
THE WORLD'S WOMEN 2015

At a Glance



United Nations Statistics Division

The lives of women and girls, men and boys everywhere are shaped by many factors: demographic, social, cultural, economic, epidemiological and environmental. Women and girls especially are negatively affected by perceptions of their role and position in society. Often this leads to discrimination against women and violation of their rights, which continues throughout their lives: from son preference that results in skewed sex ratios at birth (deviating from what would be expected biologically), to lower participation in school, in the labour force and in positions of political and decision-making power. Violence against women, which is found across countries and age groups, is another manifestation of discrimination and a violation of human rights.

This brochure summarizes the key findings of the upcoming publication, *The World's Women 2015: Trends and Statistics*, which includes research results and the latest data on the current situation of women compared to men and on progress achieved in critical areas of concern.

The World's Women reports are prepared by the Statistics Division of the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) at five-year intervals. Since 1990, five reports have been published as part of the series, analysing women's situation compared to men's worldwide in a broad range of fields. An exception was the 2005 edition that reviewed and analysed national capacity to collect and report sex-disaggregated data on social and economic topics relevant to addressing gender concerns.

For the complete series, please visit:

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/default.html>

For more information, please contact us at:

Statistics Division

United Nations

New York, NY 10017

United States of America

Fax: +1 212 963 9851

E-mail: statistics@un.org or genderstat@un.org

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The World's Women 2015 –

At a glance

Highlights of the situation of women and men in 2015 and of progress achieved since the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

Over the last 20 years, the lives of women around the world have improved in many areas. Life expectancy has continued to rise – reaching 72 years for women and 68 years for men. Age at marriage has increased for both sexes, reflecting increases in education levels, later entry into the labour force, and increased economic independence and empowerment of women. Women are having fewer children than before and are spending less time than in the past on domestic chores such as preparing meals and cleaning. Today, once enrolled, girls tend to perform better than boys in school and women now outnumber men in tertiary education in many countries. However, in many domains, women remain disadvantaged. Half of the world's women join the labour force, compared to three quarters of men; their work tends to be concentrated in certain economic sectors and occupations and they still earn less than men. Women do not have an equal voice in public and private spheres. They do not participate in public life on an equal footing with men nor hold equal power in decision-making processes. Within the household, many women lack control over even their own cash earnings. In every region of the world, women at all stages of life are subjected to various forms of violence, including physical and sexual violence, usually perpetrated by an intimate partner. In their later years, women are at higher risk of becoming widowed and of living alone than men of the same age.

The challenges and opportunities faced by women vary widely depending on where they reside. Those born in developing regions have a higher risk of dying too young compared to girls in developed countries; they are also likely to be less educated than boys, particularly if they happen to be born in sub-Saharan Africa or Southern Asia. Later on, girls in developing countries have a higher risk of not being in school; as a child and adolescents, they are more likely to be less educated than their brothers. What's more, they are at far greater risk of becoming child brides and of dying of pregnancy-related complications than girls in more developed regions. These young women will have less access to cash income and, if they marry, may have no say in how earnings they do make are spent.

In contrast, a girl born in a developed country will probably achieve a similar or higher level of education than boys, yet in different fields. She will go on to enter the labour force at similar rates to young men, but will probably end up participating less in the labour market as she attempts to balance work and family responsibilities. She will be paid less than her male counterparts and have less overall decision-making power. In older age, she will be more likely to live alone and in poverty than men of the same age.

The different trajectories of women and men – from childhood through the working and reproductive stage to older age – are highlighted in the key statistical findings of the analysis undertaken for *The World's Women 2015: Trends and Statistics* presented below.

FORMATIVE YEARS

Health

Mortality in children under age 5 has declined dramatically in all regions for both girls and boys. However, it remains high in sub-Saharan Africa, at 92 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2013. Communicable diseases remain a leading concern in developing regions and account for 70 per cent of mortality in children under age 5 when deaths in the first month of life are excluded. Lower respiratory infections, HIV/AIDS and diarrhoeal diseases are three of the most deadly communicable diseases at all ages, often the result of unsafe water and sanitation, poor hygiene and inadequate health services.

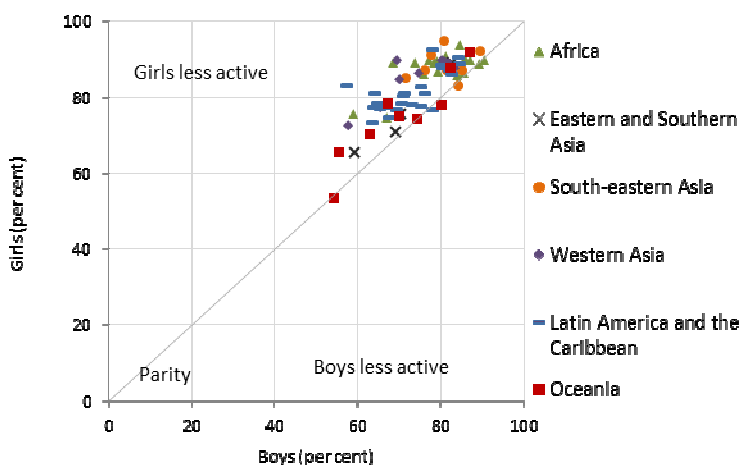
Adolescents in both developed and developing regions are at risk of forming habits that can lead to poor health. Prevalence of smoking is as high or even higher for teenage girls than boys in some countries,

and girls aged 13 to 15 are less likely to exercise than boys of the same age. In developing regions, additional risk factors such as unsafe sex contribute to health conditions related to pregnancy and childbirth and HIV/AIDS, the two leading causes of death among young women in developing countries.

For young men in all regions, and young women in developed regions, injuries are the leading cause of death. A specific type of injury – suicide – has higher rates among young men than young women in all regions, except Southern Asia and Eastern Asia. In Southern Asia, the risk of committing suicide among young women is more than twice as high as the global average.

