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Social protection systems and public services, equitable opportunity, labor laws, and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

Report of the UA-MUNC Commission on the Status of Women

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Introduction:

“Only 6 countries in the world grant women equal rights, and they are in Europe”

Source: Euro news, 04/ 03/ 2019.

This headline made the front-page earlier this year in a world-renowned publication based on a World Bank report: “Business and the Law 2019: A Decade of Reform” that looked at gender discrimination across 187 countries and how it has evolved in the past decade. Denmark, France, Latvia, Luxembourg, Belgium and Sweden made it to the top ranking. This article, among many others, targets a wide array of countries, and triggers reflection and reaction in societies aiming to build equity and inclusion among citizens. (15)



Figure 1: United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Infographic, July 2019.¹

Women and girls represent half of the world's population and, therefore, also half of its potential. Gender equality, besides being a fundamental human right, is essential to achieve peaceful societies, with full human potential and sustainable development. Moreover, it has been shown that empowering women spurs productivity and economic growth (4). The UN Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres has stated that achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls is the unfinished business of our time, and the greatest human rights challenge in our world. In fact, while the world has achieved progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment under the Millennium Development Goals (including equal access to primary education between girls and boys), women and girls continue to suffer discrimination and violence in every part of the world. (7). Unfortunately, there is still a long way to go to achieve full equality of rights and opportunities between men and women, warns UN Women. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to end the multiple forms of gender violence and secure equal access to quality education and health, economic resources and participation in political life for both women and girls and men and boys (17, 21). It is also essential to achieve equal opportunities in access to employment and to positions of leadership and decision-making at all levels. Gender equality is an objective of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and is the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal No. 5 (Gender Equality), which provides for equality in law and in social situations, and in particular equal pay for equal work.

¹ https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/E_Infographic_05.pdf

It is the belief that everyone should receive equal treatment and not be discriminated against according to their sex.

Introduction to the Committee, its Jurisdiction, and Mandate: ECOSOC

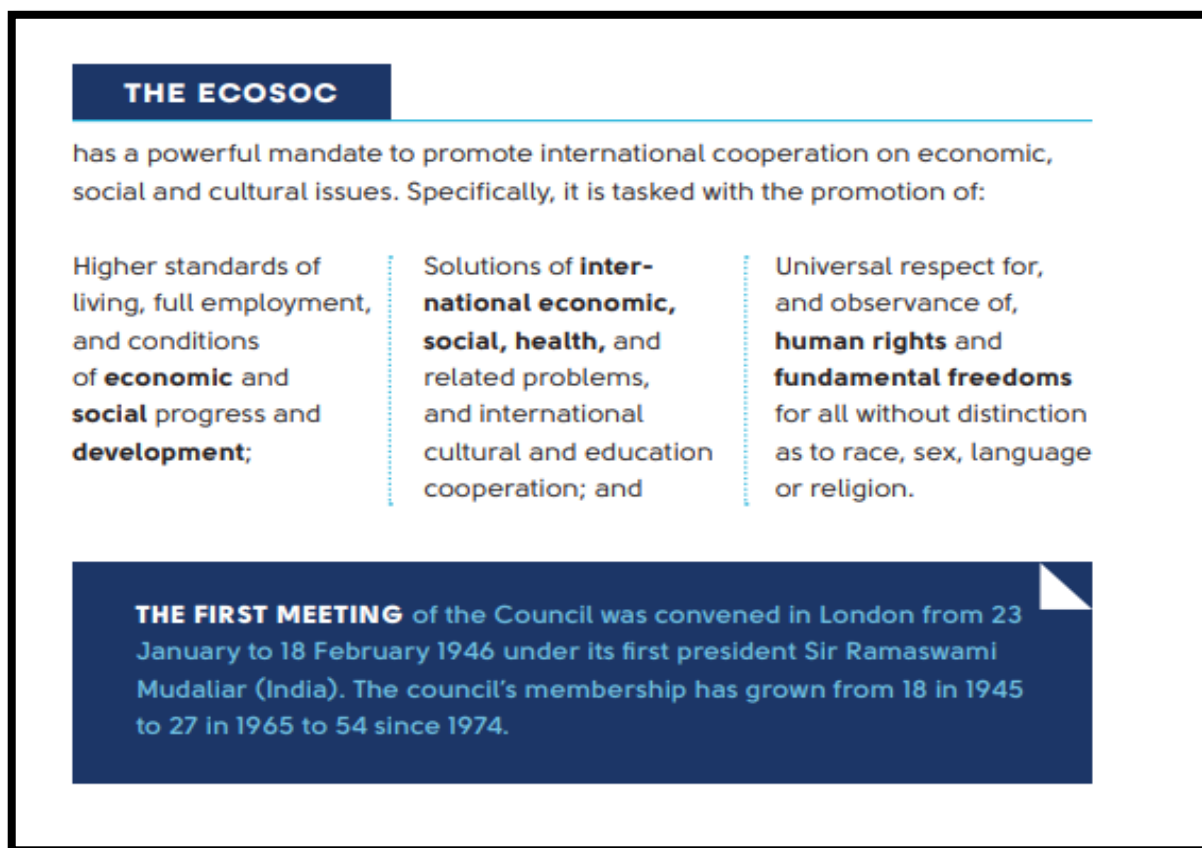


Figure 2: United Nations ECOSOC Brochure, February 2019. ²

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Global Development of the United Nations is the primary platform linked to the Sustainable Development Agenda and committed to its application. It is also an international organization dedicated to identifying emerging challenges, promoting innovation (16,17). The supervision, guidance on the development, implementation and review of strategies of the regional committees to achieve the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda holistically and inclusively is a working track for the HLPF to integrate all three matrices of Sustainable Development : economic, social, and environmental- in harmony (GA RES 67/290, 2013). Reforms such as the General Assembly resolution 68/1, have strengthened ECOSOC's leading role in the SDG'S agenda and gave it a special character to coordinated follow-up on major UN conferences and summit (17,25). ³

² https://www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/2019doc/ECOSOC_Brochure_2019_Feb18.pdf

³ Short History of the Commission on the Status of Women" (PDF). United Nations. Retrieved February 21, 2017. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2019/02/a-short-history-of-the-commission-on-the-status-of-women>

ECOSOC is a key for UN partnership and participation by the rest of the world through academics, foundations, NGO'S...building a strong structure and global network with a unique meeting point. By emphasizing combined economic, social and environmental concerns, ECOSOC encourages agreement on coherent policies and actions that make fundamental links across all three.



