for sustainable development that places human well being at the core of policy making. The participants called for sub-regional economic integration processes and national development plans that rest on the principles and practices of ecological sustainability, food sovereignty, financial inclusion, universal social protection, economic solidarity and fair trade. ■

## CHINA: UNEVEN PROGRESS

Ling Zhao

Peace Women across the Globe-China Office

On the one hand, urban and rural women's living conditions, protection and development conditions have improved significantly in China in these fifteen years elapsed in the Beijing Conference, particularly with respect to urban women's political participation, employment, education, health care, marriage and family rights.

Public awareness of the need to promote the advancement of women and gender equality improved. State, local governments and NGOs are actively involved in programs such as skills training programs, expanding micro-credit and export of labor services to help rural women out of poverty in many areas.

From 1994 to 2002, the Chinese government paid a good deal of the total micro-credit to poor households under the provision that those loans were designed primarily for women. In 2003, the National Bureau published a Rural Poverty Monitoring Report integrating gender equality as an aspect of the project's impact assessment on poverty reduction and began to develop gender-disaggregated indicators. The social environment for women's development has improved in many areas.

On the other hand, China's rapid social and economic transformation together with the impact of global economic integration has strengthened the existence of a dual system based on an urban-rural dichotomy in which social development and in particular women's rights show unequal progress. In some remote rural areas, mountain areas and ethnic minority areas, the status of women has not made significant progress.

Internal migration is on the rise; rural women, specially the young, have flocked into urban areas to work in factories for low wages or are employed in the informal sector. Their living, working, and social protection conditions have hardly changed.

### Governmental initiatives on gender equality

The Chinese Central Government established the National Working Committee on Children and Women under the State Council to improve the status of women. In addition and following the mandates in the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, the Government developed a series of laws and polices to promote gender equality such as the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women.

Thirdly, the Government was amongst the few countries to acknowledge publicly that "promoting equality between the sexes is a basic state policy to achieve China's social development".

The Government also promulgated and executed Programs for the Development of Chinese Women (1995-2000, 2001-2010), and integrated these into the national economy and social development plans. Furthermore, there were several partnerships set up with local organizations and NGOs to promote gender equality.

### The case of internal women migrants

According to statistics, there are over 150 million rural migrants in the urban areas. The proportion of women in the formal labor force shifted from less than 1/3 to 40% in the last 30 years. In the most economically developed zone and the coastal areas of China, the proportion of migrant women workers, in general, accounts for 70% in the electronics, textile and light industries. There are no independent trade unions within the industrial sector.

Large segments of the internal female migrants' population are located in the informal sector mainly as domestic workers or sex workers. There is lack of statistics as to the amount of sex workers in China but their living conditions and social protection are far below other women workers in the informal sector.

Many labor NGOs have worked hard to promote the rights and interests of migrant women workers for years. But the local governments of the economically developed zone often prefer to support large business in order to secure company revenue.

Overall the advances made in increasing awareness of women's rights and improvements in the social environment for women's development are significant steps forward. However, rapid growth and rapid global economic integration have created a dichotomy between the rural and urban populations which requires immediate action and is compounded by the existing inequities for the status of women. ■

# A grim perspective for Burmese of women

B+15

Increased militarization and political oppression in Burma over the past fifteen years had disastrous effects on the status of women. The enactment of the 2008 Constitution includes significant measures that will further curtail women's rights and indicates that the 2010 elections will do little to improve women's status. The women of Burma face unthinkable violence, limited educational, economic, and political opportunities, as well as significant hardships when forced to work abroad.

## Burma Lawyer's Council<sup>1</sup>

The Beijing Conference took place in 1995, only five years after Burma's military regime – the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) held its last general elections. In 1990, Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of the National League for Democracy, won with an overwhelming majority of the vote. The SPDC refused to recognize the results of the election, imprisoned Suu Kyi under house arrest, and installed an especially harsh version of military rule that is notorious worldwide for its violent suppression of dissent and unrelenting attacks against ethnic minorities.

## Sexual violence and rape as a weapon of war

Against a political backdrop of oppression and violence, women's status in Burma is worsening. Several grassroots organizations along the Thai-Burma border are documenting the rampant human rights abuses committed by members of the military. The crimes of the military junta span a wide range of offenses including unlawful killings, forced disappearances, rape, forced labor, and forced relocation, among many others. Each of these crimes is harmful to women but crimes of gender-based violence have perhaps the most profound impact on the status of women in Burma.

Members of the SPDC commit crimes of sexual violence with shocking regularity. The SPDC uses rape as a weapon of war, especially in its attacks on ethnic groups in the eastern part of the country.<sup>2</sup> The regime increased its attacks on ethnic groups over the past fifteen years – and these attacks include the systematic use of sexual violence.<sup>3</sup> Many women were gang raped by members of the military, who sometimes torture and/or murder their victims.<sup>4</sup> Sexual violence is not a crime committed by a few random members of the military it is a part of the SPDC's concerted strategy to attack ethnic and oppo-

sition groups.<sup>5</sup> Those who commit such crimes are not brought to justice and impunity reigns in Burma.<sup>6</sup> Because the Burmese courts are not independent from the military government victims of gender-based violence and other crimes have no recourse in the Burmese legal system. The culture of impunity that protects perpetrators of sexual violence allows such crimes to continue unabated.

The SPDC's rampant sexual violence and lack of accountability has not gone unnoticed in the international community. The United Nations Secretary General recently acknowledged that the SPDC is in breach of its obligations under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1820. And this resolution was designed specifically to protect women from sexual violence in situations of conflict.<sup>7</sup> The Secretary General took note of the regime's widespread use of sexual violence against ethnic minority women in rural areas; the military's sexual harassment of unaccompanied women and girls; the legal system's inability or unwillingness to adjudicate crimes of sexual violence; and the pervasive impunity that shields perpetrators of gender-based violence from prosecution.

In addition to sexual violence, the SPDC's war crimes and crimes against humanity have disproportionately affected women. In one incident the SPDC burned 3500 villages in eastern Burma. The aftermath was compared by the Thailand Burma Border Consortium to the severe destruction which occurs in Darfur.<sup>8</sup> The massive burning of homes and food has generated large numbers of displaced people. Women are especially harmed through forced displacement from their homes and they become more vulnerable to trafficking and dangerous work.

## Effects of militarization on women

Burmese women face significant hurdles as a result not only of outright violence but of the culture of militarism. The SPDC prioritized military spending at the detriment of essential social services upon which many women rely. The SPDC spends up to 50 percent of its budget on the military – a shocking amount, especially

when the SPDC spends less than three percent of the budget on health care and even less on education.<sup>9</sup> In fact, the regime spends less than one dollar a year per person on health and education combined.<sup>10</sup> The establishment's denial of health rights resulted in the highest maternal mortality rate in the region. In addition the maternal mortality rate in Burma's conflict zones where the military is actively attacking ethnic groups is one of the highest in the world.<sup>11</sup>

Militarization brings with it a sense of hyper-masculinity<sup>12</sup> which creates a political culture that marginalizes women. The military has the power to shape gender roles in Burmese society and construct masculinity as an equivalent of the military's physical force. The visibility of the military, and the lack of women in it, reinforces the perception that women should take on submissive social roles.

The presence of the military is evident in every level of power, and in every part of the government administration.<sup>13</sup> Because of the intense militarization, men are seen as the active contributors to society and the main forces of change.<sup>14</sup> Women, on the other

1 The Burma Lawyers' Council (BLC) is a non-governmental organization based in Mae Sot, Thailand that advocates for the protection of the rule of law and an end to political oppression and human rights violations in Burma.

2 See, e.g., Shan Women's Action Network, *License to Rape* (May 2002).

3 *Ibid.*

4 U.S. Campaign for Burma, People, Politics, Poverty, <[uscampaignforburma.org/learn-about-burma/people-politics-poverty](http://uscampaignforburma.org/learn-about-burma/people-politics-poverty)> (last visited Dec. 8, 2009).

5 See Shan Women's Action Network, *supra* note 2.

6 *Ibid.*

7 United Nations Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1820, July 15, 2009, S/2009/362.

8 Thailand Burma Border Consortium, Press Release: "Rising Instability in Eastern Burma", Oct. 29, 2009, available at: <[www.tbcc.org/announcements/2009-10-29-media-release.pdf](http://www.tbcc.org/announcements/2009-10-29-media-release.pdf)>.

9 The SPDC spends 2.2 percent of its budget on health care, which is a lesser amount than any other country with the exception of Sierra Leone. The SPDC spends 0.3 percent of its budget on education. U.S. Campaign for Burma, People, Politics, Poverty, <[uscampaignforburma.org/learn-about-burma/people-politics-poverty](http://uscampaignforburma.org/learn-about-burma/people-politics-poverty)> (last visited Dec. 7, 2009).

10 Women's League of Burma, Position Paper: "Women Demand an Immediate End to War Crimes in Burma, Women's League of Burma" (2006), citing Asian Development Bank, *Outlook 2002: Economic Trends and Prospects in Developing Asia*.

11 The U.S. Campaign for Burma states that the maternal mortality rate in this country is "estimated at 230 deaths per 100,000 live births, the highest in the region. The maternal mortality rate in Burma's ethnic and conflict areas is even higher: at 1,200 deaths per 100,000 live births, this rate is among the highest in the world and compares most to the world's humanitarian disasters. Likewise, mortality rates in these conflict zones for children under five years old are among the worst in the world comparable to Sierra Leone and Angola." U.S. Campaign for Burma, *supra*.

12 Uta Klein, *The Contribution of the Military and Military Discourse to the Construction of Masculinity in Society*, <[www.eurowrc.org/13.institutions/3.coe/en-violence-coe/11.en-coe-oct99.htm](http://www.eurowrc.org/13.institutions/3.coe/en-violence-coe/11.en-coe-oct99.htm)> (last visited Dec. 9, 2009) (describing militarization of a society as a gendered process where defense and fighting is seen as the "national duty of men" and reproduction as that of women).

13 See Women's League of Burma, *In the Shadow of the Junta: CEDAW Shadow Report 1* (2008), available at: <[www.womenofburma.org/Report/IntheShadow-Junta-CEDAW2008.pdf](http://www.womenofburma.org/Report/IntheShadow-Junta-CEDAW2008.pdf)> (hereinafter CEDAW Shadow Report).

14 See Klein, *supra* note 13.

## EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES AND THEIR IMPACT ON WOMEN

The SPDC has been exploiting Burma's natural resources at an alarming rate. The military has conducted significant mining and logging in the past fifteen years, destroying access to basic resources and introducing new factors that have eroded women's livelihoods.