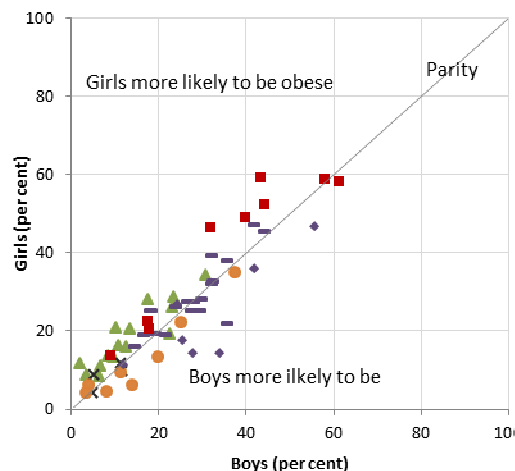
Girls are less likely than boys to exercise physically

Proportion of students aged 13 to 15 not meeting recommended levels of physical activity, 2003-2014 (latest available)



Obesity is common among both girls and boys in many countries

Proportion of students aged 13 to 15 who are obese, 2003-2014 (latest available)



Source: United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) based on data from the Global School-based Student Health Surveys.

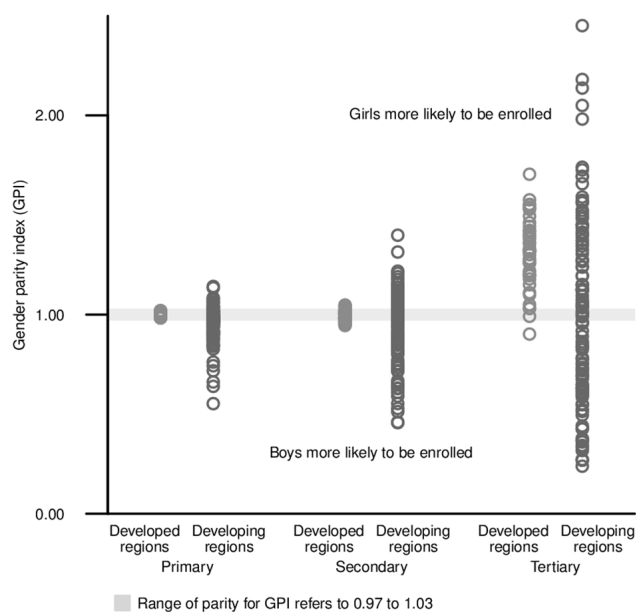
Education

Enrolment in primary education is now nearly universal. The gender gap has also narrowed and in some regions girls tend to perform better than boys at this level and progress more rapidly. However as education level increases, enrolment decline and gender disparities widen. Gender disparity is particularly prevalent in developing regions, to the advantage of boys in primary and secondary education in many countries and in favour of girls in tertiary education in others. Young women in developed regions clearly outnumber their male peers in tertiary education. In terms of the educational outcomes, girls and boys aged 15 years perform differently, with girls outperforming boys in reading skills in every country for which data are available. Boys perform slightly better in mathematics, but the gender gap is insignificant in most countries.

Despite improvements, 58 million children of primary school age are not in school. More than half of these children are girls and nearly three quarters live in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia. Nearly one in five (63 million) adolescents of lower secondary school age are out of school, with girls accounting for half of this total.

Gender disparities widen as the level of education increases

Gender parity index for gross enrolment ratios in primary, secondary and tertiary education, 2005 –2012 (latest available)



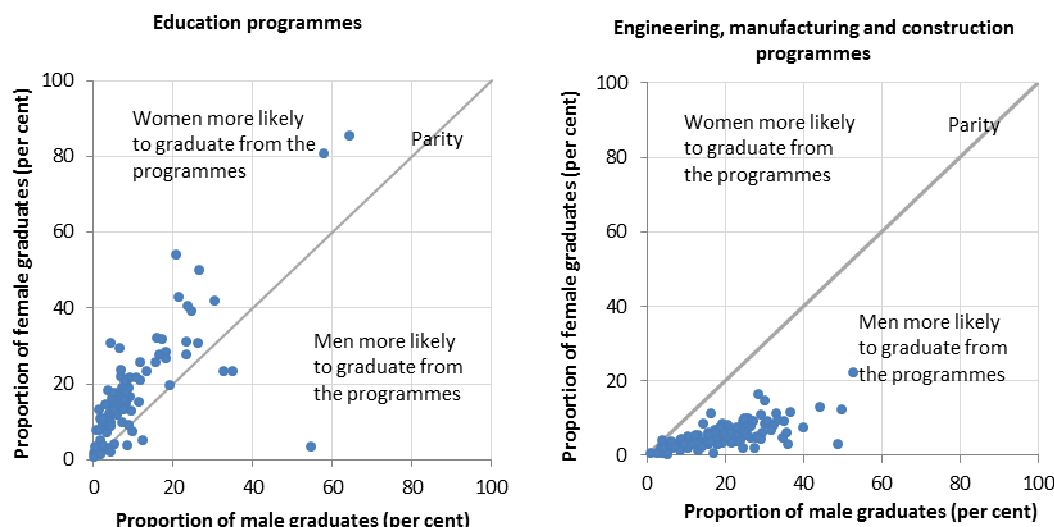
Source: UNSD based on data from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Institute for Statistics (accessed May 2014)

Female participation in tertiary education has increased globally and now surpasses male participation in many countries. However, women continue to be underrepresented in the most advanced degree programmes, especially in science-related fields of study, resulting in

fewer women than men in research. Women account for 30 per cent of all scientific researchers – an increase compared to previous decades but still far from parity.

Women are starkly underrepresented in fields of studies related to engineering, manufacturing and construction

Proportion of tertiary graduates in education and engineering, manufacturing and construction programmes, women and men, 2005–2013 (latest available)



Source: UNSD based on data from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (accessed February 2015).

Rights and empowerment

The harmful practice of child marriage has overall declined, yet 44 per cent of women aged 20 to 24 in Southern Asia and 40 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa were married before age 18. Following a similar pattern, adolescent birth rates have declined everywhere but remain particularly high in sub-Saharan Africa, where 1 in 9 adolescent girls have a baby.