The HLPF sets eight days annually for meetings to assign strategies and plans. Also, the General Assembly is a two-day meeting for Heads of State as part of the HLPF every four years (Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, 2017) and contributions to dissect the facets of a topic and work on a change.

During the process of meetings, the ECOSOC writes and shares a document: Ministerial Declaration which is a comprehensive set of non-compulsory recommendations regarding the accomplishment of the SDGs (usually adopted by consensus- i.e., without a vote (GA RES 67/290, 2013): every Member State agrees to them and will be committed to implementing them.

Goals and action plan to ECOSOC are driven each year around a different theme of global importance to SDG'S. It gives a chance to highlight and converge attention around a goal and triggers efforts. Therefore, nations must report on their implementation plans, and related frameworks and budgets regarding their commitments to the topic: for 2019, the agenda adopted and draft decision submitted by the President of the Council, Inga Rhonda King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) : decided to change the theme of the 2019 session of the Council in line with that of the 2019 high –level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the Council, namely, “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”: this matches with the topic of gender equality and the role of the Commission of the Status of Women. ⁴

Introduction to the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW):

The CSW is an official structure that helps to promote issues relating to women's concerns and leadership within the UN. It was established on June 26, 1946 by the ECOSOC resolution 11 (II) as an intergovernmental body of the UN. One of UNCSW's first tasks was to contribute to the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The commission celebrates International Women's Day on 8 March. (10, 13).

The aim of this body is to raise the problems and challenges of women and try to bring solutions and plans to decrease the gap on many levels: political, economic, civil, social and educational rights of women. In fact, during its first session, the Commission declared as one of its guiding principles: to raise the status of women, irrespective of nationality, race, language or religion, to equality with men in all fields of human enterprise, and to eliminate all discrimination against women in the provisions of statutory law, in legal maxims or rules, or in interpretation of customary law ⁵(23,24).

The Commission fixes a priority theme for every year's meeting, per ECOSOC resolution 1987/24. For 2019, the priority theme is: Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Review theme: Women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development (agreed conclusions of the sixtieth session).

During each session and by resolution 2015/6, the methods of work are the following:

⁴ ECOSOC is a key for UN partnership and participation by the rest of the world through academics, foundations, NGO'S...building a strong structure and global network with a unique meeting point. By emphasizing combined economic, social and environmental concerns, ECOSOC encourages agreement on coherent policies and actions that make fundamental links across all three.

⁵ ECOSOC is a key for UN partnership and participation by the rest of the world through academics, foundations, NGO'S...building a strong structure and global network with a unique meeting point. By emphasizing combined economic, social and environmental concerns, ECOSOC encourages agreement on coherent policies and actions that make fundamental links across all three.

Topic Background:

Women's rights are Human's right, but in the eyes of many, underexplored. Many efforts and work should be done to build a strong matrix on which will fertilize constructive and emancipated ideas to ensure empowerment, security and adequate, equitable quality of life for women.

- **Violence:**

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates 35% of women worldwide have experienced physical or sexual violence. The costs of gender-based violence are substantial. Violence against women and girls limits their implication and contribution in building societies.⁶



⁶<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2019/07/10/world-bank-sexual-violence-research-initiative-launch-2019-call-for-proposals-for-innovation-in-addressing-gender-based-violence> 1 in 5 women and girls between the ages of 15-49 have reported experiencing physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner within a 12-month period and 49 countries currently have no laws protecting women from domestic violence. Progress is occurring regarding harmful practices such as child marriage and FGM (Female Genital Mutilation), which has declined by 30% in the past decade, but there is still much work to be done to complete eliminate such practices

