



IN BRIEF



# UN WOMEN AT A GLANCE

## UN Women

UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, the organization was established in 2010 to accelerate progress on women's rights worldwide. UN Women's efforts are based on the fundamental belief that every woman has the right to live a life free from violence, poverty, and discrimination, and that gender equality is a prerequisite to achieving global development.

Empowering women fuels thriving societies, spurring productivity and growth. Yet gender inequalities remain deeply entrenched in every society: women continue to face violence and discrimination, they lack access to land, credit and decent work and are paid less for equal work. They are too often denied education and health care, and in political and economic decision-making women are disproportionately underrepresented.

When it comes to making peace after violent conflict, women are largely excluded from the negotiations and subsequently from decisions that affect the reconstruction of their communities and countries. Public spending and planning, at local as well as national levels, does not adequately take the needs and priorities of half of the population into account.

UN Women works with UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and then works with governments, civil society and UN System partners to design laws, programmes and services needed to implement these standards.

UN Women stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas to unlock rapid transformation:

- Increasing women's participation and leadership;
- Ending violence against women;
- Engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes;
- Enhancing women's economic empowerment; and
- Making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting.

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka is the Executive Director of UN Women and serves as the top-most official of the organization.

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## Facts and Figures

While there has been much progress, many challenges remain in achieving gender equality:

**ONE IN THREE WOMEN AND GIRLS** are impacted by physical or sexual violence in their lifetimes. A gross human rights violation, this pandemic fractures families and communities and hampers development, also costing billions of dollars annually in health care costs and lost productivity.

**MORE THAN 125 COUNTRIES** have specific laws that penalize domestic violence; yet 603 million women live in countries where it is not considered a crime.

**COUNTRIES WITH GREATER GENDER EQUALITY** have economies that grow faster, as shown through a comparative analysis of 134 countries. When women are empowered and have an income, they invest back into their families and communities, driving down hunger, poverty and malnutrition, and improving health, education and well-being.

**YET, ABOUT 925 MILLION PEOPLE GO HUNGRY** every day. FAO estimates that if women had the same access as men to productive assets, increased agricultural output in 34 developing countries could reduce the number of hungry people by up to 150 million.

**WHILE 139 CONSTITUTIONS GUARANTEE GENDER EQUALITY** and 117 have equal pay laws, women are still paid 10-30 per cent less than men, on average.

**WOMEN REMAIN DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECTED** by poverty, discrimination and exploitation, with more than half (50.4%) of working women in vulnerable employment. If women's paid employment rates were raised to the same level as men's, gross domestic product would be between 9 and 16 per cent higher in major developed economies while in developing economies, per capita income could rise by 14 per cent by 2020.

**EVERY DAY 800 WOMEN CONTINUE TO DIE** trying to give life. Millions of other women are at risk of unintended pregnancy or complications from unsafe abortions or childbirth due to lack of access to maternal and reproductive health care services and adequate family planning.

**A CHILD BORN TO A MOTHER WHO CAN READ** is 50 per cent more likely to survive. For every year of education beyond grade four that a woman receives, the risk of her child dying of preventable causes is reduced by 10 per cent. Yet women constitute two-thirds of the world's illiterate.

**AN ANALYSIS OF FORTUNE 500 COMPANIES** found that companies with the greatest representation of women in management positions delivered 34 per cent higher returns to shareholders than some of their counterparts.

**THIRTY PER CENT** is considered the "critical mass" mark for women's representation. Worldwide low representation of women in parliaments continues, with only one in five legislators being women.

**WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION** in governments makes a difference. In India in areas with female-led local councils the number of drinking water projects was 62 per cent higher than in those with male-led councils, while in Norway, evidence shows a direct relationship between the number of women in municipal councils and childcare coverage they enacted.

**WHERE WOMEN ARE PRESENT IN THE POLICE**, reporting of sexual assault increases, but on average only 1 in 10 police officers in the world is a woman.