Mining, in particular, has gravely impacted women due to the private ownership of many small companies and a corresponding lack of safety and community preservation standards. Additionally, mining companies often make agreements with men in the community, further marginalizing women and preventing them from reaping any potential benefits of the profits.

Once companies begin mining, the livelihoods of women, as compared to men, are disproportionately affected in four main ways. First, farmland is seized illegally without compensation and the toxicity of mines creates "dead zones" where no produce will grow. Subsistence-based economies quickly become cash-based, and many women are forced to enter the sex industry in order to provide for their families. Moreover, women must travel further to gather resources, introducing a greater risk

of harassment and violence along the way. Second, women and children are exposed to fumes from sites that may result in chronic illness or impair physical and mental capacity. Third, employment opportunities at mines draw male labor (security personnel and migrant workers) that, in turn, increases levels of gender-based violence—particularly rape—as well as HIV/AIDS infection. Fourth, women often perform tasks such as transporting and treating minerals with chemicals such as mercury, cyanide, sulfur, and hydrochloric acid. These chemicals residues also harm water sources where women collect water for cooking and washing. As a result, women and their children are exposed to toxic chemicals which damage their physical and reproductive health.

Both mining and logging also pose substantial risk of death to male workers. When men are killed on the job, many widowed families are made economically and physically vulnerable. Finally, when an area is cleared of its natural resources, local populations are left disoriented and in limbo—unable to build a sustainable future or return to their traditional way of life. ■

hand, are excluded from the military and are thereby excluded from broader political life. The power of the Government is manifest in its military, sending the clear signal that national power rests in the hands of men. The military embodies what it most likely perceives as the ideal embodiment of masculinity: power over women and power over nation.

Another limitation on women's involvement in public life is rampant sexism—a reality enforced by militarization. Sexism forces many women to take on domestic duties instead of leadership roles. Harmful gender-based stereotypes are a natural product of militarization and are consistently reinforced by the SPDC in its official communications. The regime praises Burmese women for attributes such as modesty and obedience, reinforcing the perception of women as passive social actors.<sup>15</sup> The perpetuation of these gendered stereotypes coming from the highest levels of government makes women's participation in public life extremely difficult.

### The impact of poor governance and poverty on migrant women

The SPDC's chronic mismanagement of Burma's economy has kept over 90% of the population under the poverty line.<sup>16</sup> Extreme poverty and a lack of educational opportunities force many women into unsafe work, including the sex industry in neighboring Thailand. Women who are forced into the industry are susceptible to higher rates of HIV/AIDS infection

(and other health risks) and they have limited control over their reproductive choices.

Many Burmese women who are forced to migrate and work as undocumented migrant workers face sexual violence, labor rights violations, and severe economic hardship as a result of their undocumented status.<sup>17</sup> Women who are victims of gender-based violence are unlikely to report those crimes because they fear deportation.<sup>18</sup> Although women flee Burma to escape violence, persecution, and poverty, their safety is often hardly better in neighboring countries.<sup>19</sup> The plight of migrant workers is not the sole result of the global economic crisis or of global economic woes—it is also due to SPDC's violence and oppression and mismanagement of the economy.

### Burma's constitution: codifying impunity

Burma's 2008 Constitution is a dangerous example of the threat of militarization and political oppression on the future of women. This Constitution, approved in a referendum steeped in fraud and conducted in the disastrous aftermath of Cyclone Nargis, pro-

vides a glimpse of what women's rights will look like after the 2010 elections. The elections will enact the Constitution which includes several key provisions aimed at further deteriorating the status of women in Burma.

First, the Constitution reserves 25% of seats in the legislature as well as key ministerial positions to the all-male military, and the remaining seats will likely be filled by individuals (probably men) sympathetic to the current regime.<sup>20</sup> Because an over two-thirds vote is required to change the Constitution, the sizable military presence in the government will ensure that military rule persists after the election.<sup>21</sup> Second, the Constitution includes no mention of benchmarks for women's representation in government and even reserves some positions to men only.<sup>22</sup> Such a loophole provides the government with an easy excuse to further limit the participation of women in political life. Most importantly, the Constitution includes a provision that purports to provide amnesty to all members of the regime for all crimes.<sup>23</sup> The regime's attempt to codify its own impunity will leave women without recourse to challenge the myriad of violations of women's rights. Furthermore the Constitution leaves victims of sexual violence and other crimes with no avenue to justice.

### Grim hopes for the status of women

Burma now ranks 138th on the United Nations Development Program's Human Development Index and was recently ranked above only Afghanistan and Somalia in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index.<sup>24</sup> Violence, corruption, and utter disrespect for international law have become the hallmarks of the SPDC's rule for the past 15 years. Additionally the 2010 elections will most likely cement military rule. The solidification of hyper-militarization will entrench the current systems of patriarchy, militarization, and impunity. If the constitution implemented the prospects are grim for the status of Burmese women in the future. The 2008 Constitution indicates that the status of women after the 2010 elections will only worsen. The situation can only be abated by putting an end to the crimes committed by the SPDC and holding those responsible for violations of women's rights accountable. ■

20 See International Center for Transitional Justice, Impunity Prolonged: Burma and its 2008 Constitution 3-4 (2009), available at <[www.ictj.org/.../Burma/ICTJ\\_MMR\\_Impunity2008Constitution\\_pb2009.pdf](http://www.ictj.org/.../Burma/ICTJ_MMR_Impunity2008Constitution_pb2009.pdf)>.

21 *Id.*

22 The Constitution states, "The Union shall, upon specified qualifications being fulfilled, in appointing or assigning duties to civil service personnel, not discriminate for or against any citizen of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, based on race, birth, religion, and sex. However, nothing in this Section shall prevent appointment of men to the positions that are suitable for men only." Myanmar Constitution, Ch. 8, Art. 352 (2008).

23 Myanmar Constitution, Ch. 14, Art. 445 (2008).

24 United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Reports, Human Development Report 2009, Myanmar, <[hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/country\\_fact\\_sheets/cty\\_fs\\_MMR.html](http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_MMR.html)> (last visited Dec. 7, 2009); Transparency International, Corruption Perceptions Index 2009, <[www.transparency.org/policy\\_research/surveys\\_indices/cpi/2009/cpi\\_2009\\_table](http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2009/cpi_2009_table)> (last visited Dec. 7, 2009).

15 CEDAW Shadow Report, *supra* notes 14-20.

16 *Id.*

17 See Amnesty International, Thailand: The Plight of Burmese Migrant Workers (2005), available at: <[www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA39/001/2005](http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA39/001/2005)>.

18 Refugees International describes how women from Chin State who now live in India face serious harassment and violence but are afraid to report incidents to the police. India: Burmese Chin refugees experience sexual harassment, Dec. 4, 2009, <[www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/MUMA-7YF7ET?OpenDocument](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/MUMA-7YF7ET?OpenDocument)> (last visited Dec. 7, 2009).

19 See generally Burmese Women's Union, Caught Between Two Hells (2007).





# ◎ GENDER INDICATORS

GEI VALUES IN 2009 AND RECENT GEI TRENDS (2004-2009)								
Country	GEI 2009	Evolution (%) 2004-2009	Country	GEI 2009	Evolution (%) 2004-2009	Country	GEI 2009	Evolution (%) 2004-2009
Albania	55	-9.6	Georgia	62	-3.7	Panama	70	12.2
Algeria	53	13.3	Germany	78		Paraguay	67	14.2
Angola	60	-8.0	Ghana	58	-7.5	Peru	70	23.2
Argentina	72	24.2	Greece	65	5.1	Philippines	76	3.9
Armenia	58		Guatemala	51	10.4	Poland	70	-4.0
Australia	75	4.7	Guinea-Bissau	47	0.2	Portugal	73	5.6
Austria	71	1.2	Guyana	60	4.7	Qatar	48	-2.9
Azerbaijan	60	-2.7	Honduras	69	11.2	Romania	71	3.2
Bahamas	79	8.8	Hong Kong	75	5.7	Russian Federation	71	-1.7
Bahrain	46	-1.4	Hungary	70	1.3	Rwanda	84	18.5
Bangladesh	53	-2.2	Iceland	78	4.7	Samoa	49	
Barbados	76	2.7	India	41	-7.6	Sao Tome and Principe	49	
Belarus	66	5.0	Indonesia	55	-1.3	Saudi Arabia	43	2.6
Belgium	72	8.3	Iran	54	19.8	Senegal	55	-2.0
Belize	63	13.3	Ireland	69	9.2	Sierra Leone	45	5.7
Benin	42	-13.7	Israel	72	8.3	Singapore	63	0.8
Bolivia	66	12.3	Italy	64	4.7	Slovakia	69	-7.2
Bosnia and Herzegovina	61		Jamaica	61	-9.0	Slovenia	65	-7.5
Botswana	66	-6.5	Japan	59	0.1	Solomon Islands	47	
Brazil	68	8.7	Jordan	47	1.3	South Africa	75	11.2
Bulgaria	73	0.1	Kazakhstan	74	17.7	Spain	77	16.5
Burkina Faso	54	1.9	Kenya	59	-5.7	Sri Lanka	58	-5.2
Burundi	64	6.1	Korea, Rep.	53	-6.9	St Lucia	71	
Cambodia	62	0.8	Kuwait	49		St Vincent and Grenadines	60	
Cameroon	51	-6.8	Kyrgyzstan	70	10.0	Sudan	43	-8.7
Canada	74	-4.3	Lao, PDR	52		Suriname	56	-11.7
Cape Verde	54		Latvia	75	0.5	Swaziland	49	-3.8
Central African Republic	46	-5.1	Lebanon	47	1.2	Sweden	88	4.3
Chad	43		Lesotho	64	16.3	Switzerland	62	-1.9
Chile	62	5.4	Lithuania	76	1.0	Syria	54	16.1
China	68	8.7	Luxembourg	61	2.1	Tajikistan	52	-7.5
Colombia	75	11.2	Macedonia	67	7.7	Tanzania	72	
Congo, Rep.	45	1.0	Malaysia	58	-7.3	Thailand	70	0.6
Costa Rica	67	2.7	Maldives	61	-10.5	Timor-Leste	66	
Côte d'Ivoire	39	-2.6	Mali	53	-0.5	Togo	47	11.7
Croatia	75	9.0	Malta	58	24.0	Trinidad and Tobago	70	3.1
Cuba	70	7.2	Mauritania	51	6.0	Tunisia	50	-2.7
Cyprus	65	7.4	Mauritius	60	17.1	Turkey	46	-8.0
Czech Republic	68	-4.0	Mexico	61	3.6	Uganda	67	7.7
Denmark	79	-1.8	Moldova	74	1.7	Ukraine	69	0.0
Djibouti	47		Mongolia	70	8.4	United Arab Emirates	50	7.5
Dominican Republic	65	5.1	Morocco	45	-5.6	United Kingdom	74	5.2
Ecuador	72	25.0	Mozambique	64		United States of America	74	-4.1
Egypt	44	-11.2	Namibia	71	3.5	Uruguay	69	0.7
El Salvador	68	10.4	Nepal	51	18.9	Uzbekistan	57	-10.0
Equatorial Guinea	44	5.4	Netherlands	77	7.3	Vanuatu	54	
Eritrea	47	-22.5	New Zealand	78	2.6	Venezuela	68	10.3
Estonia	73	0.0	Nicaragua	52	-10.6	Viet Nam	74	11.7
Ethiopia	53	12.0	Niger	47	2.8	Yemen	30	5.1
Finland	84	6.1	Nigeria	44	-14.9	Zambia	56	-0.5
France	72	13.1	Norway	83	9.2	Zimbabwe	58	-2.8
Gabon	53	-1.3	Oman	46	10.1			
Gambia	50	-18.7	Pakistan	43	2.3			