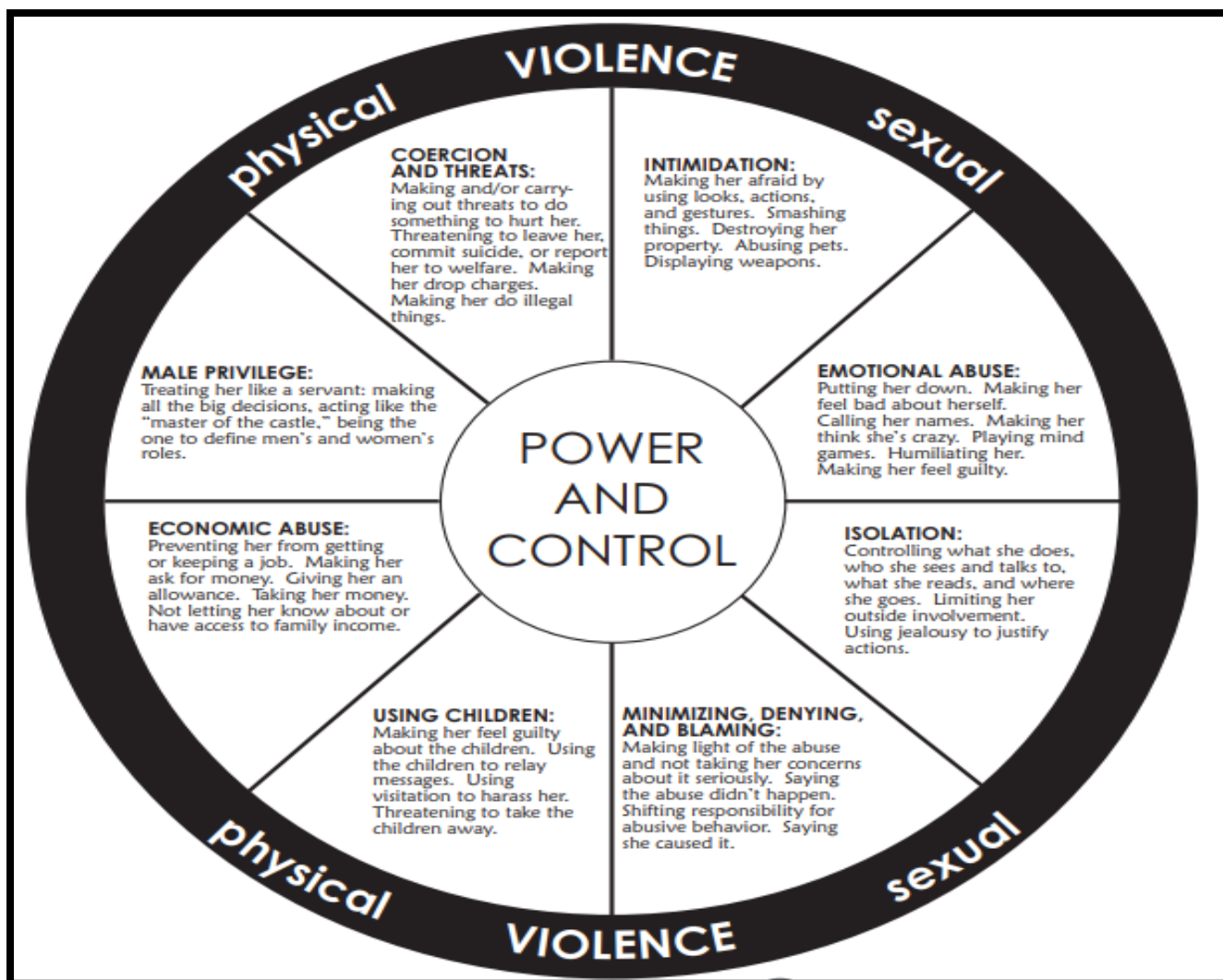


Figure 3: National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence, Power Control Wheel⁷