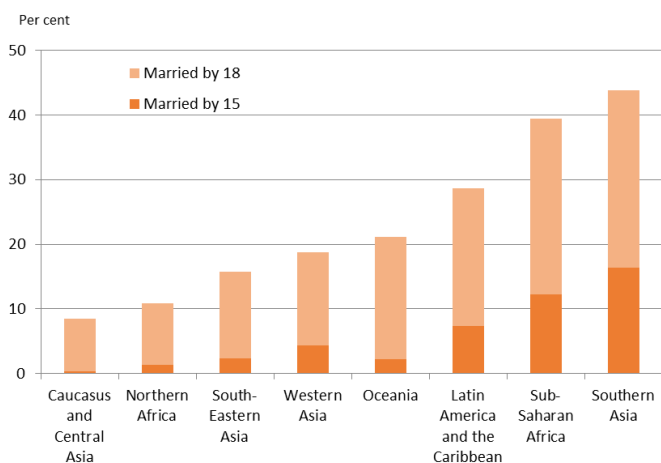
An estimated 120 million girls and women under age 20 (about 1 in 10) have been subjected to forced sexual intercourse or other forced sexual acts. The proportion of women whose first experience of sexu-

al intercourse was forced against their will is almost 30 per cent in some countries.

More than 125 million girls and women today have been subjected to female genital mutilation in countries in Africa and Western Asia where this specific form of violence against women is concentrated. Prevalence tends to be lower among younger women, indicating a decline in the practice, however it remains unacceptably widespread in a number of countries, with overall prevalence rates of over 80 per cent.

The prevalence of child marriage is high, particularly in Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa

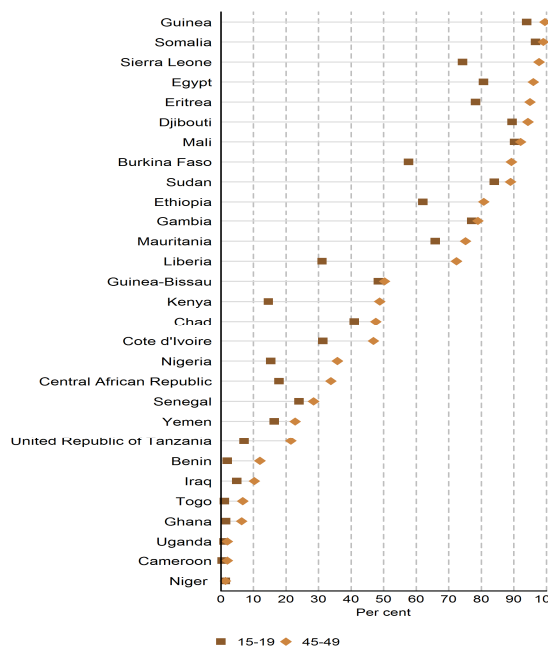
Proportion of women aged 20 to 24 who married before ages 15 and 18, 2005–2013 (latest available)



Source: UNSD based on data from United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), special tabulation on child marriage (last updated February 2015).

Female genital mutilation still prevalent in Africa and Western Asia

Girls and women aged 15 to 19 and 45 to 49 subjected to female genital mutilation, 1995-2013 (latest available)



Source: UNSD based on Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) and Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) reports.

ADULT AGES

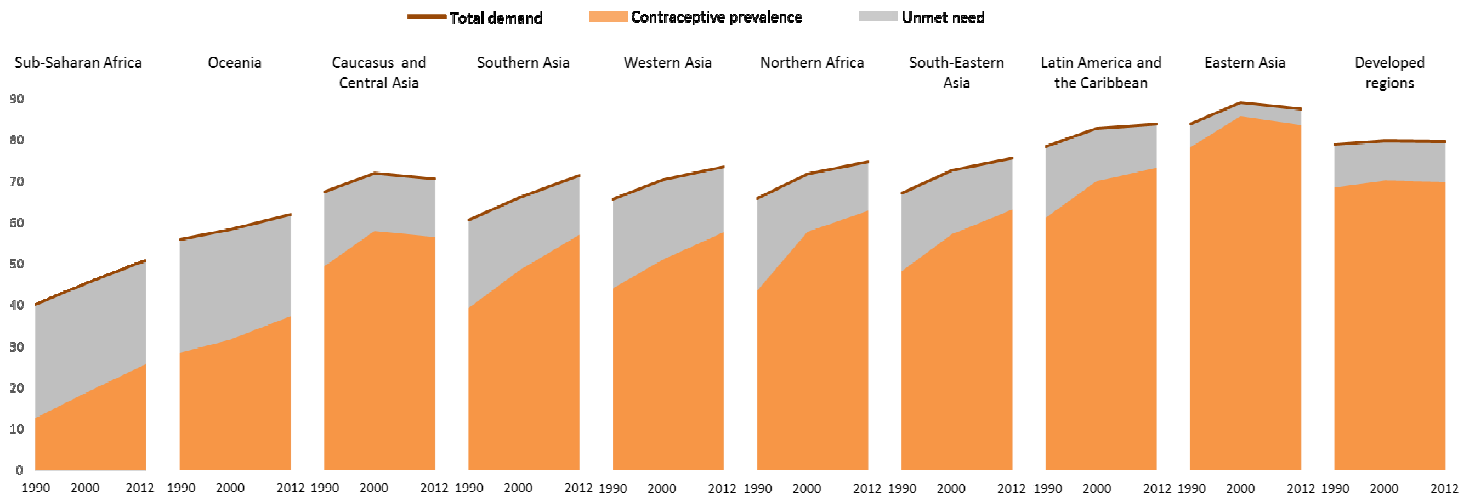
Health

A growing share of women are using contraceptives and the demand for family planning is increasingly being satisfied. Sub-Saharan Africa, however, lags behind. In this region, only 5 out of 10 women with a stated desire to avoid pregnancy are using contraceptives. This is also

the region with the highest share of unsafe abortions and levels of maternal mortality. Oceania shows similar patterns with 4 out of 10 women with an unmet need for family planning.

