

TURNING PROMISES INTO ACTION:

GENDER EQUALITY
IN THE 2030 AGENDA
FOR SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT

The 2030 Agenda is clear: there can be no sustainable development without gender equality. *Turning promises into action: Gender equality in the 2030 agenda*, a global monitoring report by UN Women, asks: **How far have we come in turning this new development consensus into results for women and girls, and what is needed to bridge the remaining gaps between rhetoric and reality?**

New data analysis* in the report puts a spotlight on gender-based discrimination across all 17 SDGs. The goal-by-goal review shows that gender inequalities—deeply rooted and present across all countries—are pervasive in each and every dimension of sustainable development. **See goal-by-goal summary below.**

Using micro-level data, the report shows how across countries, women and girls who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination are often left behind and excluded from progress. These groups of women and girls not only lack access to education and health, but also other key measures of well-being including access to clean water, fuel and housing. **See case studies summary below.**

Addressing these challenges requires dramatic advances in statistics, financing and policies for gender equality.

THE NEED FOR ACTION

The report identifies four key areas for action:

1. Harnessing policy synergies: the demands for implementation are huge—there are 17 goals and gender equality matters for all of them. Integrated approaches to implementation are pivotal to harnessing these synergies.
2. Improving gender data, statistics and analysis to effectively monitor progress for women and girls across all goals and targets.
3. Prioritizing gender-responsive investments, policies and programmes to align action with the principles, values and aspirations of the 2030 Agenda.
4. ensure an integrated approach to implementation, follow-up and review with gender equality at its core.

See *Policy in Focus* summary below.

* NOTE: Data presented are from global databases and may not reflect the most up-to-date country level information. For the most up-to-date country level information we advise that you check with national level sources.

FACT SHEET – CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN ASIA

Gender-based discrimination— deeply rooted and present across all countries—threatens to undermine the transformative potential of the 2030 Agenda in real and measurable ways:

1 NO POVERTY

Globally, women and girls are over-represented among the poor: 330 million women and girls live on less than US\$1.90 a day, that's 4.4 million more than men. Poverty rates by sex in **Central and Southern Asia** are 15.8% for women and 14.5% for men. When adjusted for the fact that men outnumber women in the population, the results indicate that women globally are 4% more likely than men to live in extreme poverty, while the gender gap rises to 8% in **Central and Southern Asia**.

2 ZERO HUNGER

In nearly two thirds of countries, women are more likely than men to report food insecurity. **Central and Southern Asia** is the region with the largest gaps, with women being 4 percentage points more likely than men to report food insecurity. The gap is much higher in **Pakistan**, where women are 11 percentage points more likely than men to report food insecurity.

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Globally, 303,000 women died from pregnancy-related causes in 2015. The rate of death is declining much too slowly to achieve Target 3.1. **Central and Southern Asia** has an MMR of 170 deaths per 100,000 live births, which is lower than the global average of 216.

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

15 million girls of primary-school age will never get the chance to learn to read or write in primary school compared to 10 million boys.

5 GENDER EQUALITY

The 2030 Agenda promises to put an end to barriers that prevent women and girls from realizing their full potential. But significant challenges lie ahead:

5.1 In 18 countries across the world, husbands can legally prevent their wives from working; in 39 countries, daughters and sons do not have equal inheritance rights; and 49 countries lack laws protecting women from domestic violence.

5.2 Globally, 1 in 5 women and girls under the age of 50 reported experiencing physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner within a 12-month period. In **Central and Southern Asia**, the corresponding figure is 23.1%.

5.3 Globally, 750 million women and girls were married before the age of 18, and at least 200 million women and girls in 30 countries have undergone FGM. **Central and Southern Asia** has the highest rates of child marriage, with 16% of women currently aged 20–24 married before they turned 15, and 43% before age 18. In **Tajikistan**, girls who married before age 15 delivered their first child at the average age of 17, compared to age 21 for girls who married at 15 or older.

5.4 Women do 2.6 times the unpaid care and domestic work that men do. However, in **Central and Southern Asia**, the figure is even higher – 3 times, with a huge variation across countries within the region. In **Pakistan**, for instance, women do 11 times the unpaid care and domestic work that men do, while the corresponding figures for **Bhutan** and **Kyrgyzstan** are 2.6 and 1.8, respectively.

5.5 Women hold just 23.7% of parliamentary seats globally, an increase of 10 percentage points compared to 2000 – but still way below parity. The figure for **Central and Southern Asia** is even lower, at 18.5%. **Afghanistan**, with 27.7% of women holding parliamentary seats, has the highest rates in the region, while **Sri Lanka** has the lowest – 5.8%.