⁷ <http://www.ncdsv.org/images/PowerControlwheelNOSHADING.pdf>

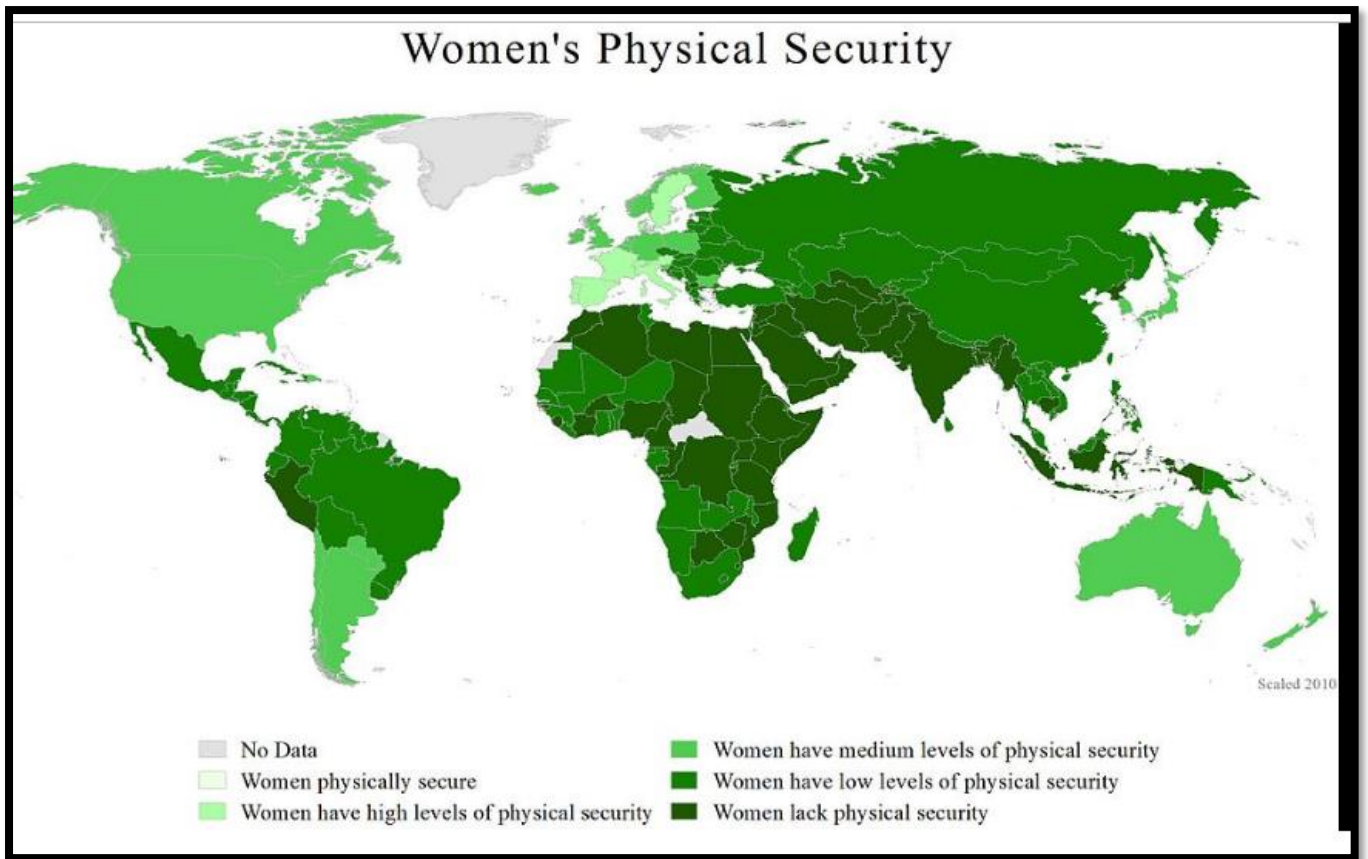


Figure 4: WomanStats Project - A map of the world showing countries by level of women's physical security, 2011.⁸

⁸ <http://www.womanstats.org>



Figure 5: Women Business and Laws database, 2016 ⁹.

Figure 6: Selected Potential Benefits from Secondary Education for Girls: The cost of not educating girls missed opportunities: the high cost of not educating girls. July 2018, p 54.¹⁰

- Education:

⁹ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/multimedia/2017/7/infographic-spotlight-on-sdg-5>

¹⁰ <http://www.ungei.org/resources/files/Missed-opportunities-high-cost-of-not-educating-girls-World-Bank-July-2018.pdf>

Summary Table: Selected Potential Benefits from Ensuring a Secondary Education for Girls

Domain	Coverage	Estimated Potential Impacts
Earnings and standards of living	Global	Doubling of expected earnings in adulthood
	Global	Increase in labor force participation by one tenth
	Global	Gain in perceptions of standards of living of up to one tenth
Child marriage and early childbearing	DCs	Virtual elimination of child marriage
	DCs	Reduction in early childbearing by up to three fourths
Fertility and population growth	DCs	Reduction in total fertility by one third
	DCs	Increase in contraceptive use by one fourth
	Global	Reduction in global population growth by 0.3 point
Health, nutrition and well-being	DCs	Increase in women's knowledge of HIV/AIDS by one fifth
	DCs	Increase in women's decision-making ability for health by one fifth
	Global	Increase in women's psychological well-being
	DCs	Reduction in under-five mortality rate by up a fifth
	DCs	Reduction in under-five stunting rate by more than a third
Agency and decision-making	DCs	Women more likely to exercise decision-making in the household
	Global	Women possibly more likely to better assess quality of basic services
	DCs	Increase in likelihood of birth registration by one fifth
Social capital and institutions	Global	Women more likely to report altruistic behaviors
	Global	Women more likely to report ability to rely on friends when in need
	Global	Women possibly more likely to better assess institutions and leaders
Potential economic costs	Global	Loss in human capital wealth from US\$ 15 trillion to US\$ 30 trillion
	Global	Benefit from reduced population growth of more than US\$ 3 trillion in first year after universal secondary completion, cumulative over time

Source: Authors.
Note: DCs = Developing countries.

Poor quality education brings negative outcome and impact on many levels : beside the girls themselves, it will affect their families and societies. This study by the World Bank shows the potential cost of not educating girls globally.¹¹(18,23) . Low educational attainment affects girls' life trajectories in many ways :

¹¹<http://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/moving-towards-gender-equality-new-index-looks-legal-reforms-help-women-s-economic-inclusion> Despite substantial progress over the last two decades, girls still have on average lower levels of educational attainment than boys in many countries, especially at the secondary and tertiary levels. As documented by the World Development Report 2018 when it comes to actual learning, while girls tend to outperform boys in reading, they score lower in math and science tests in many countries

Girls dropping out of school early are more likely to marry or have children early, before they may be physically and emotionally ready to become wives and mothers. This may affect their own health.

Through lower expected earnings in adulthood and higher fertility over their lifetime, a lack of education for girls leads to higher rates of poverty for households.

It can weaken solidarity in communities and reduce women's participation in society. Fundamentally, a lack of education disempowers women and girls in ways that deprive them of their basic rights.

Overall, the message is clear: Educating girls is not only the right thing to do. It also makes economic and strategic sense for countries to fulfill their development potential.¹²

¹²<http://uis.unesco.org/en/news/closing-gender-gap> According to UIS data by 2014, 88% of girls of primary school age (about 6 to 11 years old) were enrolled in school globally. The biggest gain was seen in sub-Saharan Africa where net enrolment among girls rose from 54% to 77%. Meanwhile, the out-of-school rate for girls declined from 18% in 2000 to 10% in 2014. The rate of boys out of school declined from 12% to 9%. While the male and female out-of-school rates are very similar at the global level, this is not the case at the regional level. In sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia, where most of these young out-of-school adolescents live, females are more likely to be excluded from education. In West Asia, for example, 20% of adolescent girls of lower secondary school age are out of school compared to 13% of boys. In sub-Saharan Africa, the female rate is 36% compared to 32% for males.