# Reproductive health

## References

**CURRENT SITUATION**  
(latest available data)

- Better situation
- Above average
- Below average
- Worse situation

**RECENT EVOLUTION** (Between most recent and previous available data)

- ➔ Significant progress
- ➔ Slight progress
- || Stagnant
- ➔ Regression
- ➔ Major regression

Complete table at: [www.socialwatch.org/statistics2009](http://www.socialwatch.org/statistics2009)

Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) RECENT EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (Basic Capabilities Index value, 0-100)	WOMEN AGED 15-49 ATTENDED AT LEAST ONCE DURING PREGNANCY BY SKILLED HEALTH PERSONNEL (%)	BIRTHS ATTENDED BY SKILLED HEALTH PERSONNEL (%)	CONTRACEPTIVE USE AMONG CURRENTLY IN UNION WOMEN AGED 15-49 (%)	Value	
➔	Afghanistan (47)	52		14		33
➔	Albania (96)	81		100		91
➔	Algeria (96)	79		95		87
➔	Angola (58)			45		45
➔	Antigua and Barbuda (94)			100		100
➔	Argentina (98)			99		99
➔	Armenia (95)	93.2		98		96
	Australia (99)			100		100
➔	Azerbaijan (96)	70		97		51.1
	Bahamas (99)			99		99
	Bahrain (99)			99		99
➔	Bangladesh (56)	48.7		20		55.8
➔	Barbados (98)	89		100		95
➔	Belarus (100)			100		100
	Belgium (98)			99		99
➔	Belize (92)			91		34.3
	Benin (77)	88		74		17
➔	Bhutan (79)			51		35.4
➔	Bolivia (79)	79.1		60.8		70
➔	Bosnia and Herzegovina (98)	99		100		100
➔	Botswana (90)	99		99		99
➔	Brazil (90)			97		97
	Brunei Darussalam (99)			100		100
➔	Bulgaria (97)			99		99
➔	Burkina Faso (71)	72.8		54		63
➔	Burma/Myanmar (73)			68		68
➔	Burundi (61)	93		34		64
➔	Cambodia (66)	69.3		43.8		57
➔	Cameroon (77)	83.3		63		73
	Canada (99)			100		100
➔	Cape Verde (93)			89		89
➔	Central African Republic (65)			54		54
➔	Chad (44)	42.6		15		29
➔	Chile (99)			100		58.4
➔	China (95)			98		84.6
➔	Colombia (94)	93.5		96		95
➔	Comoros (79)			62		62
➔	Congo DR (68)			61		61
➔	Congo, Rep. (76)	86.8		83		20.6
	Cook Islands (98)			100		100
➔	Costa Rica (93)			94		94

**NOTE:**  
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**SOURCES:**  
Women aged 15-49 attended at least once during pregnancy: Global Health Atlas, WHO ([www.who.int/globalatlas](http://www.who.int/globalatlas)).  
Births attended by skilled health personnel: Reproductive Health Indicators Database, Department of Reproductive Health and Research, WHO ([www.who.int/reproductivehealth/](http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/)). Except for (+) Demographic and Health Surveys - STAT compiler ([www.measuredhs.com/accesssurveys/](http://www.measuredhs.com/accesssurveys/)).  
Contraceptive use among currently in union women aged 15-49: World Bank ([www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)).

Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) RECENT EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (Basic Capabilities Index value, 0-100)	WOMEN AGED 15-49 ATTENDED AT LEAST ONCE DURING PREGNANCY BY SKILLED HEALTH PERSONNEL (%)	BIRTHS ATTENDED BY SKILLED HEALTH PERSONNEL (%)	CONTRACEPTIVE USE AMONG CURRENTLY IN UNION WOMEN AGED 15-49 (%)	Value
→	Côte d'Ivoire (74)	84	57		71
→	Croatia (100)		100		100
→	Cuba (99)		100	77.1 →	89
=	Cyprus (100)		100		100
→	Czech Republic (99)		100		100
→	Djibouti (90)		93		93
→	Dominica (96)		99		99
→	Dominican Republic (87)	98.3	96	72.9 →	89
←	Ecuador (86)	56	80		68
→	Egypt (89)	71.3	74		73
→	El Salvador (80)		69		69
=	Equatorial Guinea (58)		63		63
→	Eritrea (60)	70.3	28		49
=	Estonia (99)		100		100
→	Ethiopia (53)	28	6		17
→	Fiji (93)		99		99
=	Finland (100)		100		100
→	France (99)		99		99
→	Gabon (82)	94	86		90
→	Gambia (73)	92	57		75
→	Georgia (96)	91	92		92
=	Germany (99)		100		100
→	Ghana (76)	91.9	50		71
→	Grenada (92)		100		100
→	Guatemala (68)	86	41		64
→	Guinea (68)	82.2	38		60
→	Guinea-Bissau (58)	89	39		64
=	Guyana (84)	88	94	34.2 ←	72
→	Haiti (48)	84.5	26		55
=	Honduras (82)	91.7	67	65	75
=	Hungary (99)		100		100
=	India (68)	65	47		56
→	Indonesia (85)	91.5	66	61.4 →	73
→	Iraq (88)		89		89
→	Iran (95)		97		97
=	Ireland (100)		100		100
→	Italy (100)		99		99
→	Jamaica (95)		97		97
→	Japan (99)		100		100
=	Jordan (99)	98.6	100	57.1 →	85
→	Kazakhstan (99)	82	100		91
→	Kenya (71)	88.1	42		65
→	Kiribati (89)		90		90
→	Korea, DPR (87)	98	97		98
→	Korea, Rep. (100)		100		100
→	Kuwait (100)		100		100
→	Kyrgyzstan (95)	88	98		93
=	Lao PDR (58)	44	19		32
=	Latvia (99)		100		100

**NOTE:**  
1. Evolution: Evolution of indicators obtained by re-scalating those values resulting from the relative rate of variation among the following ranks:  
Minor than -5: significant regression; Between -5 and -1: regression; Between -1 and 1: stagnant; Between 1 and 5: slight progress; Larger than 5: significant progress.  
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Births attended by skilled health personnel: Reproductive Health Indicators Database, Department of Reproductive Health and Research, WHO (www.who.int/reproductivehealth/). Except for (+) Demographic and Health Surveys - STAT compiler (www.rhesurveys.com/accesssurveys).  
Contraceptive use among currently in union women aged 15-49: World Bank (www.worldbank.org).

Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) RECENT EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (Basic Capabilities Index value, 0-100)	WOMEN AGED 15-49 ATTENDED AT LEAST ONCE DURING PREGNANCY BY SKILLED HEALTH PERSONNEL (%)	BIRTHS ATTENDED BY SKILLED HEALTH PERSONNEL (%)	CONTRACEPTIVE USE AMONG CURRENTLY IN UNION WOMEN AGED 15-49 (%)	Value			
→	Lebanon (96)		98		98			
→	Lesotho (72)	90.4		55		73		
→	Liberia (61)		51		11.4	→	31	
	Libya (99)		100				100	
	Lithuania (99)		100				100	
	Luxembourg (100)		100				100	
→	Macedonia (—)		98				98	
→	Madagascar (59)	79.9		45			62	
→	Malawi (62)	93.1		54			74	
	Malaysia (97)		100				100	
→	Maldives (91)	98		84			91	
	Mali (67)	53		41		8.2	→	34
	Malta (99)		100				100	
→	Marshall Islands (93)		95				95	
→	Mauritania (68)	63		53			58	
→	Mauritius (99)		99				99	
→	Mexico (95)		94				94	
→	Micronesia (89)		88				88	
→	Moldova (—)	98		100			99	
→	Mongolia (93)		99				99	
	Montenegro (94)		99				99	
→	Morocco (81)	67.8		63			65	
→	Mozambique (66)	84.5		48			66	
→	Namibia (89)	85		76		55.1	→	72
	Nauru (76)		100				100	
→	Nepal (58)	69.7		19			44	
→	Netherlands (100)		100				100	
	New Zealand (98)		95				95	
→	Nicaragua (70)	85		67		72.4	→	75
→	Niger (55)	46.1		18			32	
→	Nigeria (56)	61		35			48	
	Niue (98)		100				100	
→	Oman (98)		98				98	
→	Pakistan (71)		54		29.6	→	42	
→	Palau (99)		100				100	
	Panama (93)		91				91	
→	Papua New Guinea (62)		38				38	
→	Paraguay (95)		100				100	
→	Peru (88)	85		73		71.3	→	76
	Philippines (78)	87.6		60		50.6	→	66
	Poland (99)		100				100	
	Portugal (99)		100				100	
→	Qatar (95)	62		100			81	
→	Romania (96)	89		98			94	
→	Russia (99)	96		100			98	
→	Rwanda (53)	94.3		28			61	
→	Samoa (97)		100				100	
→	São Tomé and Príncipe (83)	91		81			86	
→	Saudi Arabia (95)		93				93	

**NOTE:**  
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Contraceptive use among currently in union women aged 15-49: World Bank (www.worldbank.org).