Unmet need for family planning remains high, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and Oceania

Total demand for family planning, contraceptive prevalence, and unmet need for family planning, 1990, 2000 and 2012 (percentage of women married or in union, aged 15 to 49)

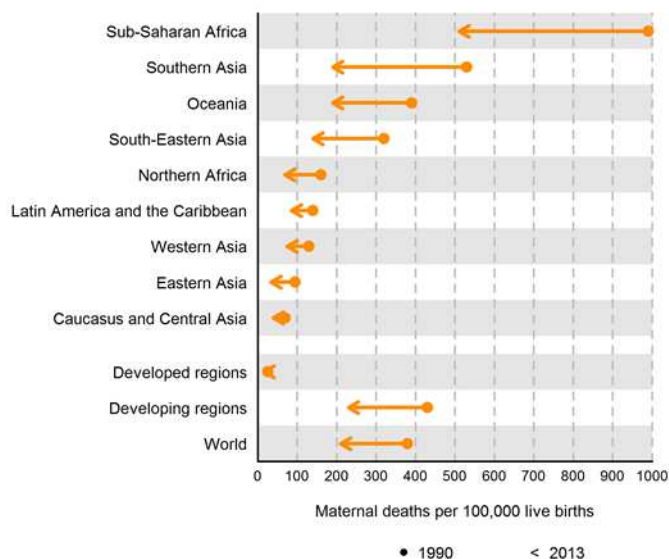


Source: UNSD based on United Nations Population Division, *Model-based Estimates and Projections of Family Planning Indicators 2014*

Maternal health has improved considerably over the years. Worldwide, the number of maternal deaths declined by 45 per cent between 1990 and 2013. Still, in sub-Saharan Africa and also in Southern Asia, only half of pregnant women receive adequate care during childbirth. In 2012, 83 per cent of pregnant women had at least one antenatal care visit in developing regions, an improvement of 18 percentage points since 1990. However, only 52 per cent of pregnant women had the recommended minimum of four antenatal care visits.

Maternal mortality has declined, yet high levels are found in sub-Saharan Africa

Maternal mortality ratio by region, 1990 and 2013

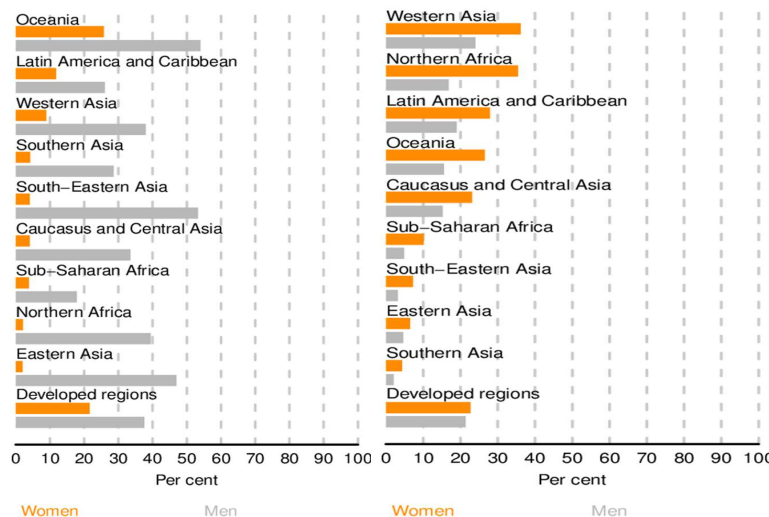


Source: UNSD based on United Nations Millennium Development Goals Report 2014, statistical annex.

In terms of unhealthy habits and risk factors for non-communicable diseases, men smoke tobacco and drink alcohol to a much greater extent than women. Thirty-three per cent of men aged 15 and over smoke and 48 per cent drink, compared to 13 per cent and 29 per cent of women, respectively. However, large numbers of women have adopted tobacco smoking in developed regions and their numbers are increasing in Oceania. The prevalence of obesity has increased for both sexes, with current levels of obesity higher for women than men (14 per cent of women aged 20 and over are obese compared to 10 per cent of men).

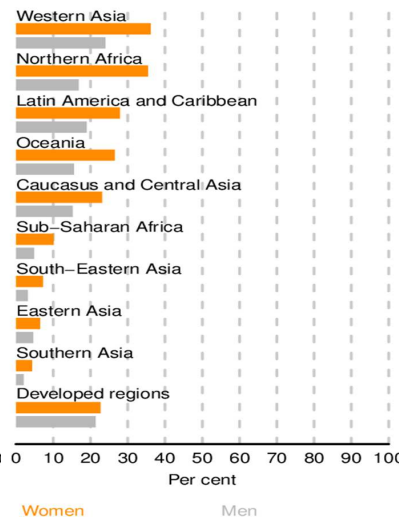
Smoking prevalence is high among men everywhere and women in developed regions and Oceania

Tobacco smoking prevalence, 15+, 2011



Obesity prevalence is higher for women than men

Obesity prevalence, 20+, 2008



Source: Statistics on tobacco smoking compiled by UNSD from World Health Organization (WHO), *WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic, 2013*, appendix X. Statistics on obesity, computed by UNSD based on data from WHO, Global health observatory (accessed 23 September 2014).

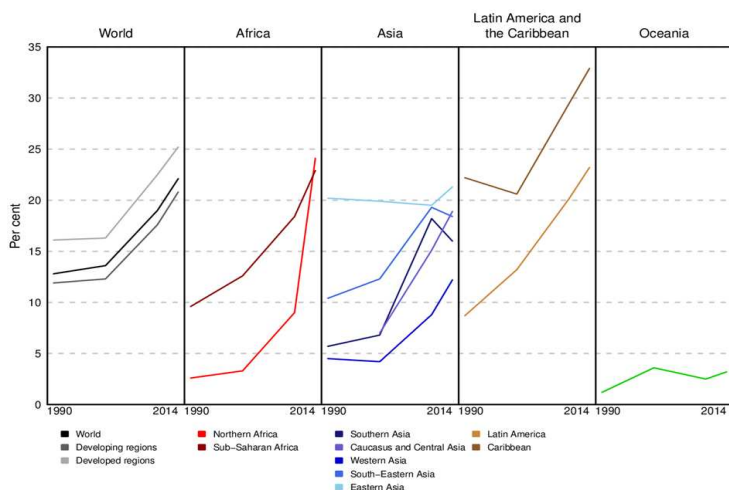
Rights and empowerment

Women are underrepresented at all levels of political decision-making, but progress is being made. The number of female Heads of State or Government reached 19 in 2014, 7 more than in 1995. The proportion of the world's cabinet ministers who were women nearly tripled between 1994 and 2014, yet remains low at 17 per cent. Worldwide, only about 1 in 5 parliamentary seats are held by women, however this is an increase from 1 in 8 in 1990.