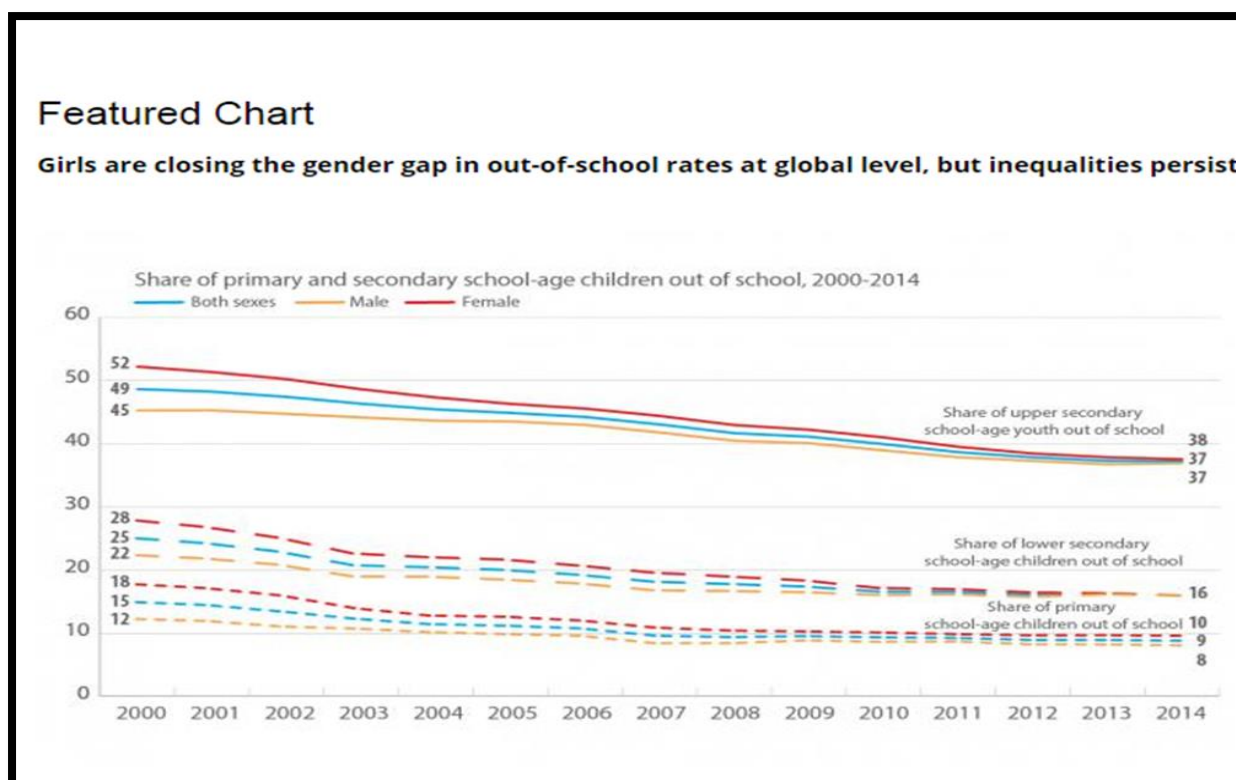


Figure 7: Share of primary and secondary school-age children out of school, UNESCO, UIS 2017.¹³

The UIS focuses on developing new indicators helping countries with forming decisions that would improve education and access to good quality learning towards fulfilling the aim of SDG4.

- The under-representation of women and girls in science streams/equal chances? :

While women worldwide have higher enrollment and graduation rates than men, they are less likely to specialize in scientific disciplines¹⁴(1,2,24)

The reasons behind this is multifactorial (stereotype, traditions, culture, “masculine mentality” ...).

A lot still has to be done to increase the representation of women in scientific by mainly focusing on the self-esteem of women and girls. Parity in the health field is a primary need since Gender is a main role in the studies and data, this is a step to achieving WHO's "triple billion" goal.¹⁵

¹³ <http://uis.unesco.org/en/news/closing-gender-gap>

¹⁴ <http://www.oecd.org/internet/bridging-the-digital-gender-divide.pdf> Only 7% of them are moving towards engineering, compared to 22% of men. And among information and communication technology (ICT) students, 28% are women and 72% are men. Parity in enrollment and completion is very recent, so the current pool of working women is made up of women who could go to school at a time when girls were much less educated. While significant progress has been made, the changing profile of scientific students and professionals will not be rapid as it depends on both the quantity and quality of education.

¹⁵ [https://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/docs/pdfs/1050143_\(e\)_desa/dialogues_ecosoc_achieving_gender_equality_women_empowerment.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/docs/pdfs/1050143_(e)_desa/dialogues_ecosoc_achieving_gender_equality_women_empowerment.pdf) The goal of the organization is to ensure that, by 2023, an additional one billion people will benefit from universal health coverage, an additional one billion people will be better protected against health emergencies, and that billion more people will enjoy better health and greater well-being. Thus the new internal strategy adopted by WHO, in line with the will to “leave no one behind” repeatedly affirmed in the Sustainable Development Goals, is it characterized by the importance given to the evaluation of gender and the extent of equity and entitlements in all programs of our institutions. As a result, each department is responsible for enforcing parity.

When different backgrounds and mentalities combine their efforts, they bring their own experience and judgment; the result exceeds any expectation: better decisions and strategies can be observed in organizations since they can handle a problem from a wide range of opinions and experiences.



Figure 8: To what extent do organisations promote gender equality through their operations and within the workplace? The global health 5050 report ,2019 .¹⁶

- Workplace: Protection and Safety.

This concerns all societies: It is an elementary goal to work on issues of gender discrimination including sexual harassment. Efforts should focus on legislative gaps to implement laws that end workplace discrimination.¹⁷ (24,25).

- Sustainable infrastructure for gender equality:

Women are more affected than men from poor access to quality infrastructure: The goal is to enable more women to enter the sector so that they can have a stronger impact on promoting inclusive infrastructure that meets the needs of both genders. Adapted infrastructure for all will have a transformative effect for women, economies and society at large. Infrastructure designed and managed from a women's perspective can play a key role in bridging the infrastructure gap. Indeed, diversity contributes to innovation. The women's perspective on infrastructure design and management will both improve services today and foster innovation tomorrow.¹⁸ (23) (24).