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→	Senegal (68)	87.4	52		70
→	Serbia (98)		99		99
→	Sierra Leone (57)	82	43		63
→	Singapore (92)		100		100
	Slovakia (99)		100		100
	Slovenia (99)		100		100
→	Solomon Islands (—)		43		43
→	Somalia (48)		33		33
→	South Africa (89)	89	92		91
←	Sri Lanka (96)		97	68	83
→	St Kitts and Nevis (95)		100		100
	St Lucia (98)		100		100
→	St Vincent and Grenadines (95)		100		100
→	Sudan (70)		49		49
→	Suriname (82)	91	71		81
→	Swaziland (80)		74	50.6	62
	Switzerland (97)		100		100
→	Syria (95)		93		93
	Tajikistan (89)	75	83	38.3	65
→	Tanzania (73)	94.3	46		70
→	Thailand (96)		97		97
→	Timor-Leste (56)		19	19.8	19
→	Togo (68)	78	62		70
→	Tonga (96)		99		99
→	Trinidad and Tobago (95)	96	98		97
→	Tunisia (95)		90		90
→	Turkey (92)	67	83		75
→	Turkmenistan (88)	87	100		94
	Tuvalu (89)		100		100
→	Uganda (59)	94.1	42		68
	Ukraine (99)	90	100	66.7	86
	United Arab Emirates (100)		100		100
→	United Kingdom (99)		99		99
→	United States of America (98)		100		100
→	Uruguay (98)		100		100
→	Uzbekistan (93)		100		100
→	Vanuatu (87)		92		92
→	Venezuela (94)		95		95
→	Vietnam (93)	70	88		79
→	Yemen (59)	34	20	27.7	27
→	Zambia (71)	93.3	43		68
→	Zimbabwe (77)	94.2	69		82

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Contraceptive use among currently in union women aged 15-49: World Bank (www.worldbank.org).

**DEFINITION OF INDICATORS:**

**Women aged 15-49 attended at least once during pregnancy by skilled health personnel (%):** Percentage of women aged 15-49 years attended at least once during pregnancy by skilled health personnel (doctors, nurses or midwives).

**Births attended by skilled health personnel (%):** Percentage of births attended by skilled health personnel (doctors, nurses or midwives).

**Contraceptive use among women currently in union aged 15-49 (%):** Percentage of women in union aged 15-49 years currently using contraception.

Methodological notes and guidelines at the end of the section.

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: [www.socialwatch.org/statistics2009](http://www.socialwatch.org/statistics2009)

# Gender and education

## References

**CURRENT SITUATION**  
(latest available data)

- Better situation
- Above average
- Below average
- Worse situation

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- ➔ Significant progress
- ➔ Slight progress
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- ➔ Regression
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Complete table at: [www.socialwatch.org/statistics2009](http://www.socialwatch.org/statistics2009)

Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) RECENT EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	COUNTRIES (IEG value)	LITERACY RATIO GAP (women/men, value 0-1)	NET PRIMARY ENROLMENT RATIO GAP (women/men, value 0-1)	NET SECONDARY ENROLMENT RATIO GAP (women/men, value 0-1)	GROSS TERTIARY ENROLMENT RATIO GAP (women/men, value 0-1)	Value
nd	Afghanistan (46)		0.36	0.58	0.35	0.26	39
←	Albania (96)	55	1.00 →	0.93 ←	0.92 ←	1.00	96
	Algeria (96)	53		0.90 ←	1.00	1.00	97
nd	Andorra (93)			0.89	0.98	1.00	96
←	Angola (60)	60	0.75		0.84	0.66 ←	75
nd	Anguilla (—)			0.97	1.00	1.00	99
nd	Antigua and Barbuda (—)			0.96	1.00		98
	Argentina (98)	72	1.00	0.95 ←	1.00	1.00	99
←	Armenia (99)	58	1.00	0.89 ←	0.99 ←	1.00	97
←	Aruba (—)		1.00	0.95 ←	1.00	1.00	99
←	Australia (100)	75		0.95 ←	0.91 ←	1.00	95
←	Austria (99)	71		0.94 ←	0.91 ←	1.00	95
←	Azerbaijan (96)	60	1.00	0.89 ←	0.91 ←	0.84 ←	91
→	Bahamas (99)	79		0.96 →	1.00 →		98
←	Bahrain (99)	46		0.95 ←	0.99 ←	1.00	98
→	Bangladesh (56)	53	0.90 →	1.00	1.00	0.54 ←	86
	Barbados (98)	76		0.97 ←	1.00 →	1.00	99
←	Belarus (100)	66		0.93 ←	0.97 ←	1.00	97
←	Belgium (98)	72		0.96 ←	0.92 ←	1.00	96
←	Belize (92)	63		0.95 ←	1.00	1.00	98
→	Benin (77)	42	0.56 →	0.80 →	0.55 →	0.25 →	54
nd	Bermuda (—)			0.86	1.00	1.00	95
nd	Bhutan (79)			0.98	0.93	0.44	78
→	Bolivia (79)	66		0.96 ←	0.94 ←		95
nd	Bosnia and Herzegovina (—)	61		0.88	0.98		93
→	Botswana (90)	66		0.97 ←	1.00	0.99 →	99
←	Brazil (90)	68		0.89 ←	1.00	1.00	96
←	Brunei Darussalam (99)			0.91	0.95 ←	1.00	96
←	Bulgaria (97)	73	1.00	0.94 ←	0.91 ←	1.00	96
→	Burkina Faso (71)	54	0.71 →	0.84 →	0.72 →	0.48	69
	Burundi (61)	64	0.92 ←	0.93 →	0.72	0.46 ←	76
→	Cambodia (66)	62	0.90	0.89	0.79 →	0.54 →	78
←	Cameroon (77)	51		0.85	0.78	0.78	80
←	Canada (98)	74		0.95 ←	0.93 ←	1.00	96
	Cape Verde (93)	54		0.94 ←	1.00	1.00	98
nd	Cayman Islands (—)		0.99	0.93	0.98	1.00	98
←	Central African Republic (65)	46	0.67 ←	0.72 →		0.29 ←	56
←	Chad (44)	43	0.57 ←	0.69 →	0.44 →	0.14	46
→	Chile (99)	62	1.00	0.92 ←	0.99 →	0.98 →	97
→	China (94)	68	0.99 →	0.87	0.91	0.92 →	92
←	Colombia (94)	75	1.01	0.95 ←	1.00	1.00	99
←	Comoros (79)					0.76 ←	76
←	Congo, DR (75)		0.81 ←	0.81 ←	0.53 ←	0.35	62
→	Congo, Rep. (76)	45		0.92	0.85	0.19 →	65
←	Cook Islands (—)			0.88 ←	1.00		94
←	Costa Rica (93)	67	1.01	0.94 ←	0.99	1.00	98

SOURCE:  
UNESCO Website Database ([www.uis.unesco.org](http://www.uis.unesco.org)), 2009.

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: [www.socialwatch.org/statistics2009](http://www.socialwatch.org/statistics2009)



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→	Côte d'Ivoire (74)	39	0.74 ←	0.79 →	0.55 →	0.50 →	64
	Croatia (100)	75	1.00		0.99 ←		99
←	Cuba (99)	70	1.00	0.92 ←	0.94 ←	1.00	97
←	Cyprus (100)	65	1.00	0.95 ←	0.97 ←	1.00	98
←	Czech Republic (99)	68		0.94 ←	0.96 ←	1.00	97
←	Denmark (100)	79		0.95	0.98 ←	1.00	98
←	Djibouti (90)	47		0.87 →	0.69	0.68 ←	74
nd	Dominica (96)			0.94	1.00		97
←	Dominican Republic (87)	65	1.02	0.90 ←	1.00	1.00	98
←	Ecuador (86)	72	1.00 →	0.96 ←	0.98 ←	1.00	98
	Egypt (89)	44	0.93 →	0.91 ←	0.90 ←		91
	El Salvador (80)	68	1.01 →	0.96	1.00 →	1.00	99
→	Equatorial Guinea (58)	44	1.00 →	0.95 →	0.57 →	0.43 ←	74
←	Eritrea (60)	47	0.81 →	0.82 ←	0.71 ←	0.15	62
←	Estonia (99)	73	1.00	0.93 ←	0.97 ←	1.00	98
←	Ethiopia (53)	53	0.72 ←	0.87 →	0.67 ←	0.34 ←	65
←	Fiji (93)			0.92 ←	1.00	1.00	97
←	Finland (100)	84		0.96 ←	1.00	1.00	99
←	France (99)	72		0.94 ←	0.96 ←	1.00	97
←	Gabon (82)	53	0.97	0.49 ←	0.86		78
←	Gambia (73)	50		1.00 →	0.94 →	0.24	73
←	Georgia (96)	62		0.89 ←	0.95 ←	1.00 →	95
←	Germany (99)	78		0.95	0.93 ←		94
	Ghana (76)	58	0.86 ←	0.94	0.85 ←	0.52 →	79
nd	Gibraltar (—)			0.92	0.96		94
←	Greece (99)	65	1.00	0.95 ←	0.89 ←	1.00	96
nd	Grenada (92)			0.95	0.96		96
→	Guatemala (68)	51	0.91 →	0.92 ←	0.92 ←	1.00	94
←	Guinea (68)		0.57	0.83 →	0.55 →	0.27	55
←	Guinea-Bissau (60)	47		0.67	0.55	0.19	47
←	Guyana (84)	60		0.95	0.95 ←	1.00	97
	Honduras (82)	69	1.03	0.96 ←	1.00	1.00	99
←	Hong Kong (—)	75		0.92	0.95 ←	1.00	96
←	Hungary (99)	70		0.93 ←	0.95 ←	1.00	96
←	Iceland (98)	78		0.96 ←	1.00	1.00	99
→	India (68)	41	0.80 ←	0.87	0.76	0.66 →	78
→	Indonesia (85)	55	0.99	0.93 ←	0.97 →	0.98 →	97
	Iran (97)	54	0.99 →	1.00 →	0.89 ←	1.00	97
→	Iraq (88)		0.91 →	0.80	0.64 ←	0.57 →	73
←	Ireland (100)	69		0.94	1.00	1.00	98
←	Israel (100)	72		0.96 ←	0.95 ←	1.00	97
←	Italy (100)	64	1.00	0.93 ←	0.94 ←	1.00	97
	Jamaica (94)	61	1.10	0.96 ←	1.00	1.00	99
←	Japan (100)	59		0.95	0.95 ←	0.84 ←	92
←	Jordan (99)	47	1.00	0.97	0.98 ←	1.00	99
←	Kazakhstan (99)	74	1.00	0.95 ←	0.94 ←	1.00	97
←	Kenya (71)	59	1.01 →	0.97 ←	0.87 ←	0.57 ←	85
nd	Kiribati (89)			0.98	1.00		99
←	Korea, Rep. (100)	53		0.91 ←	0.88 ←	0.61 →	80
←	Kuwait (100)	49	1.00	0.95	0.96 ←	1.00	98
	Kyrgyzstan (98)	70	1.00	0.97	0.98	1.00	99
→	Laos (58)	52	0.88 →	0.86 ←	0.77 ←	0.71 →	81
←	Latvia (99)	75	1.00	0.92 ←	0.97 ←	1.00	97
	Lebanon (96)	47	1.01 →	0.94 ←	1.00	1.00	98
	Lesotho (72)	64		0.98 ←	1.00	1.00	99
→	Liberia (65)			0.88	0.71 →	0.75 →	78
→	Libya (99)			0.91	1.00	1.00 →	97

SOURCE:  
UNESCO Website Database (www.unesco.org), 2009.

