

Chapter 5

Power and decision-making

Key findings

- The number of female Heads of State or Government reached 19 in 2015, only seven more than in 1995.
- Women's representation in lower or single houses of parliament has increased, yet globally only about one in every five of parliamentarians is a woman.
- Around 30 per cent of electoral candidates in lower or single houses of parliament are women.
- Women's representation among cabinet ministers increased from 6 per cent in 1994 to 18 per cent in 2015.
- Women's participation in local government has grown in many countries, yet remains far from parity.
- Women are outnumbered by men among judges and magistrates in about half of the countries with data. At higher levels up the judicial hierarchy, women's representation declines drastically.
- The media remains a male-dominated industry that reinforces gender stereotypes.
- The glass ceiling appears to be most impenetrable in the world's largest corporations; less than 4 per cent of Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) are women and the gender composition of executive boards of private companies is far from parity.

Introduction

In societies around the world, men typically hold most positions of power and decision-making, an area in which gender inequality is often severe and highly visible. Advances over the past two decades are evident in all regions and most countries, but progress has been slow. Women continue to be underrepresented in national parliaments. They are seldom leaders of major political parties, participate as candidates in elections in small numbers and, during electoral processes, face multiple obstacles deeply rooted in inequality in gender norms and expectations. The use by some countries of gender quotas has improved women's chances of being elected. Yet, once elected, few women reach the higher echelons of parliamentary hierarchies.

Women are also largely excluded from executive branches of government, and female Heads of State or Government are still the exception. Only a minority of women are appointed as ministers and, when they are, they are usually not assigned

to core ministries (such as to the cabinet of the prime minister, or to ministries of home affairs, finance, defence and justice). Women continue to be outnumbered by men in the highest-ranking positions in the civil service. They are not equally represented among government ambassadors and representatives to the United Nations, nor in local government. The underrepresentation of women is even more extreme in the private sector. The glass ceiling appears to be most impenetrable in the largest corporations, which are still essentially male dominated, particularly at the level of CEO.

This chapter provides an assessment of the current situation in the participation of women and men in positions of power and decision-making across the world, as well as trends over the past two decades. Three main areas are covered: politics and governance, the media, and the private sector.

Box 5.1

Gaps in statistics on women in positions of power and decision-making

Women's representation in positions of power and decision-making in public office, corporations and the media has garnered growing attention over the past two decades. Moreover, data for monitoring progress in these areas are also increasingly available. The most readily available information on decision-making relates to the number and proportion of women in national parliaments and key elected positions, collected under the auspices of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). For instance, the number of countries from which data on women's representation in lower or single houses of parliament were available increased from 167 in 1997 to 190 in 2015.^a Data on women's representation in ministerial positions were available for 181 countries in 1994 and 192 countries in 2015.^b

For other topics, data are available for fewer countries. For example, as at March 2015, sex-disaggregated data on candidates in the latest parliamentary elections, compiled by the IPU, are available for 99^c countries compared to 65 countries in 2010^d. Sex-disaggregated data, as at April 2015, on the number of female judges and magistrates, compiled annually by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), are available for 76 countries.^e

Data on power and decision-making are also collected by regional organizations for their member States. The European Commission, for example, regularly monitors the numbers of men and women in key decision-making positions for the 28 countries of the European Union (EU), as well as candidate countries (such as Iceland, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey) and two other European countries (Liechtenstein and Norway)^f. Indicators maintained in its database cover positions in politics, public administration, the judiciary, business and finance, social partners and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), environment and the media. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) also maintains indicators on positions of decision-making in public life and the private sector for its Member States.^g The United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC) maintains indicators on autonomy in decision-making in the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean^h, as well as indicators on women in power and decision-making in

CEPALSTAT (Statistics on Latin America and the Caribbean).ⁱ Data are available from 1998 to 2013 for countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as for some countries in Europe such as Portugal and Spain.