¹⁶ <https://globalhealth5050.org>

¹⁷ <https://www.weforum.org/focus/women-and-work>

The legal framework protecting women from workplace discrimination and sexual harassment, as well as gaps in national laws, and highlighted data from Women, Business and the Law's accessing institutions, getting a job, going to court and protecting women from violence indicators

¹⁸ <https://blogs.worldbank.org/voices/making-infrastructure-work-both-women-and-men?cid=ECR TT worldbank EN EXT&hootPostID=7c782dba591956c3421fbd6472ca7e25>

Because they are poorly thought out or work poorly, transit infrastructure in cities threatens women's safety and increases their exposure to gender-based violence. It is essential for women to be involved in defining priorities for infrastructure design and operation so that they contribute effectively to development." on-sexist" transport begins with infrastructure that ensures women's safety. If this security requirement is not met, the presence of gender norms will tend to prevent women from actively participating in the labor market and the activities of community life. And to

Past international Actions of the CSW:

The CSW is instrumental in promoting women's rights, documenting the reality of women's lives throughout the world, and shaping global standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women. In 1996, ECOSOC in resolution 1996/6 (see p. 20) expanded the Commission's mandate and decided that it should take a leading role in monitoring and reviewing progress and problems in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and in mainstreaming a gender perspective in UN activities (12, 36). The CSW showed many resolutions and actions towards



women's rights since its creation. The most recent are defined by the themes of the last few years showing the steps and fields of concern behind their strategy and goals:

Political Groups:

Representatives of UN Member States, civil society organizations and UN entities gather at UN headquarters in New York for the annual two-week session. Participation of civil society representatives and contribution to empower women are the main actors.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action are the main axes that guide the discussions for progress and gap diminution towards gender equality. Member States agree on future actions to

systematically ensure transport safety, it is essential to act more on changing behavior. These are all factors that severely limit women's potential for compensation.

promote women's rights in political, economic, and social fields. The outcomes and recommendations of each session are transmitted to ECOSOC for follow-up. UN Women supports all aspects of the Commission's work. (10,18)

Possible Solutions:

- CSW64 / Beijing+25 (2020) at the UN Headquarter:

2020 is a crucial year for the acceleration and realization of gender equality and women's rights since it will mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) (12). The review will focus on the Platform for Action and the implementation and the achievement of gender equality and its contribution towards the full realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (18,20).

- Education:

G7 actions for Education:

G7 leaders have called for urgent actions to enhance gender equality in education and use it as pathway to a more gender-equal world. During the summit in 2019 they issued "The Declaration on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment" as a serious support and proof for the attention given for this goal¹⁹. (9)

¹⁹ G7: Women 7 Alternative Gender Declaration August 23, 2019

<https://www.elysee.fr/en/g7/2019/08/26/official-documents> Developed with the French government, this year's G7 host, UNGEI, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), UNESCO, UNICEF and Plan International, Gender at the Center aims to help developing countries mainstream gender equality in their education systems. It will also direct more financial and technical resources to participating countries which demonstrate a commitment to accelerating gender equality results. The Advisory Council's report, the Biarritz Partnership, states that the inequality of opportunity is acute, and that the G7 commitment to address this is critical.

UNGEI girl's education initiative:

UNGEI is a multi-stakeholder partnership committed to improving the quality and availability of girls' education and contributing to the empowerment of girls and women through transformative education. It strives to promote girls' education and gender equality through policy advocacy and support to governments and other development actors to deliver on the gender and education-related Sustainable Development Goals (7, 17). UNGEI promotes the building of evidence and sharing of good practice in girls' education and gender equality and seeks to strengthen collaboration and partnership.

GPE (Global Partnership for Education):

The GPE 2020 strategy's country model locks together sector planning and implementation, government-led dialogue and monitoring, and education financing, to enable partner countries to achieve their goals in learning and equity. GPE has put in place a robust monitoring and evaluation program to measure progress on GPE 2020, reflect on the support provided, and learn from results achieved to date, to ensure that meaningful and equitable changes happen at the country level.