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at:  
www.socialwatch.org/statistics2009

Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) RECENT EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES	COUNTRIES	LITERACY RATIO GAP (women/men, value 0-1)		NET PRIMARY ENROLMENT RATIO GAP (women/men, value 0-1)		NET SECONDARY ENROLMENT RATIO GAP (women/men, value 0-1)		GROSS TERTIARY ENROLMENT RATIO GAP (women/men, value 0-1)		Value
	(BCI value, 0-100)	(IEG value)									
nd	Liechtenstein (—)				1.00		0.85		0.47		77
←	Lithuania (99)	76	1.00		0.94	←	0.96	←	1.00		97
←	Luxembourg (100)	61			0.95	←	0.99		1.00		98
	Macao (—)		1.00	→	0.88	←	0.97	←	0.95	→	95
←	Macedonia (—)	67	0.99		0.93	←	0.92	←	1.00		96
←	Madagascar (59)		0.94	→	0.97	←	0.95	←	0.89	←	94
←	Malawi (62)		0.86	→	1.00		1.00	→	0.51		84
←	Malaysia (97)	58	1.00		0.94	←	1.00		1.00		99
←	Maldives (91)	61	1.00		0.92	←	1.00		1.00		98
→	Mali (67)	53	0.65	→	0.80	→	0.64		0.53		65
←	Malta (99)	58	1.02		0.92		0.94		1.00		97
nd	Marshall Islands (91)				0.92		0.97		1.00		96
→	Mauritania (68)	51	0.82	→	1.00	→	0.84	→	0.34	→	75
←	Mauritius (99)	60	1.02		0.97	←	0.97	←	1.00		98
	Mexico (95)	61	1.00		0.95	←	1.00		1.00	→	99
nd	Micronesia (—)				0.98		0.97				97
←	Moldova (—)	74			0.94	←	1.00		1.00		98
nd	Monaco (—)				0.90		0.92				91
	Mongolia (93)	70	1.01		0.98	←	1.00		1.00		99
nd	Montserrat (92)				0.97		0.87				92
	Morocco (81)	45	0.75	←	0.87	←	0.84		0.91	→	84
←	Mozambique (66)	64	0.61	←	0.87	→	0.73	→	0.50		68
	Myanmar (73)		0.98	←	0.98		1.00	→	1.00		99
←	Namibia (89)	71	1.03		0.98	←	1.00		0.88	←	97
←	Nauru (76)				0.94	←	1.00				97
→	Nepal (58)	51	0.75	→	0.96	→	0.88		0.38	→	74
←	Netherlands (100)	77			0.93	←	0.94	←	1.00		96
←	Netherlands Antilles (—)		1.00		0.97	→	1.00		0.42	←	85
←	New Zealand (97)	78			0.95	←	0.97	←	1.00		97
←	Nicaragua (70)	52	1.04		0.94	←	1.00		1.00		99
←	Niger (55)	47	0.44		0.71	→	0.61	←	0.40	←	54
←	Nigeria (66)	44	0.77	←	0.83		0.79		0.69		77
nd	Niue (94)				1.00		0.92				96
←	Norway (100)	83			0.95	←	0.94	←	1.00		96
←	Oman (98)	46	0.99	→	0.96	←	0.92	←	1.00		97
→	Pakistan (71)	43	0.74	→	0.77	→	0.72		0.80		76
←	Palau (96)				0.92	←	0.98	←	1.00		97
←	Panama (93)	70	0.99		0.93	←	1.00		1.00		98
→	Papua New Guinea (61)		0.93	→	0.80						86
←	Paraguay (95)	67	0.97	←	0.94	←	0.99		1.00		98
→	Peru (88)	70	0.99	→	0.96		1.00	→	1.00		99
←	Philippines (78)	76	1.03		0.94	←	1.00		1.00		99
←	Poland (99)	70			0.94	←	0.94	←	1.00		96
←	Portugal (99)	73	1.00		0.90		1.00		1.00		98
←	Qatar (95)	48	0.99		0.95	←	0.98	←	1.00		98
←	Romania (98)	71	1.00		0.94	←	0.95	←	1.00		97
←	Russia (100)	71	1.00		0.95		0.94		1.00		97
→	Rwanda (53)	84	0.98	→	1.00		0.91		0.64	→	88
←	Samoa (97)	49	0.99		0.92	←	1.00		0.80	←	93
nd	San Marino (—)				0.91		0.95		1.00		95
nd	Sao Tomé and Príncipe (83)	49	0.99		0.96		1.00				98
	Saudi Arabia (96)	43	0.98	→	0.95	→	0.92	←	1.00		96
←	Senegal (68)	55	0.77	→	0.98	→	0.76		0.55		76
nd	Seychelles (99)		1.00		0.97		1.00				99
→	Sierra Leone (59)	45	0.63		0.91		0.69	←	0.40	→	66
←	Singapore (100)	63	1.00		0.93		0.93		0.94		95
←	Slovakia (99)	69			0.95	←	0.96	←	1.00		97

SOURCE:  
UNESCO Website Database (www.unesco.org), 2009.

For more detailed information on the reference  
years of the data see complete tables at:  
www.socialwatch.org/statistics2009

Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) RECENT EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	COUNTRIES (IEG value)	LITERACY RATIO GAP (women/men, value 0-1)	NET PRIMARY ENROLMENT RATIO GAP (women/men, value 0-1)	NET SECONDARY ENROLMENT RATIO GAP (women/men, value 0-1)	GROSS TERTIARY ENROLMENT RATIO GAP (women/men, value 0-1)	Value				
←	Slovenia (99)	65	1.00		0.94	←	0.94	←	0.39	←	82
nd	Solomon Islands (—)	47			0.88		0.77				82
nd	Somalia (—)				0.54						54
	South Africa (89)	75	1.00		0.95	←	1.00		1.00		99
←	Spain (100)	77	1.00		0.94	←	1.00		1.00		98
←	Sri Lanka (96)	58	1.01		0.96	←	0.98				98
nd	St Kitts and Nevis (95)				0.98		0.98				98
→	St Lucia (98)	71			0.95	←	1.00		1.00	→	98
nd	St Vincent and Grenadines (95)	60			0.93		1.00				97
←	Sudan (70)	43	0.84	←	0.83		0.90		0.89	←	86
	Suriname (82)	56	0.98		0.92	←	1.00		1.00		97
	Swaziland (80)	49	1.03		0.92	←	0.89	←	0.99	→	95
←	Sweden (100)	88			0.95	←	0.94	←	1.00		96
	Switzerland (99)	62			0.94	←	0.90	←	0.91	→	92
→	Syria (95)	54	0.95	→	0.92	←	0.93	→			93
→	Tajikistan (89)	52	1.00		0.93		0.82	←	0.38	→	78
←	Tanzania (73)	72	0.94	←	0.99		0.81	←	0.48		81
	Thailand (94)	70	1.00		0.94	←	1.00		1.00		98
nd	Timor-Leste (53)	66			0.90		0.95		1.00		95
→	Togo (68)	47	0.76	→	0.87	→	0.53	→			72
nd	Tokelau (—)				1.00		0.82				91
←	Tonga (96)		1.00		0.89	←	0.94	←	1.00		96
←	Trinidad and Tobago (95)	70			0.94	←	1.00		1.00		98
	Tunisia (95)	50	0.96	→	0.91	←	1.00		1.00	→	97
→	Turkey (92)	46	0.96	→	0.91		0.80	→	0.74		85
nd	Turkmenistan (—)		1.00								100
nd	Turks and Caicos Islands (—)				1.00		0.92				96
←	Tuvalu (89)				0.92	←	0.86				89
→	Uganda (59)	67	0.89	→	0.99	→	0.82	→	0.62	→	83
←	Ukraine (98)	69	1.00		0.95	←	0.95		1.00		97
←	United Arab Emirates (100)	50	1.04		0.94	←	0.95	←	1.00		97
←	United Kingdom (99)	74			0.96	←	0.97	←	1.00		98
←	United States of America (98)	74			0.95	←	0.96	←	1.00		97
←	Uruguay (98)	69	1.01		0.93	←	0.95	←	1.00		97
←	Uzbekistan (—)	57	1.00		0.94	←	0.95		0.69		90
←	Vanuatu (87)	54			0.91	←	0.81	←	0.57		76
←	Venezuela (93)	68	1.01		0.93	←	1.00		1.00		98
→	Viet Nam (93)	74	0.99		0.92	←	0.98		0.97	→	97
nd	Virgin Islands (UK) (—)				0.95		1.00		1.00		98
	West Bank and Gaza (—)		1.00		0.96	←	1.00		1.00	→	99
→	Yemen (59)	30	0.43	←	0.71	→	0.47	→	0.35	→	49
←	Zambia (71)	56	0.85	←	0.96	←	0.88	→	0.46	←	79
→	Zimbabwe (77)	58	0.98	→	0.98	←	0.93		0.64	→	88

SOURCE: UNESCO Website Database (www.uis.unesco.org), 2009. For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2009

**NOTE:**

1. **Evolution:** Evolution of indicators obtained by re-escalating those values resulting from the relative rate of variation among the following ranks:  
*Minor than -5: significant regression; Between -5 and -1: regression; Between -1 and 1: stagnant; Between 1 and 5: slight progress; Larger than 5: significant progress.*

This rate is obtained from the following operation:  
 $(2009 \text{ value} - 2008 \text{ value} / 2008 \text{ value}) * 100$

2. **Value reached by the index:** The value results from adding the values calculated for each dimension and dividing the result by the total number of dimensions presenting data.

3. **Stagnant Evolution:** In those indicators showing stagnant evolution in all their values, said evolution responds to lack of updating, being reproduced those values registered in 2008.

**DEFINITION OF INDICATORS:**

**Literacy ratio gap (women/men):**  
Ratio of female literacy ratio (15-24 years old) to male literacy ratio (15-24 years old).

**Net primary enrolment ratio gap (women/men):**  
Ratio of female net primary enrolment ratio to male net primary enrolment ratio.

**Net secondary enrolment ratio gap (women/men):**  
Ratio of female net secondary enrolment ratio to male net secondary enrolment ratio.

**Gross tertiary enrolment ratio gap (women/men):**  
Ratio of female gross tertiary enrolment ratio to male gross tertiary enrolment ratio.