Women's representation among corporate managers, legislators and senior officials remains low, ranging between 21 per cent in Africa and 37 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean. The gender composition of executive boards of private companies is far from parity – fewer than 4 per cent of chief executive officers heading the world's

Women's representation in parliament has increased

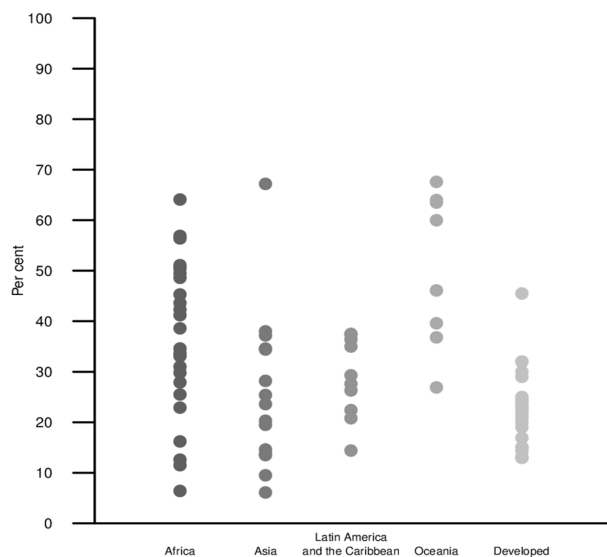
Proportion of seats held by women in single or lower chambers of national parliaments, by region, as of January 2014



Source: UNSD based on United Nations Millennium Development Goals Report 2014, statistical annex.

Violence against women exists everywhere

Prevalence of lifetime intimate partner physical and/or sexual violence by region, 1995-2014



Source: UNSD based on data from national and international surveys on violence against women.

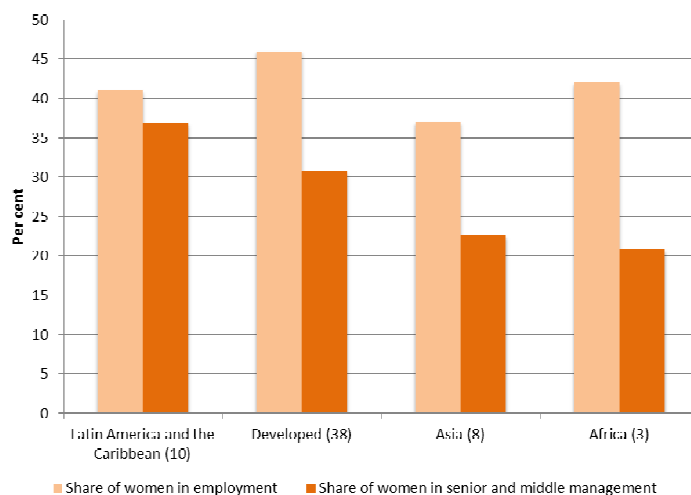
Note: Age group covered varies by data source

500 major corporations were women in 2014, meaning that the "glass ceiling" is still firmly in place for the world's women.

In developing countries, women's ability to be economically independent is restricted by limited access to their own cash income (which is on average lower than men's by 35 percentage points) and discriminatory laws on inheritance and property rights in over two thirds of countries. Many women are also excluded from economic decision-making within their own households. In developing countries for which data are available, about 1 in 3 married women are excluded from decision-making about major household purchases, and about 1 in 10 married women are not consulted on how their own cash earnings are spent.

Women's share in senior and middle management remains low

Share of women in senior and middle management and in employment, 2009-2013 (latest available)



Source: UNSD based on data in the Minimum Set of Gender Indicators database, indicator 45 (last accessed February 2015)

Note: The numbers in brackets indicate the number of countries with available data.

More than one third (35 per cent) of women worldwide have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner or sexual violence by a non-partner at some point in their lives. Intimate partner violence is the most common form of violence, and this type of violence peaks in women's reproductive years in both developed and developing countries. Prevalence declines, but does not disappear, with age and is lowest among women aged 60 and over.

In more than 60 per cent of countries with data available, fewer than 40 per cent of women who experienced violence sought help of any kind. Among women who did, most looked to family and friends as opposed to the police and health services. In almost all countries, the percentage of women who sought help from the police, out of all women who sought help, was less than 15 per cent.

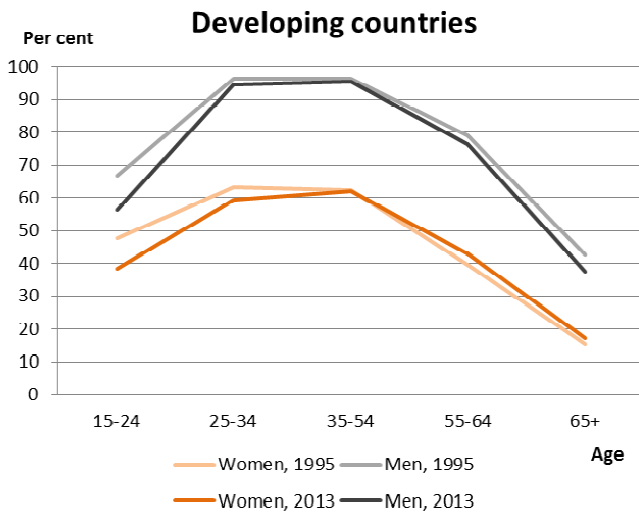
Work

When both paid and unpaid work such as household chores and caring for children are taken into account, women work longer hours than men. Women spend an average of 3 hours more per day than men on unpaid work in developing countries, and 2 hours more in developed countries. In terms of paid work, women in developing countries spend 2 hours less per day than men on average; in developed countries, they spend 1.5 hour less than men. Gender differentials in time spent on domestic work are narrowing, mainly as a result of less time spent on household chores by women accompanied, to a smaller extent, by an increase in time spent on childcare by men.

The gender gap in labour force participation remains large in all regions. Globally, both women's and men's participation in the labour market declined slightly from 1995 to 2013, with participation rates currently at 50 per cent and 77 per cent, respectively. This trend is mainly driven by a decline in participation among both young women and men aged 15 to 24. Nevertheless, higher proportions of women aged 25 to 54 are participating in the labour force than in the past.