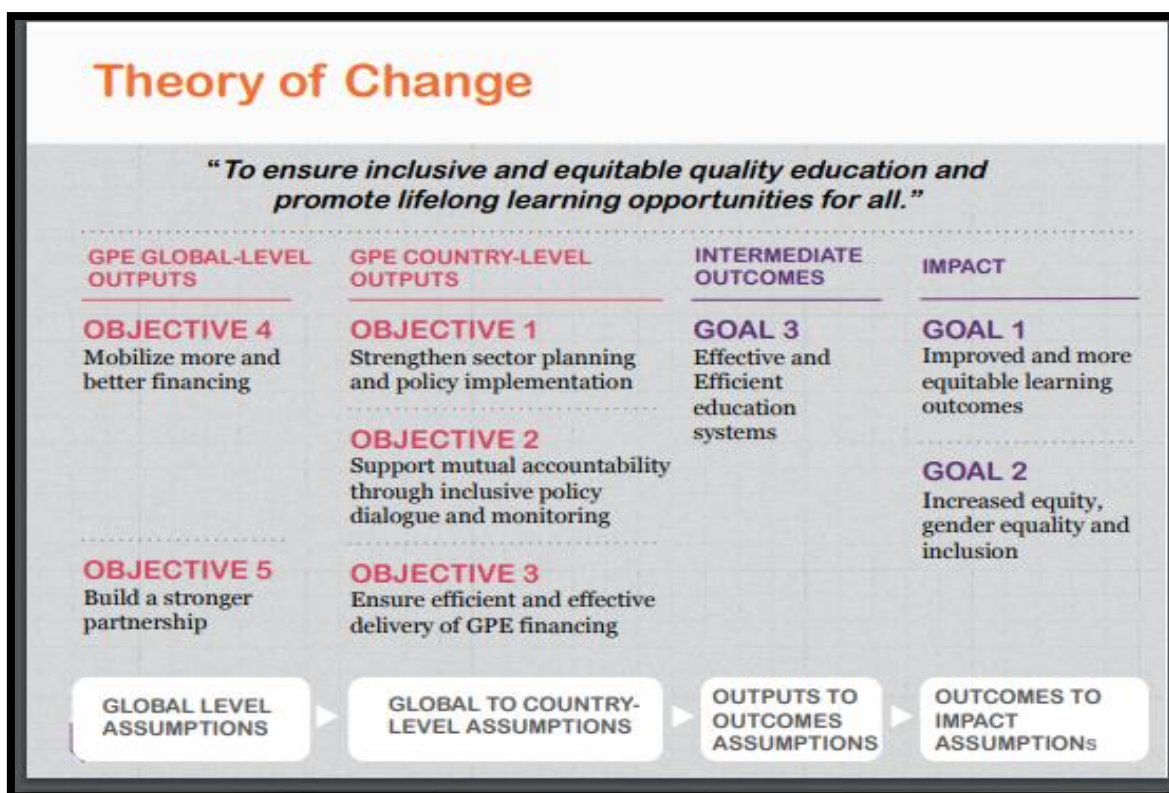


Figure 9: Improving learning and equity through stronger education systems: Global Partnership for Education, 2020²⁰

- Reforms and laws:

The recently published study “Women, Business and the Law 2019: A Decade of Reform” introduces a new index of eight indicators/ parameters that cover different stages of a woman’s working life, which have significant implications for the economic standing of women: Going Places, Starting a Job, Getting Paid, Getting Married, Having Children, Running a Business, Managing Assets and Getting a Pension.²¹

²⁰ <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/707111485965604836/GPE-2020-Enhancing-Equity-and-Learning-through-ECCE-ELP-Virtual-Series.pdf>

²¹ <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/31327/WBL2019.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y>
As you can see, these indicators are closely associated with outcomes that relate to women’s economic empowerment, women’s labor force participation. The study found that in economies that conducted reforms, more women work and is paid better.

The global picture: What does the index tell us?

The index shows that most of the world moved towards gender equality over the past decade. Ten years ago, the global average score was 70.06. Since then 131 economies made 274 legal changes towards gender equality. This led to a 4.65-point increase in the average global score, to 74.71 today. This is a significant achievement—but it also means that women still have only three-fourths of the legal rights of men in the measured areas.

8 Indicators that Measure How Laws Affect Women Through Their Working Lives

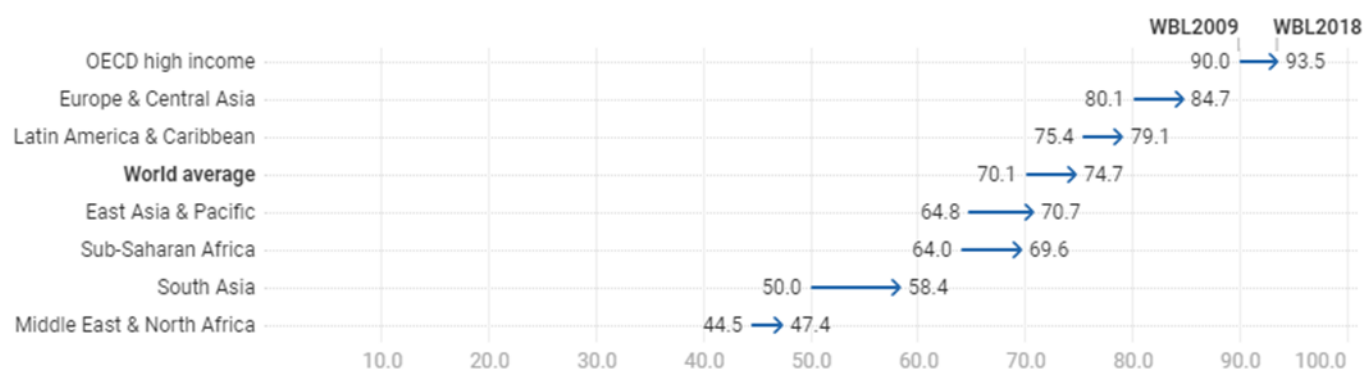


Source: *Women, Business and the Law 2019: A Decade of Reform*

Figure 10: The 8 indicators: *Women, Business and the Law 2019: A Decade of Reform*²²

Women's Legal Rights: How the World Improved over the Past Decade

Women, Business and the Law Index, WBL2009 - WBL2018



Source: *Women, Business and the Law*

Figure 11: WBL index; *Women, Business and the Law 2019: A Decade of Reform*

Regional Trends: Who Improved and How? All regions of the world improved on average towards gender equality over the past decade, and six countries—Belgium, Denmark, France, Latvia, Luxembourg and Sweden—now have a perfect score of 100, meaning that the law treats men and women equally along all the dimensions measured. No economy was gender equal under the law a decade ago.