Methodological notes and guidelines at the end of the section.

# Gender and empowerment

## References

**CURRENT SITUATION**  
(latest available data)

- Better situation
- Above average
- Below average
- Worse situation

**RECENT EVOLUTION** (Between most recent and previous available data)

- Significant progress
- Slight progress
- = Stagnant
- ← Regression
- ← Major regression

Complete table at: [www.socialwatch.org/statistics2009](http://www.socialwatch.org/statistics2009)

Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) RECENT EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	COUNTRIES (IEG value)	FEMALE PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL WORKERS GAP (women/men, value 0-1)	FEMALE LEGISLATORS, SENIOR OFFICIALS AND MANAGERS GAP (women/men, value 0-1)	SEATS IN PARLIAMENT HELD BY WOMEN GAP (women/men, value 0-1)	WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS IN GOVERNMENT AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL GAP (women/men, value 0-1)	Value
→	Afghanistan (46)				0.38		38
←	Albania (96)	55			0.08	→	7
→	Algeria (96)	53	0.47		0.08	→	22
→	Andorra (93)				0.47	→	47
→	Angola (60)	60			0.59	→	33
→	Antigua and Barbuda (—)		1.00	0.82	0.12	→	53
→	Argentina (98)	72	1.00	0.49	0.67	→	56
→	Armenia (99)	58			0.09	→	5
→	Australia (100)	75	1.00	→	0.59	→	55
→	Austria (99)	71	0.96	→	0.37	←	57
→	Azerbaijan (96)	60			0.13	→	15
→	Bahamas (99)	79	1.00	→	0.85	→	59
→	Bahrain (99)	46			0.03	→	6
→	Bangladesh (56)	53	0.14	←	0.30	→	19
→	Barbados (98)	76	1.00	→	0.75	→	57
→	Belarus (100)	66			0.47	→	29
→	Belgium (98)	72	0.96	←	0.47	→	56
→	Belize (92)	63	1.00	→	0.69	→	44
→	Benin (77)	42			0.12	→	18
→	Bhutan (79)				0.09	←	9
←	Bolivia (79)	66	0.67	→	0.56	→	38
=	Bosnia and Herzegovina (—)	61			0.14	←	13
→	Botswana (90)	66	1.00	→	0.49	←	50
→	Brazil (90)	68	1.00	→	0.52	→	44
→	Brunei Darussalam (99)		0.79		0.35	→	41
→	Bulgaria (97)	73	1.00	0.52	0.28	←	53
→	Burkina Faso (71)	54			0.18	→	18
→	Burundi (61)	64			0.44	→	28
←	Cambodia (66)	62	0.49	→	0.19	→	23
→	Cameroon (77)	51			0.16	→	14
←	Canada (98)	74	1.00	→	0.56	→	54
→	Cape Verde (93)	54			0.22	→	23
→	Central African Republic (65)	46			0.12	→	11
→	Chad (44)	43			0.05	→	9
→	Chile (99)	62	1.00	→	0.33	→	43
→	China (94)	68	1.00	0.20	0.27	←	39
→	Colombia (94)	75	1.00	→	0.61	→	56
←	Comoros (79)				0.03		3
nd	Congo, DR (75)					0.14	14
→	Congo, Rep. (76)	45			0.08	→	13
←	Costa Rica (93)	67	0.67	→	0.33	→	48
→	Côte d'Ivoire (74)	39			0.10	→	15
→	Croatia (100)	75	1.00	→	0.32	→	56

**SOURCES:**  
UNESCO Website Database ([www.uis.unesco.org](http://www.uis.unesco.org)), 2009.  
IPU Database, 2009. ([www.ipu.org](http://www.ipu.org))

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Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) RECENT EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	COUNTRIES (IEG value)	FEMALE PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL WORKERS GAP (women/men, value 0-1)	FEMALE LEGISLATORS, SENIOR OFFICIALS AND MANAGERS GAP (women/men, value 0-1)	SEATS IN PARLIAMENT HELD BY WOMEN GAP (women/men, value 0-1)	WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS IN GOVERNMENT AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL GAP (women/men, value 0-1)	Value
→	Cuba (99)	70	1.00		0.76 →	0.19 →	62
→	Cyprus (100)	65	0.82 →	0.18 ←	0.17 →	0.00 ←	29
	Czech Republic (99)	68	1.00	0.43 →	0.18 ←	0.12 ←	43
←	Denmark (100)	79	1.00	0.33 →	0.61	0.50 ←	61
→	Djibouti (90)	47			0.16 →	0.06 →	11
→	Dominica (96)		1.00	0.92	0.23	0.00 ←	54
→	Dominican Republic (87)	65	1.00 →	0.47 →	0.25 →	0.17 →	47
→	Ecuador (86)	72	0.92 →	0.54 →		0.17 ←	54
→	Egypt (89)	44	0.43 →	0.10 ←	0.02 ←	0.06 →	15
→	El Salvador (80)	68	0.82 ←	0.49	0.23 →	0.55 →	52
→	Equatorial Guinea (58)	44			0.11 →	0.05 →	8
→	Eritrea (60)	47			0.28	0.21 →	25
→	Estonia (99)	73	1.00	0.59 →	0.26 →	0.18 →	51
→	Ethiopia (53)	53	0.43	0.25	0.28 →	0.06 →	26
→	Fiji (93)					0.10 ←	10
→	Finland (100)	84	1.00	0.43 →	0.71 →	0.89 →	76
→	France (99)	72	0.89	0.59	0.22 →	0.21 →	48
→	Gabon (82)	53			0.20 →	0.13 →	17
←	Gambia (73)	50			0.10 ←	0.25 ←	18
→	Georgia (96)	62	1.00	0.35 →	0.06 ←	0.29 →	43
→	Germany (99)	78	1.00	0.59 →	0.47 →	0.86 →	73
→	Ghana (76)	58			0.09 ←	0.13 →	11
→	Greece (99)	65	0.96 →	0.35 →	0.17 →	0.06 →	39
→	Grenada (92)				0.15 ←	0.67 →	41
→	Guatemala (68)	51			0.14 →	0.33 →	23
→	Guinea (68)					0.18 →	18
→	Guinea-Bissau (60)	47			0.11 →	0.60 →	36
→	Guyana (84)	60			0.43 →	0.29 →	36
→	Haiti (—)				0.04 →	0.33 →	19
→	Honduras (82)	69	1.00	0.69 →	0.31 →	0.17 →	54
→	Hong Kong (—)	75	0.67 →	0.37 →	0.83		62
→	Hungary (99)	70	1.00	0.54 →	0.12 →	0.13 →	45
→	Iceland (98)	78	1.00	0.37 ←	0.46 →	0.38 →	55
←	India (68)	41			0.12 →	0.04	8
→	Indonesia (85)	55			0.20 →	0.12 →	16
→	Iran (97)	54	0.52	0.19	0.04 →	0.07 →	21
→	Iraq (88)				0.34 →		34
→	Ireland (100)	69	1.00 →	0.45 →	0.15 →	0.27	47
→	Israel (100)	72	1.00	0.35 ←	0.21 →	0.20 →	44
→	Italy (100)	64	0.85 →	0.47 →	0.27 →	0.09 ←	42
→	Jamaica (94)	61			0.15 →	0.21 →	18
→	Japan (100)	59	0.85 →	0.11 →	0.10 →	0.14 →	30
→	Jordan (99)	47			0.07 →	0.12 →	9
→	Kazakhstan (99)	74	1.00	0.61	0.19 →	0.21 →	50
→	Kenya (71)	59			0.11 →	0.11 →	11
←	Kiribati (89)				0.04 ←		4
←	Korea DR (—)				0.18 ←		18
→	Korea, Rep. (100)	53	0.64 →	0.09 →	0.16 →	0.06	24
→	Kuwait (100)	49			0.08 →	0.00 ←	4
→	Kyrgyzstan (98)	70	1.00	0.33	0.34 →	0.14 →	46
→	Laos (58)	52			0.34 →	0.00 ←	17
→	Latvia (99)	75	1.00	0.72 →	0.25 ←	0.31 →	57
→	Lebanon (96)	47			0.05 →	0.07 →	6
→	Lesotho (72)	64			0.33 →	0.39 →	36

SOURCES:  
UNESCO Website Database (www.uis.unesco.org), 2009.  
IPU Database, 2009. (www.ipu.org)

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socdevwatch.org/statistics2009

Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) RECENT EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	COUNTRIES (IEG value)	FEMALE PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL WORKERS GAP (women/men, value 0-1)		FEMALE LEGISLATORS, SENIOR OFFICIALS AND MANAGERS GAP (women/men, value 0-1)		SEATS IN PARLIAMENT HELD BY WOMEN GAP (women/men, value 0-1)		WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS IN GOVERNMENT AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL GAP (women/men, value 0-1)		Value
→	Liberia (65)						0.14	→			14
→	Libya (99)						0.08				8
→	Liechtenstein (—)						0.32	→			32
→	Lithuania (99)	76	1.00		0.75	←	0.22	→	0.18	→	54
→	Luxembourg (100)	61					0.30	→	0.17	←	24
→	Macedonia (—)	67	1.00		0.41		0.39	→	0.20	→	50
←	Madagascar (59)								0.06	←	6
→	Malawi (62)								0.17	→	17
←	Malaysia (97)	58	0.67	←	0.30	→	0.12	→	0.10	←	30
→	Maldives (91)	61	0.67		0.18	→	0.07	→	0.13	→	26
←	Mali (67)	53					0.11	→	0.23	←	17
→	Malta (99)	58	0.61		0.25		0.10	→	0.18	→	29
→	Marshall Islands (91)						0.03	→			3
→	Mauritania (68)	51					0.28		0.10	→	19
→	Mauritius (99)	60	0.75		0.33		0.21	→	0.09	→	35
→	Mexico (95)	61	0.72	→	0.41	→	0.30		0.10	→	38
←	Micronesia (—)						0.00	←			0
→	Moldova (—)	74	1.00		0.64	→	0.31	→	0.12	→	52
→	Monaco (—)						0.33	→			33
→	Mongolia (93)	70	1.00		1.00		0.04	←	0.06	→	53
nd	Montenegro (—)						0.07				7
→	Morocco (81)	45	0.54		0.14		0.12	→	0.06	→	21
→	Mozambique (66)	64					0.53	→	0.15	→	34
→	Namibia (89)	71	1.00		0.43		0.37	→	0.23	→	51
←	Nauru (76)						0.00	←			0
→	Nepal (58)	51	0.23		0.09		0.50	→	0.08	→	22
→	Netherlands (100)	77	1.00	→	0.35		0.70	→	0.56	→	65
→	New Zealand (97)	78	1.00		0.56	←	0.51	→	0.30	→	59
→	Nicaragua (70)	52					0.23	←	0.17	→	20
→	Niger (55)	47					0.14	→	0.30	→	22
→	Nigeria (66)	44					0.08	→	0.11	→	9
→	Norway (100)	83	1.00	→	0.43	→	0.56		0.80	→	70
→	Oman (98)	46	0.49		0.10		0.00		0.11	→	18
←	Pakistan (71)	43	0.35		0.02	←	0.29	→	0.06	←	18
←	Palau (96)						0.00	←			0
→	Panama (93)	70	1.00	→	0.75	→	0.09	←	0.17	→	50
→	Papua New Guinea (61)						0.01	←			1
→	Paraguay (95)	67	1.00		0.30		0.14	→	0.45	→	47
→	Peru (88)	70	0.85	→	0.52	→	0.38	→	0.13	→	47
→	Philippines (78)	76	1.00		1.00		0.26	→	0.33	→	65
←	Poland (99)	70	1.00		0.49	→	0.25	→	0.06	←	45
→	Portugal (99)	73	1.00		0.52	→	0.39	→	0.20	→	53
→	Qatar (95)	48	0.32		0.09		0.00		0.08	→	12
→	Romania (98)	71	1.00		0.41		0.13	→	0.14	→	42
→	Russia (100)	71	1.00		0.64	→	0.16	→	0.00	←	45
→	Rwanda (53)	84					1.00	→	0.56	→	78
→	Samoa (97)	49					0.09	→	0.08	→	9
→	San Marino (—)				0.22		0.18	←			20
→	Sao Tomé and Príncipe (83)	49					0.08	←	0.17	→	12
→	Saudi Arabia (96)	43	0.06		0.45		0.00		0.00	←	13
→	Senegal (68)	55					0.28	→	0.26	→	27
nd	Serbia (—)						0.28				28
←	Seychelles (99)						0.31	←	0.14	←	23
→	Sierra Leone (59)	45					0.15	←	0.15	→	15