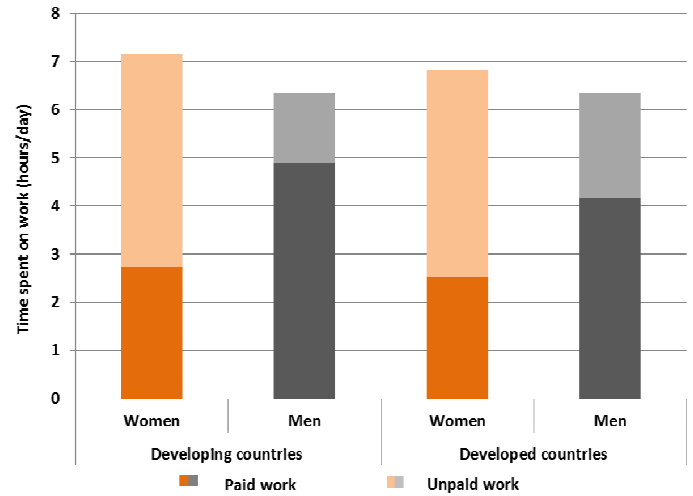
Gender gap in labour force participation remains large

Labour force participation rate, persons 15 and over, by sex and age, 1995 and 2013



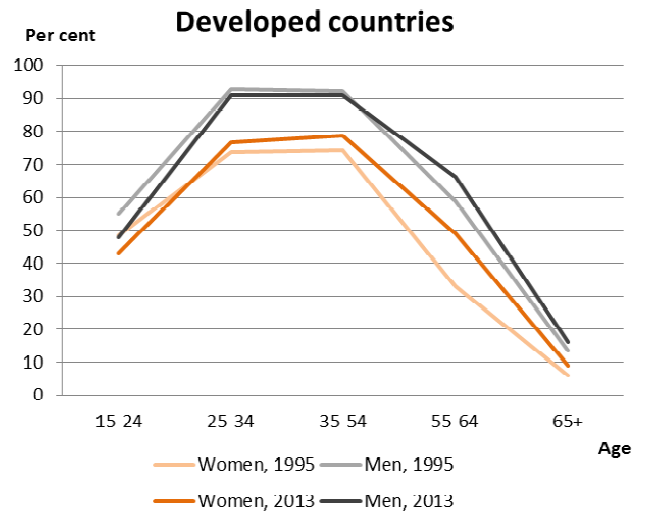
Women work longer hours than men when unpaid work is factored in

Time spent on paid and unpaid work by sex, developing and developed countries, 2005 – 2013 (latest available)



Source: UNSD based on country-level data from Eurostat, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC) and national statistical offices (as of November 2014)

Note: The graph is based on available data from 29 countries from developing regions and 24 countries from developed regions.



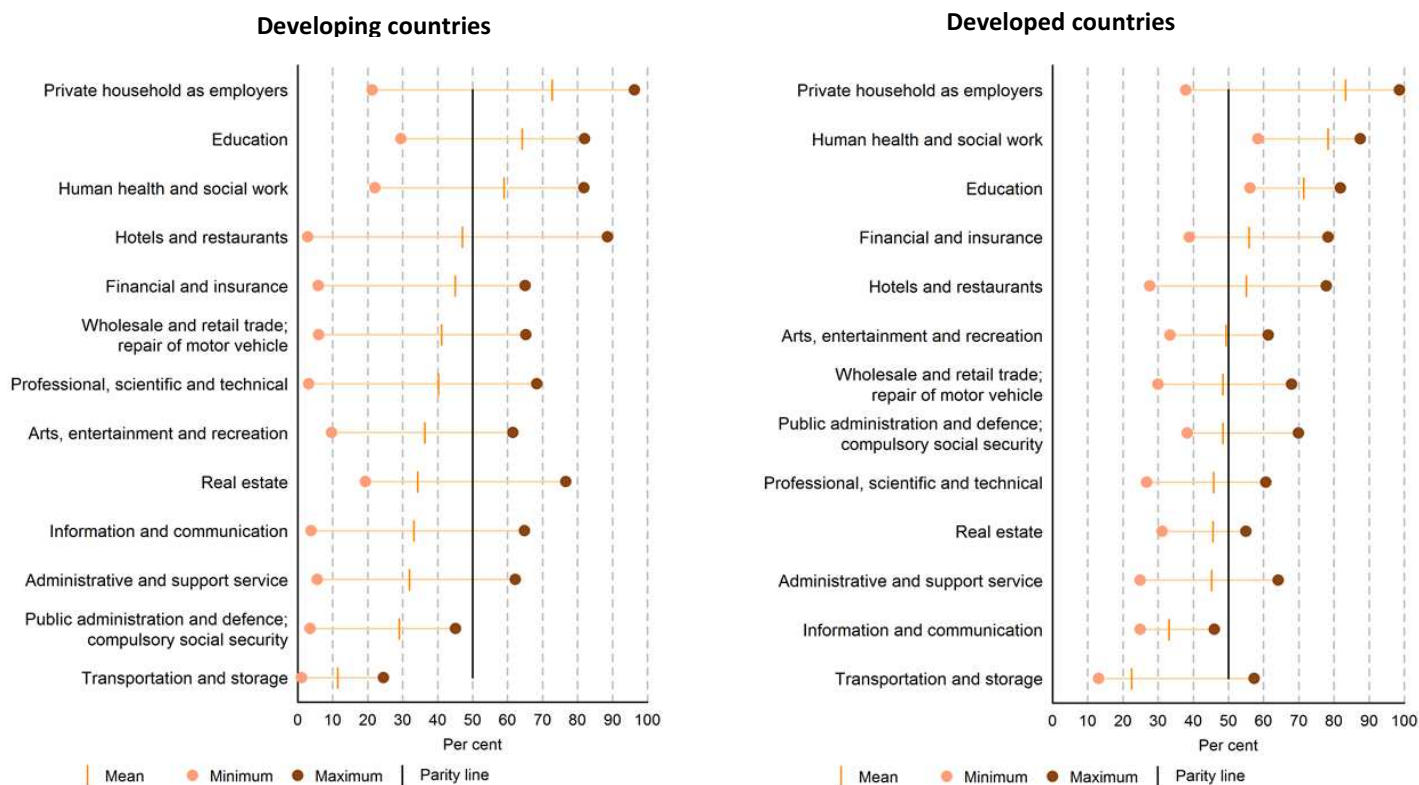
Source: UNSD based on data from the International Labour Office (ILO), Key Indicators of the Labour Market, table 1a (accessed January 2015).