5.6 Based on data from 45 countries, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa, only 52% of women aged 15–49 who are married or in a union make their own informed decisions about sexual relations and the use of contraceptives and health services. In **Kyrgyzstan**, **Nepal** and **Tajikistan**, the corresponding rates are 76.6, 59.5 and 40.9 respectively.

5.a Globally, women are just 13% of agricultural land holders.

5.b The benefits of internet and technology are accessible to men at a much higher rate than women, leaving women behind in Internet access and mobile phone ownership. Globally, women are less likely than men to own a mobile phone, and their internet usage is 5.9 percentage points lower than that of men.

5.c More than 100 countries have taken action to track budget allocations for gender equality.

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

Women and girls are responsible for water collection in 80% of the world's households without access to water on premises.

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

Indoor air pollution from using combustible fuels for household energy caused 4.3 million deaths in 2012, with women and girls accounting for 6 out of every 10 of these. In rural households in **Central and Southern Asia**, the proportion of households with reliance on solid fuels is as high as 89%.

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Globally, the labour force participation rate (LFPR) among prime working-age women (aged 25–54) stands at 63% compared to 94% among their male counterparts. The global gender pay gap is 23%. **Central and Southern Asia** is the only region where prime working-age women's LFPR has fallen consistently since 1997, from 42% to 37%, according to the latest 2017 estimates. Countries in the region recording the largest declines since 1997 in LFPR for women aged 25–54 are **Kyrgyzstan** (14.7 percentage points), **Bangladesh** (10.3 percentage points) and **India** (8.1 percentage points).

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Women represent 28.8% of researchers worldwide. Only about 1 in 5 countries have achieved gender parity in this area. In **Central and Southern Asia**, the figure is 33%.

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

Up to 30% of income inequality is due to inequality within households, including between women and men. Women are also more likely than men to live below 50% of the median income. In **India**, the rates for females living below 50% of the median income are 1.6 percentage points higher than males – 20.5 versus 18.9, respectively.

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

The global population is becoming more urban, with opportunities and risks for women and girls: More than 50% of urban women in developing countries live in conditions where they lack at least one of the following: access to clean water, improved sanitation facilities, durable housing or sufficient living area. In **Central and Southern Asia**, more than 60% of women live in the above-mentioned conditions. This is the case, for instance, in **Pakistan, Tajikistan, Nepal, Bangladesh** at 69.5, 61.5, 61, 60.8% women, respectively. In **Maldives** and **Kyrgyzstan**, 48.8 and 40.8% women, respectively live in urban areas where they lack access to clean water, improved sanitation, durable housing or sufficient living area.

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

Investment in public transportation yields large benefits for women, who tend to rely on public transport more than men do.

13 CLIMATE ACTION

Climate change has a disproportionate impact on women and children, who are 14 times as likely as men to die during a disaster. Many female agricultural workers also face severe inequalities in their access to land, credit and essential inputs such as fertilizers, irrigation, technology, information and markets. Thus, climate change adaptation and mitigation practices requiring the use of technical advances on heat-resistant and water-conserving crop varieties are also less likely to reach them. This is particularly relevant in **Central and Southern Asia**, where nearly 60% of employed women are employed in the agricultural sector, a proportion much higher than that of men.

14 LIFE BELOW WATER

The contamination of freshwater and marine ecosystems negatively impacts women's and men's livelihoods, their health and the health of their children. In **Central and Southern Asia**, where 16.6% of women are employed in fishing, aquaculture and related activities – next only to Oceania at 20.3%, marine contamination may have an even larger impact.

15 LIFE ON LAND

Between 2010 and 2015, the world lost 3.3 million hectares of forest areas. Poor rural women depend on common pool resources and are especially affected by their depletion.

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

In times of conflict, rates of homicide and other forms of violent crime increase significantly. While men are more likely to be killed on the battlefield, women are disproportionately subjected to sexual violence and abducted, tortured and forced to leave their homes. In Central and Southern Asia, **Kyrgyzstan** has one of the highest intentional female homicides per 100,000 population, as of 2010.

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

In 2012, finances flowing out of developing countries were 2.5 times the amount of aid flowing in, and gender allocations paled in comparison.

LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND (CASE STUDIES)

Leaving no one behind means the benefits of sustainable development reach everyone. Currently, across countries, it is those women and girls who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination who are often the furthest behind. For the case of **Pakistan**, the report finds:

- *Say in health care*: Almost half of all women and girls aged 15–49 have no say in decisions regarding their own health care, but rates vary significantly by location, wealth and ethnicity. For instance, 69.5% of poorest rural Pashtun women report no say in health care.
- *Malnutrition*: The poorest rural Sindhi women and girls are almost 17 times as likely as the richest urban Punjabi women and girls to be undernourished (BMI <18.5)
- *Clean cooking Fuel*: The poorest rural Punjabi women and girls are almost 200 times as likely as the richest urban Urdu women and girls to lack access to clean fuels.
- *Clustered deprivations*: 12% of all women aged 18–49 (or 4.9 million) are simultaneously deprived in four SDG-related dimensions. These women were not only married before the age of 18 and education-poor, they also reported no agency in health-care decisions and said they were not working at the time of the survey

POLICY IN FOCUS

Harnessing policy synergies

Investments in accessible, affordable and quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) can contribute to the achievement of several gender- and child-related goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda by, for instance, reducing the time women spend on unpaid care by shifting some of it out of the family (Target 5.4), enabling women to increase their access to employment (Target 8.5) and enhancing school readiness (Target 4.2). In **India**, for example, some states such as Tamil Nadu have successfully used the infrastructure of the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)—a massive national programme implemented since 1974 to improve child health and nutrition—to provide universal preschool and day-care services as an entitlement of children under 6.

The need for global gender data availability

Gaps in gender data and the lack of trend data make it difficult to assess and monitor the direction and pace of progress for women and girls. The availability of data necessary for global monitoring of the gender-specific indicators is at a mere 26% while the figure for **Central and Southern Asia** is 23.4% - slightly lower than the global average. Unless gender is mainstreamed into national statistical strategies, gender data scarcity will persist.

Prioritizing gender-responsive investments, policies and programmes

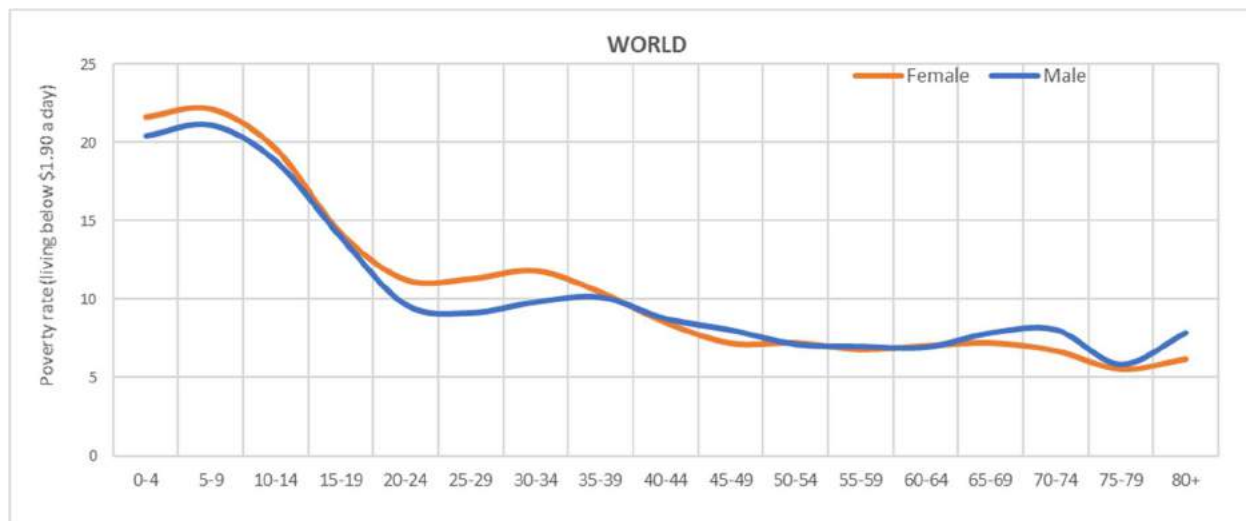
Prioritizing gender-responsive investments pays off. In South Africa, for instance, it is estimated that a gross annual investment of 3.2% of GDP in ECEC would not only result in universal coverage for all 0-5-year-old children, but also create 2.3 million new jobs, raising female employment by 10.1%.

APPENDIX

Note: The below represent a selection of illustrative examples for the Central and Southern Asia region. Country-specific data may be available; if you are interested in country-specific data, please contact us at gender.data@unwomen.org using the subject line “SDG Report”.

1 NO POVERTY

Proportion of people living in extreme poverty^a by sex and age, 2009-2013^b



Source: World Bank calculations using Global Micro Database 2017.

Notes:

a – Living below \$1.90 a day.

b – Data refer to the most recent available during the period specified for 89 developing countries.