²² <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/31327/WBL2019.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y>

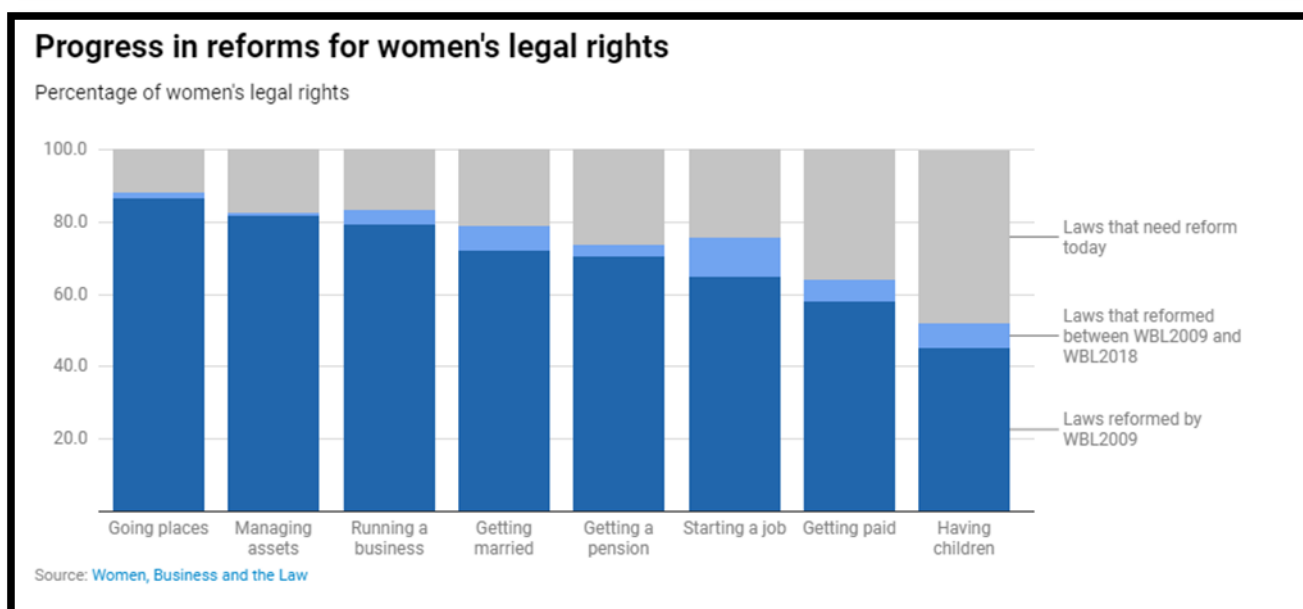
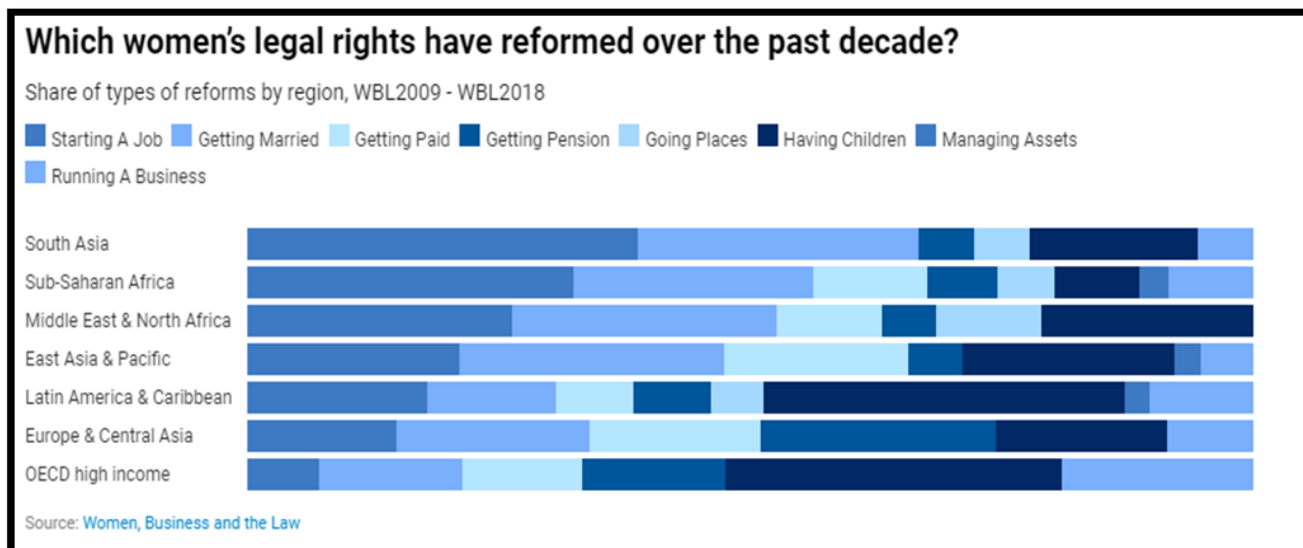


Figure 12: Women, Business and the Law 2019: A Decade of Reform²³

²³ <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/31327/WBL2019.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y>

“There are certain triggers for reforms benefitting gender equality. Advocacy by women’s groups coupled with public interest litigation is one such trigger as is support from bilateral and international organizations. These catalysts are very similar to reforms in other areas such as the business environment, where reforms are often driven by internal constituencies or encouraged by international organizations...” p20

Current Status: Key Questions to be addressed.

- 1) How can you identify the role of CSW in improving the quality of life in order to better prepare women and girls with the needed skills for the workforce of today and tomorrow?
- 2) What impact the CSW have in your country? Region as a whole?
- 3) How can the UN ensure monitoring the outcome of the changes and regulations towards women's right?
- 4) How transparent is your state when it comes to laws and reforms from women?
- 5) Has your state taken any past actions or contributed to any global past actions towards the status of women?
- 6) Does your delegation want to further the measures and laws in regards to women's rights or propose changes to the current measures?
- 7) How does your delegation approach intervention, communication and partnership with other states to help them improve the status of women?
- 8) How can you advance efforts to bridge the demand and supply sides of workforce development and education initiatives to produce better outcomes for women, their families and communities? Can these challenges be met?

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