Women are more likely than men to be unemployed, and when they are employed they have different types of jobs than men. Women are more often found in jobs with low pay and no social protection, including as workers in private households (of which 78 per cent are women) and contributing family workers (63 per cent). Women are also better represented in jobs with shorter or more flexible hours, including as part-time workers (63 per cent) and in services related to education, health and social work (68 per cent), which offer opportunities for balancing work and family responsibilities but lower income and fewer options for career advancement.

Women earn less than men across all sectors and occupations, with women working full-time earning between 70 per cent and 90 per cent of what men earn, in most countries. Moreover, men benefit more than women in terms of higher pay from higher levels of education and seniority. Most developed countries show a long-term decline in the gender pay gap, but the trend is mixed in recent years.

Women are the majority of workers in specific sub-categories of the services sector

Share of women in subcategories of the services sector, 2008–2012 (latest available)

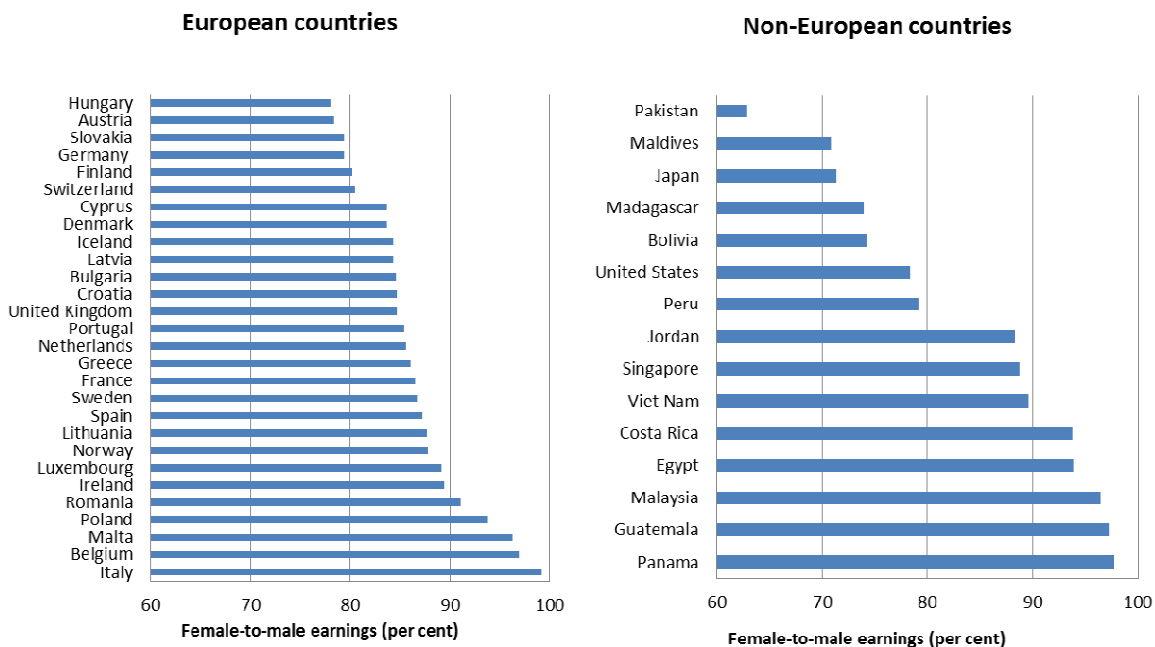


Source: UNSD based on data from ILO, Key Indicators of the Labour Market, tables 5a and 5b (accessed June 2014).

Note: The graph is based on data available from 24 countries from developing regions and 36 countries from developed regions.

A gender pay gap exists in all countries with available data

Ratio of female-to-male earnings, 2008–2012 (latest available)



Source: UNSD based on data from Eurostat, Structure of Earning Survey 2010; ILO, ILOSTAT (accessed August 2014).

Note: Data for full-time wage and salaried workers only.

OLDER YEARS

Health

Non-communicable diseases are the dominant cause of death at older ages – worldwide they are responsible for 85 per cent of all deaths among people aged 60 and over. Cardiovascular disease (stroke and ischaemic heart disease) is, by a large margin, the most common cause of death in both older women and men. Men have a higher risk of dying from cardiovascular disease than women of the same age, with the risk being 1.6 times higher for men than women among those aged 60 to 69. Despite this, more older women than older men die from the disease – 7.8 million women compared to 6.8 million men in 2012 – because women represent the majority of older persons.

All cancers combined are the second leading cause of death among women and men aged 60 and older, and they are also a major cause of disability. In 2012, for all ages, over 14 million new cases of cancer were diagnosed, 32.6 million people were living with cancer, and 8.2 million people died from the disease, according to latest estimates. The incidence rate for all cancers is 24 per cent higher for men than for women, and the global mortality rate for men is 52 per cent higher. For women, cancers of the breast, lung, colon and cervix are most common; for men, cancers of the lung, prostate, colon, stomach and liver predominate.

Dementia, one of the major causes of disability in later life, results in the loss of the mental skills that enable a person to live independently. Older women are particularly affected by dementia because of their greater longevity and the typically late onset of the condition.