2 ZERO HUNGER

Gender gap in prevalence of food security, 2014-2015

Country	% of males who are food insecure	% of females who are food insecure	Difference (f-m)
Afghanistan	44.1	47.6	3.4
Bangladesh	29.1	29.8	0.7
Bhutan	2.7	2.5	-0.2
India	20.9	24.1	3.2

Iran	47.1	50.4	3.2
Kazakhstan	7.5	7.5	0.1
Kyrgyzstan	19.1	22.3	3.2
Nepal	24.5	26.0	1.5
Pakistan	36.6	48.1	11.5
Sri Lanka	21.0	21.7	0.7
Tajikistan	12.8	13.1	0.2
Uzbekistan	11.9	15.0	3.1

Source: UN Women calculations based on data from the FAO Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) survey (2014–2015).

Notes: The FIES measures the percentage of individuals in the national population who have experienced food insecurity at moderate or severe levels during the 12-month reference period. The analysis is based on data from 141 countries collected by FAO in the context of the Voices of the Hungry Project. FAO. 2017.

5 GENDER EQUALITY

Internet penetration rate by sex and region, 2017

SDG Regional Groupings	Female Internet users as % of total female population 2017	Male Internet users as % of total male population 2017
Australia and New Zealand	53.7	56.9
Central and Southern Asia	41.5	44.6
Eastern and South-eastern Asia	27.8	42.0
Europe and Northern America	75.2	82.0
Latin America and the Caribbean	66.7	65.2
Northern Africa and Western Asia	55.3	59.5
Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand)	53.7	56.7
Sub-Saharan Africa	18.4	24.6

World	44.7	50.6
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Source: ITU (International Telecommunication Union). 2017. *ICT Facts and Figures 2017*. Geneva: ITU.

Note: Internet penetration rates refer to the number of women and men using the Internet, as a percentage of the respective total female and male population.

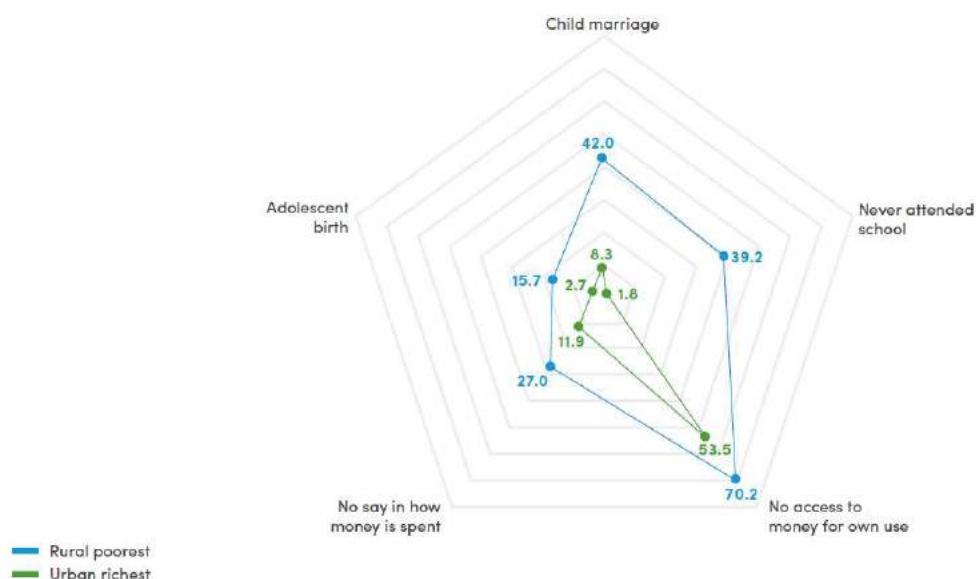


Select gender equality indicators, India, 2015-16

The compounding effect of wealth and location also produces large inequalities. In India (see Figure below), for example, a young woman aged 20-24 from a poor, rural household is

- 5.1 times as likely as one from a rich urban household to marry before the age of 18
- 21.8 times as likely to have never attended school
- 5.8 times as likely to become an adolescent mother
- 1.3 times as likely to have no access to money for her own use
- 2.3 times as likely to report she has no say in how money is spent