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Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) RECENT EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	COUNTRIES (IEG value)	FEMALE PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL WORKERS GAP (women/men, value 0-1)	FEMALE LEGISLATORS, SENIOR OFFICIALS AND MANAGERS GAP (women/men, value 0-1)	SEATS IN PARLIAMENT HELD BY WOMEN GAP (women/men, value 0-1)	WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS IN GOVERNMENT AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL GAP (women/men, value 0-1)	Value
→	Singapore (100)	63	0.79 →	0.35 →	0.32 →	0.00 ←	37
←	Slovakia (99)	69	1.00 =	0.45 =	0.24 →	0.00 ←	42
→	Slovenia (99)	65	1.00 =	0.49 →	0.15 →	0.07 →	43
←	Solomon Islands (—)	47			0.00 ←	0.00 ←	0
→	Somalia (—)				0.06		6
→	South Africa (89)	75			0.77 →	0.71	74
→	Spain (100)	77	0.92 →	0.47 =	0.57 →	1.00 →	74
→	Sri Lanka (96)	58	0.85 ←	0.27 →	0.06 →	0.11 ←	32
←	St Kitts and Nevis (95)				0.07 ←	0.00 ←	3
→	St Lucia (98)	71	1.00	1.00	0.12 →	0.09 ←	55
→	St Vincent and Grenadines (95)	60			0.22 ←	0.25 →	24
→	Sudan (70)	43			0.22 →	0.03 →	12
←	Suriname (82)	56			0.34 →	0.13 →	24
→	Swaziland (80)	49			0.16 →	0.15 →	16
→	Sweden (100)	88	1.00 →	0.43 =	0.89 →	1.00 →	83
←	Switzerland (99)	62	0.28 ←	0.09 ←	0.40 →	0.17 ←	23
→	Syria (95)	54	0.67		0.14 →	0.07 ←	29
→	Tajikistan (89)	52			0.21 →	0.03 ←	12
→	Tanzania (73)	72	0.47	0.96	0.44 →	0.18 →	51
→	Thailand (94)	70	1.00 =	0.41 →	0.13 →	0.08 →	41
=	Timor-Leste (53)	66			0.41 →	0.29	35
→	Togo (68)	47			0.12 →	0.25 →	19
nd	Tonga (96)				0.03		3
→	Trinidad and Tobago (95)	70	1.00 =	0.75 →	0.37 →	0.22 →	59
→	Tunisia (95)	50			0.30 →	0.08 →	19
→	Turkey (92)	46	0.47 →	0.08 ←	0.10 →	0.04 ←	17
←	Turkmenistan (—)				0.20 ←	0.10 →	15
←	Tuvalu (89)				0.00 ←		0
→	Uganda (59)	67			0.44 →	0.31 →	37
→	Ukraine (98)	69	1.00 =	0.61 →	0.09 →	0.06 →	44
→	United Arab Emirates (100)	50	0.33 →	0.09 →	0.29 →	0.06 →	19
→	United Kingdom (99)	74	0.89 →	0.52 →	0.24 →	0.40 →	51
←	United States of America (98)	74	1.00 =	0.72 ←	0.20 →	0.17 ←	52
=	Uruguay (98)	69	1.00 =	0.67 →	0.14 →	0.00 ←	45
→	Uzbekistan (—)	57			0.21 →	0.04 →	12
→	Vanuatu (87)	54			0.04 →	0.09 →	7
→	Venezuela (93)	68	1.00 =	0.37 →	0.23 →	0.16 →	44
→	Viet Nam (93)	74	1.00 =	0.28	0.35 ←	0.13 →	44
→	Yemen (59)	30	0.18 →	0.04 →	0.00 ←	0.03 →	6
→	Zambia (71)	56			0.18 →	0.33 →	26
→	Zimbabwe (77)	58			0.18 →	0.17 →	18

**SOURCES:**  
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**NOTE:**

**1. Evolution:** Evolution of indicators obtained by re-escalating those values resulting from the relative rate of variation among the following ranks:  
*Minor than -5: significant regression; Between -5 and -1: regression; Between -1 and 1: stagnant; Between 1 and 5: slight progress; Larger than 5: significant progress.*

This rate is obtained from the following operation:  $(2009 \text{ value} - 2008 \text{ value} / 2008 \text{ value}) * 100$

**2. Value reached by the index:** The value results from adding the values calculated for each dimension and dividing the result by the total number of dimensions presenting data.

**3. Stagnant Evolution:** In those indicators showing stagnant evolution in all their values, said evolution responds to lack of updating, being reproduced those values registered in 2008.

**DEFINITION OF INDICATORS:**

**Female professional and technical workers:**  
Women's share of positions defined according to the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-88) to include physical, mathematical and engineering science professionals (and associate professionals), life science and health professionals (and associate professionals), teaching professionals (and associate professionals) and other professionals and associate professionals.

**Female legislators, senior officials and managers:**  
Women's share of positions defined according to the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-88) to include legislators, senior government officials, traditional chiefs and heads of villages, senior officials of special interest organizations, corporate managers, directors and chief executives, production and operations department managers and other department and general managers.

**Women in decision-making positions in government at ministerial level:** Women as a percentage of total decision-making positions in government. Data were provided by states based on their definition of national executive and may therefore include women serving as ministers and vice ministers and those holding other ministerial positions, including parliamentary secretaries.

**Seats in parliament held by women:** Seats held by women in a lower or single house, where relevant, as percentage of total seats.

# Gender and economy

## References

**CURRENT SITUATION**  
(latest available data)

- Better situation
- Above average
- Below average
- Worse situation

**RECENT EVOLUTION** (Between most recent and previous available data)

- ➔ Significant progress
- ➔ Slight progress
- = Stagnant
- ➔ Regression
- ➔ Major regression

Complete table at: [www.socialwatch.org/statistics2009](http://www.socialwatch.org/statistics2009)

Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) RECENT EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	COUNTRIES (IEG value)	ACTIVITY RATE GAP (women/men, value 0-1)	ESTIMATED EARNED INCOME RATIO GAP (women/men, value 0-1)	Value
←	Albania (96)	55	0.70	←	62
←	Algeria (96)	53	0.45	➔	39
←	Angola (60)	60	0.81	➔	71
➔	Argentina (98)	72	0.70	➔	62
←	Armenia (99)	58	0.79	←	71
➔	Australia (100)	75	0.80	➔	75
➔	Austria (99)	71	0.76	➔	61
←	Azerbaijan (96)	60	0.82	➔	73
➔	Bahamas (99)	79	0.91	➔	81
←	Bahrain (99)	46	0.33	←	34
←	Bangladesh (56)	53	0.61	←	53
➔	Barbados (98)	76	0.83	➔	73
←	Belarus (100)	66	0.82	=	73
➔	Belgium (98)	72	0.73	➔	64
➔	Belize (92)	63	0.52	➔	46
←	Benin (77)	42	0.62	←	55
←	Bhutan (79)		0.58	←	53
➔	Bolivia (79)	66	0.74	➔	66
➔	Bosnia and Herzegovina (—)	61	0.86	➔	76
←	Botswana (90)	66	0.67	←	49
➔	Brazil (90)	68	0.71	➔	65
←	Brunei Darussalam (99)		0.55	←	48
←	Bulgaria (97)	73	0.78	←	72
←	Burkina Faso (71)	54	0.87	➔	77
=	Burundi (61)	64	0.99	➔	88
←	Cambodia (66)	62	0.93	➔	84
←	Cameroon (77)	51	0.65	➔	57
➔	Canada (98)	74	0.84	➔	74
←	Cape Verde (93)	54	0.45	←	40
←	Central African Republic (65)	46	0.79	➔	70
←	Chad (44)	43	0.85	➔	75
➔	Chile (99)	62	0.52	➔	46
←	China (94)	68	0.83	➔	73
➔	Colombia (94)	75	0.76	➔	70
←	Comoros (79)		0.67	←	59
←	Congo, DR (75)		0.68	←	60
←	Congo, Rep. (76)	45	0.65	←	57
➔	Costa Rica (93)	67	0.56	➔	54
←	Côte d'Ivoire (74)	39	0.44	←	38

SOURCE:  
UNDP Human Development Report 2009.