Staying involved and active

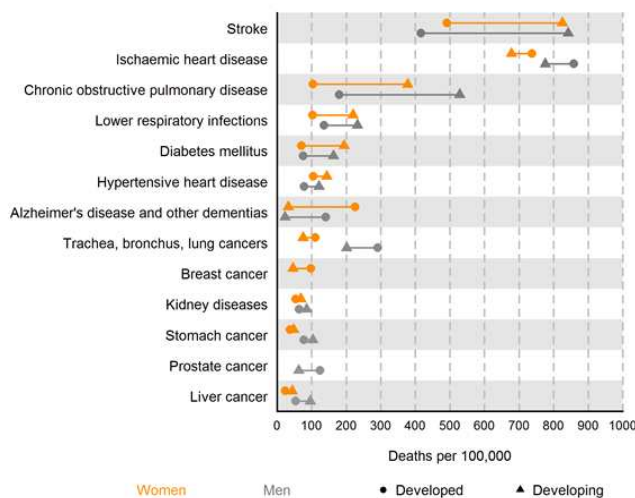
Women remain in the labour market longer than before, often reflecting changes in the statutory retirement age and pension reforms. The proportion of women aged 55 to 64 still in the labour force increased over the last two decades in most regions; the increase was more than 10 percentage points in more developed regions, Eastern Europe, Southern Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean. The participation of women in the labour market after they reach 65, however, has not changed over time and is still less than 25 per cent in most regions. The only exceptions are sub-Saharan Africa and Oceania, where women aged 64 and over are more likely to be in the labour force than women from other regions – a result of their higher participation in subsistence agriculture.

In many cases, the ability of women and men to be self-reliant, work as long as desired and remain socially engaged at older ages, is limited by illiteracy and low participation in adult education programmes, among other factors. Illiteracy affects 781 million adults in the world today. More than half are in Southern Asia and a quarter in sub-Saharan Africa. Nearly two thirds of illiterate adults are women, a proportion that has remained unchanged for two decades. At age 65 and older, 30 per cent of women are illiterate compared to 19 per cent of men. Illiteracy has almost been eradicated in developed regions and the Caucasus and Central Asia. By comparison, the vast majority of older women in Northern Africa, sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia are illiterate.

The number of years of healthy life lost globally due to Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia is 14 per cent higher for women than for men in the age group 60 to 69 years and is 38 per cent higher in the age group 70 and over.

Cardiovascular disease is the most common cause of death for older women and men

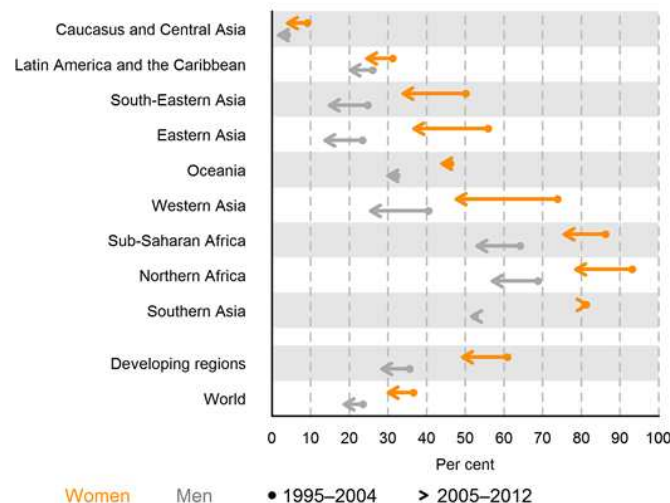
Mortality rates for top causes of deaths at age 60 and over, by sex and region, 2012



Source: UNSD based on data from WHO, 2014, *Global health estimates for deaths by cause, age, and sex for years 2000-2012*.

Women's illiteracy rate declined remains higher

Illiteracy rate for older persons (aged 65+) by sex and region, 1995–2004 and 2005–2012



Source: UNSD based on data from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (as of May 2014)

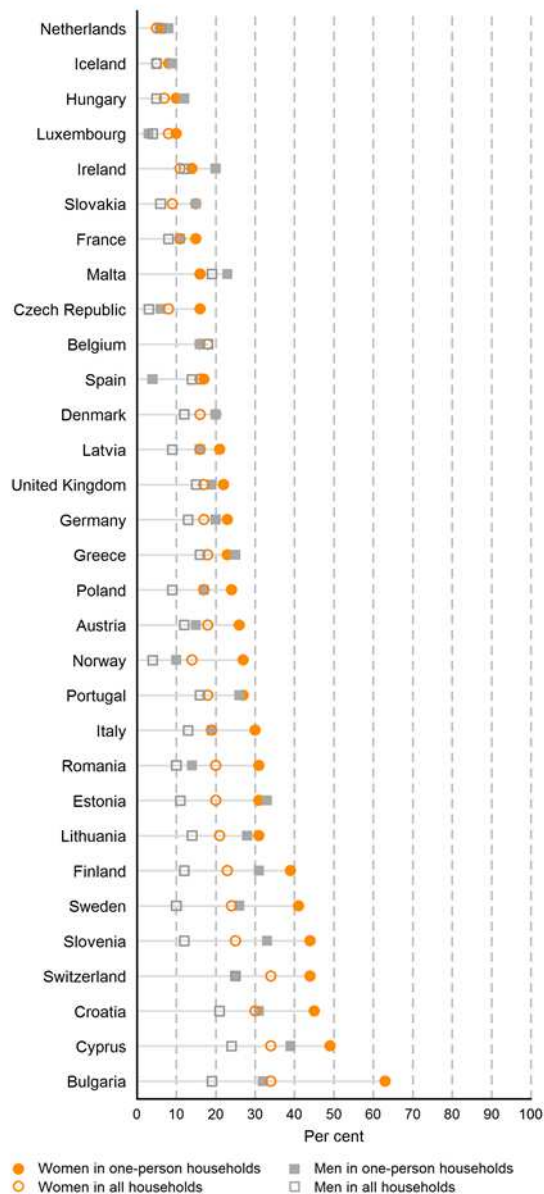
Rights and empowerment

Women's economic dependency on men, rooted in inequality in inheritance and property rights and unequal access to their own income, becomes most visible when families dissolve as a result of divorce or the death of a partner. Women as single mothers with dependent children and older women living alone have higher rates of poverty than men in similar types of living arrangements.

Although violence peaks in women's reproductive years, it persists as women age. For example, across countries of the European Union, the proportion of women who experienced physical and/or sexual violence in the past 12 months was 6 per cent for women between the ages of 18 and 29, decreasing to 3 per cent for women aged 60 and over.

In European countries, older women are more likely to be poor than older men, particularly when living in one-person households

Poverty rate for older persons (aged 65+) by sex, in all households and in one-person households, European countries 2012



Source: UNSD based on data from EUROSTAT, Income and Living Conditions database online (2014).

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/default.html>