INEQUALITIES BETWEEN POOREST RURAL AND RICHEST URBAN INDIAN WOMEN, VARIOUS INDICATORS, PERCENTAGE, 2015-2016



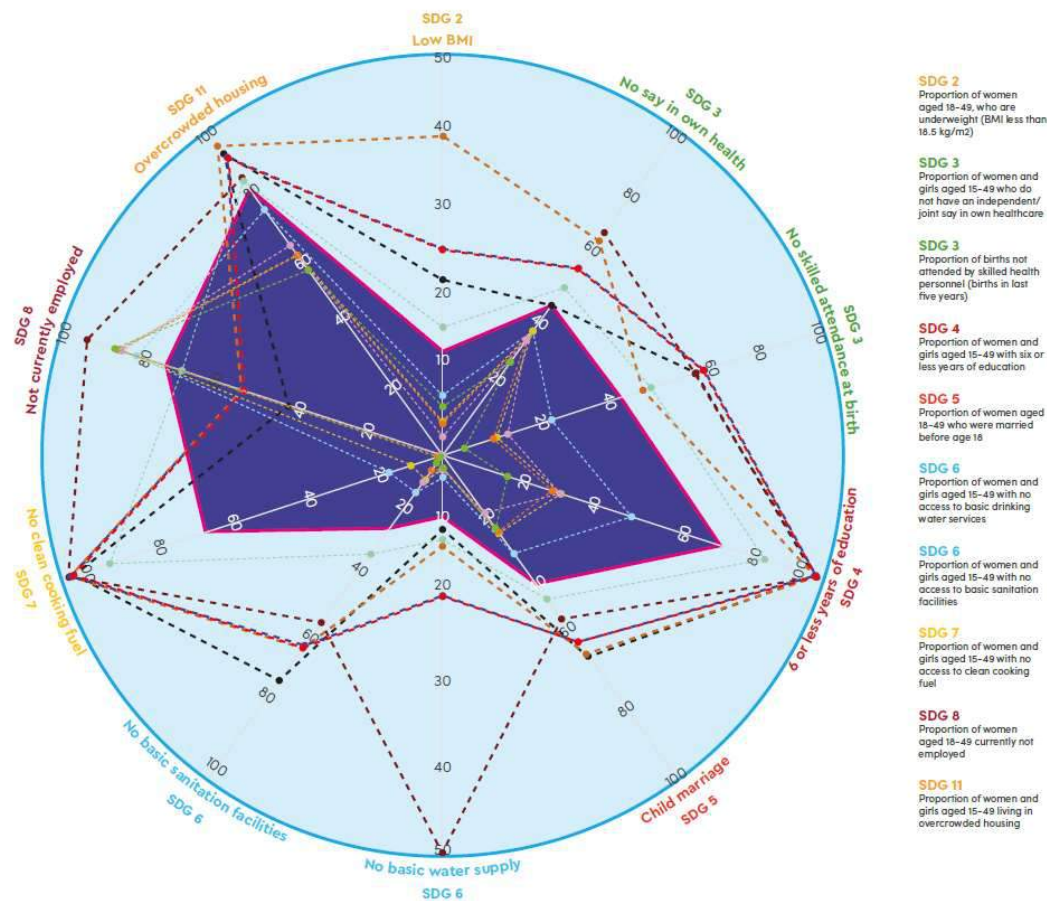
Source: UN Women calculations based on microdata from the India National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4/DHS).

Proportion of urban population living in slums (per cent)

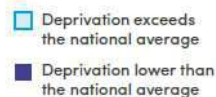
Region	2014	2000
Australia and New Zealand	0.03	0.03
Central Asia and Southern Asia	31.89	46.05
Eastern Asia and South-eastern Asia	27.55	38.23
Landlocked Developing Countries	59.00	67.11
Latin America and The Caribbean	21.26	29.31
Least developed countries	62.16	77.97
Northern America and Europe	0.10	0.10
Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand)	24.15	24.19
Sub-Saharan Africa	55.99	65.04
Western Asia and Northern Africa	22.06	23.11
World	22.77	28.42

Source: UN-Habitat, 2017.

INEQUALITIES IN SDG-RELATED OUTCOMES BETWEEN DIFFERENT GROUPS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS, PAKISTAN, 2012-2013



Groups



Source: UN Women calculations based on microdata from NIPS and ICF International 2013.

Notes: Different scales are used across each of the 10 axes, each corresponding to the maximum and minimum values for each given indicator. Select groups are shown given space limitations; for full group disaggregation, see Annex Table 3. Urdu is used as shorthand for Urdu-speaking, see Characteristics. No access to clean drinking water: Pashtuns reside mostly in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region, where reliance on unprotected wells and springs is particularly high. The 2005 earthquake and 2010 floods have further raised concerns about water quality for residents of this region. These and other factors contribute to much higher rates of no access to clean drinking water for Pashtuns overall, but especially those from the poorest rural households.