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: [www.socialwatch.org/statistics2009](http://www.socialwatch.org/statistics2009)



Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) RECENT EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES  (BCI value, 0-100)	COUNTRIES  (IEG value)	ACTIVITY RATE GAP (women/men, value 0-1)	ESTIMATED EARNED INCOME RATIO GAP (women/men, value 0-1)	Value
→	Croatia (100)	75	0.74 →	0.67 →	71
←	Cuba (99)	70	0.59 ←	0.45	52
→	Cyprus (100)	65	0.76 →	0.60 →	68
←	Czech Republic (99)	68	0.77 ←	0.51 ←	64
→	Denmark (100)	79	0.84 =	0.73 →	79
nd	Djibouti (90)	47	0.64	0.48	56
→	Dominican Republic (87)	65	0.57 →	0.43 →	50
→	Ecuador (86)	72	0.73 →	0.56 →	64
←	Egypt (89)	44	0.27 ←	0.23 ←	25
→	El Salvador (80)	68	0.62 →	0.40 →	51
←	Equatorial Guinea (58)	44	0.56 →	0.43	49
←	Eritrea (60)	47	0.64 ←	0.45	54
←	Estonia (99)	73	0.80 ←	0.62 ←	71
→	Ethiopia (53)	53	0.79 →	0.60	70
→	Fiji (93)		0.64 →	0.48	56
=	Finland (100)	84	0.86 ←	0.71 →	79
←	France (99)	72	0.79 →	0.64	72
←	Gabon (82)	53	0.75 ←	0.57	66
←	Gambia (73)	50	0.69 ←	0.53	61
←	Georgia (96)	62	0.66 ←	0.33 ←	50
→	Germany (99)	78	0.77 →	0.58 →	68
←	Ghana (76)	58	0.94 ←	0.71	83
→	Greece (99)	65	0.67 →	0.55 →	61
←	Guatemala (68)	51	0.41 ←	0.32	37
←	Guinea (68)		0.91 →	0.69	80
←	Guinea-Bissau (60)	47	0.66 →	0.51	58
←	Guyana (84)	60	0.53 →	0.41	47
←	Haiti (—)		0.67 ←	0.52	60
→	Honduras (82)	69	0.61 →	0.46 →	54
→	Hong Kong (—)	75	0.76 →	0.56	66
→	Hungary (99)	70	0.73 →	0.64 →	68
→	Iceland (98)	78	0.86 →	0.72 →	79
←	India (68)	41	0.42 ←	0.31	37
←	Indonesia (85)	55	0.60 ←	0.46	53
→	Iran (97)	54	0.52 →	0.39	46
→	Ireland (100)	69	0.74 →	0.53 →	63
→	Israel (100)	72	0.85 →	0.65 →	75
→	Italy (100)	64	0.62 →	0.47 →	55
←	Jamaica (94)	61	0.73 ←	0.56	65
←	Japan (100)	59	0.66 ←	0.45 ←	55
←	Jordan (99)	47	0.36 =	0.31	34
←	Kazakhstan (99)	74	0.87 →	0.63	75
←	Kenya (71)	59	0.78 ←	0.83	81
←	Korea, Rep. (100)	53	0.68 ←	0.40 ←	54
←	Kuwait (100)	49	0.58 →	0.35	46
←	Kyrgyzstan (98)	70	0.74 ←	0.58	66
←	Laos (58)	52	0.67 ←	0.51	59
←	Latvia (99)	75	0.77 ←	0.65 ←	71

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←	Lebanon (96)	47	0.41	→	0.31	36
→	Lesotho (72)	64	0.63	→	0.52	58
→	Libya (99)		0.40	→	0.30	35
→	Lithuania (99)	76	0.82	→	0.69	76
→	Luxembourg (100)	61	0.69	→	0.51	60
←	Macedonia (—)	67	0.63	←	0.48	56
→	Madagascar (59)		0.92	→	0.70	81
←	Malawi (62)		0.95	→	0.73	84
←	Malaysia (97)	58	0.57	←	0.36	47
←	Maldives (91)	61	0.67	←	0.50	59
←	Mali (67)	53	0.87	→	0.68	77
→	Malta (99)	58	0.49	→	0.50	50
←	Mauritania (68)	51	0.65	←	0.50	57
←	Mauritius (99)	60	0.54	→	0.41	47
→	Mexico (95)	61	0.50	→	0.39	44
←	Moldova (—)	74	0.81	→	0.63	72
←	Mongolia (93)	70	0.66	←	0.50	58
←	Morocco (81)	45	0.33	←	0.25	29
nd	Mozambique (66)	64	1.02		0.81	91
→	Myanmar (73)		0.79	→		79
→	Namibia (89)	71	0.74	→	0.57	66
←	Nepal (58)	51	0.64	→	0.50	57
→	Netherlands (100)	77	0.77	→	0.64	71
→	New Zealand (97)	78	0.82	→	0.70	76
←	Nicaragua (70)	52	0.41	←	0.32	36
←	Niger (55)	47	0.75		0.57	66
←	Nigeria (66)	44	0.53	←	0.41	47
→	Norway (100)	83	0.87	→	0.77	82
←	Oman (98)	46	0.28	→	0.19	23
←	Pakistan (71)	43	0.39	←	0.29	34
→	Panama (93)	70	0.64	→	0.58	61
→	Papua New Guinea (61)		0.96	→	0.72	84
→	Paraguay (95)	67	0.77	→	0.34	56
→	Peru (88)	70	0.72	→	0.55	63
→	Philippines (78)	76	0.66	→	0.61	63
←	Poland (99)	70	0.78	→	0.60	69
→	Portugal (99)	73	0.79	→	0.59	69
←	Qatar (95)	48	0.41	←	0.24	33
→	Romania (98)	71	0.80	→	0.69	75
←	Russia (100)	71	0.80	→	0.62	71
←	Rwanda (53)	84	0.95	→	0.74	85
nd	Samoa (97)	49	0.51		0.38	44
nd	Sao Tomé and Príncipe (83)	49	0.40		0.30	35
←	Saudi Arabia (96)	43	0.22	←	0.16	19
←	Senegal (68)	55	0.69	→	0.54	61
←	Sierra Leone (59)	45	0.60	→	0.46	53
→	Singapore (100)	63	0.66	→	0.51	59
←	Slovakia (99)	69	0.76	←	0.58	67

SOURCE:  
UNDP Human Development Report 2009.

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at:  
[www.socialwatch.org/statistics2009](http://www.socialwatch.org/statistics2009)

Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) RECENT EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES  (BCI value, 0-100)	COUNTRIES  (IEG value)	ACTIVITY RATE GAP (women/men, value 0-1)	ESTIMATED EARNED INCOME RATIO GAP (women/men, value 0-1)	Value		
←	Slovenia (99)	65	0.80	←	0.61	←	71
←	Solomon Islands (—)	47	0.66	←	0.50		58
←	South Africa (89)	75	0.58	←	0.45		51
→	Spain (100)	77	0.66	→	0.51	→	58
←	Sri Lanka (96)	58	0.45	←	0.41	←	43
nd	St Lucia (98)	71	0.67		0.51		59
nd	St Vincent and Grenadines (95)	60	0.68		0.51		60
←	Sudan (70)	43	0.33	←	0.25		29
←	Suriname (82)	56	0.52	→	0.40		46
←	Swaziland (80)	49	0.43	←	0.29		36
→	Sweden (100)	88	0.87	←	0.81	→	84
→	Switzerland (99)	62	0.80	→	0.63	→	71
→	Syria (95)	54	0.44	→	0.34		39
←	Tajikistan (89)	52	0.74	←	0.58		66
nd	Tanzania (73)	72	0.95		0.73		84
←	Thailand (94)	70	0.81	←	0.62	→	72
←	Timor-Leste (53)	66	0.67	←			67
←	Togo (68)	47	0.56	←	0.43		49
nd	Tonga (96)		0.63		0.48		55
→	Trinidad and Tobago (95)	70	0.61	→	0.46	→	54
←	Tunisia (95)	50	0.38	←	0.29		34
←	Turkey (92)	46	0.36	←	0.36	←	36
←	Turkmenistan (—)		0.83	→	0.64		73
←	Uganda (59)	67	0.92	→	0.70		81
	Ukraine (98)	69	0.79	←	0.55	→	67
→	United Arab Emirates (100)	50	0.42	→	0.25	→	33
→	United Kingdom (99)	74	0.80	→	0.66	→	73
	United States of America (98)	74	0.82		0.63		72
→	Uruguay (98)	69	0.72	→	0.56	→	64
←	Uzbekistan (—)	57	0.78	←	0.60		69
nd	Vanuatu (87)	54	0.91		0.68		79
→	Venezuela (93)	68	0.69	→	0.53	→	61
←	Viet Nam (93)	74	0.92	→	0.71		81
→	West Bank and Gaza (—)		0.15	→			15
→	Yemen (59)	30	0.39	→	0.30		34
←	Zambia (71)	56	0.73	←	0.55		64
←	Zimbabwe (77)	58	0.76	←	0.58		67

SOURCE:  
UNDP Human Development Report 2009.  
  
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**NOTE:**

**1. Evolution:** Evolution of indicators obtained by re-escalating those values resulting from the relative rate of variation among the following ranks:  
*Minor than -5: significant regression; Between -5 and -1: regression; Between -1 and 1: stagnant; Between 1 a 5: slight progress; Larger than 5: significant progress.*

This rate is obtained from the following operation:  
 $(2009 \text{ value} - 2008 \text{ value} / 2008 \text{ value}) * 100$

**2. Value reached by the index:** The value results from adding the values calculated for each dimension and dividing the result by the total number of dimensions presenting data.

**3. Stagnant Evolution:** In those indicators showing stagnant evolution in all their values, said evolution responds to lack of updating, being reproduced those values registered in 2008.

**DEFINITION OF INDICATORS:**

**Activity rate gap (women/men):**

Female economic activity rate (the share of the female population ages 15 and older who supply, or are available to supply, labour for the production of goods and services) as a percentage of the male economic activity rate.

**Estimated earned income ratio (women/men):**

Ratio of estimated female earned income to estimated male earned income. Because of the lack of gender-disaggregated income data, female and male earned income are crudely estimated by UNDP on the basis of data on the ratio of the female non-agricultural wage to the male non-agricultural

wage, the female and male shares of the economically active population, the total female and male population and GDP per capita (purchasing power parity in USD).

SW / OCCASIONAL PAPERS / 06

## PUTTING GENDER ECONOMICS AT THE FOREFRONT

### 15 years after the IV World Conference on Women

*The economic and financial crisis has deepened gender inequalities and made them ever more brutal. Reports and statements from civil society organizations around the world show it is time to put an end to the gender blindness of current economic policies. A change must come in economic theory and this must be reflected in practice. It is not a question of just aiming for growth and formulating some policies for women; it is time to design and implement a new development paradigm with equal rights and equal opportunities for everyone without any kind of discrimination whatsoever.*

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The *Occasional Papers* intend to address issues that are relevant for the members of the Social Watch network, and as an empowering tool for civil society.