Consistently measuring the participation of women in local governments across countries and regions remains a challenge, since internationally agreed standards, definitions and indicators for monitoring this area are yet to be developed. Moreover, local government structures vary from one country to the next. Depending on the region or country, data collected may differ in the level or type of positions taken into consideration, and the metadata needed to understand those differences are often missing. Currently, data on participation in local governments are regularly collected and maintained by some regional agencies only, including by the European Commission and UNECE for Europe and by UNECLAC for Latin America and the Caribbean. All together, these sources provided data on mayors for 59 countries and on city or town councils for 55 countries in Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean.^j In Asia and Oceania, information on the percentage of subnational (all tiers of government below national level) women's representation has been published in ad hoc regional reports prepared by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and is available for 29 countries.^k The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA) produced the electronic publication "Gender in Figures" in 2011, 2013 and 2013–2014, and in the latest edition^l, published data on women in local councils or municipalities for eight countries in Northern Africa and Western Asia.

At the international level, official data also tend to be sparse on women's access to high-level decision-making positions in the media and the private sector. Statistics and analysis on these topics are based in large part on private and NGO sources. Most of the indicators for measuring the participation of women in power and decision-making focus on their individual participation. However, women's collective action is of equal importance if women's issues are going to be taken into consideration by policy makers.^m Yet, the measurement of collective action is challenging as the concept is broad and requires many different aspects to be measured.

^a United Nations, 2015a.

^b United Nations, table 6A, 2000a and IPU and UN Women, 2015.

^c Compiled by the United Nations Statistics Division from IPU, PARLINE database on national parliaments, www.ipu.org/parline-e/parlinesearch.asp (accessed 25 March 2015). Data for Andorra, Canada, Cyprus, Estonia, Ireland and the Lao People's Democratic Republic obtained from the IPU, 2011c. Data for Armenia, Gambia and Lesotho obtained from IPU, 2013.

^d United Nations, 2010b.

^e UNODC, 2015.

^f European Commission, 2015a.

^g UNECE, 2015.

^h UNECLAC, 2014.

ⁱ UNECLAC, 2015.

^j European Commission, 2015a; UNECLAC, 2015.

^k UNDP, 2014.

^l UNESCWA, 2015.

^m UN Women, 2015.

A. Politics and governance

Equal participation of women and men in politics is central to more inclusive and democratic governance. As stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, “everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.”^{1, 2} Greater representation of women in national and local government can bring a different perspective on women’s needs and priorities when framing national and local policies and allocating budgets. The election of women to parliament can be a first step towards gender-sensitive reforms. In some contexts, greater representation of women in public decision-making has already been associated with policy and budgetary shifts. For instance, a study conducted in 2006–2008 among parliamentarians from 110 countries showed that women in parliament were more likely than men to prioritize gender and social issues such as childcare, equal pay, parental leave, pensions, reproductive rights and protection against gender-based violence.³

1. Parliaments

Women’s representation in parliament has increased, yet globally only about one in five members of parliament are female

Although women make up about half of the electorate and have attained the right to vote and hold office in almost every country in the world,⁴ they continue to be underrepresented as members of national parliaments. Improvement in the representation of women in this domain has been steady, but there is still a long way to go. The proportion of seats held by women in single or lower chambers of national parliaments⁵ was

22 per cent in 2015, almost double the level recorded in 1997 (12 per cent).⁶

The share of women in parliament has increased steadily in most subregions (figure 5.1). In 2015, it was highest in the Caribbean, followed by developed regions, Latin America, Northern Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. All subregions in Asia and Oceania were below the global average. The lowest share of women in parliament continues to be found in Oceania, although minor improvements have been noted over time. Eastern Asia, which used to have one of the highest shares of women in single or lower houses of parliament in 1990, has made little progress and, in 2015, was below the global average.

A small number of countries have reached or surpassed the parity line of 50 percent. Since 2003, the record for women’s representation in a national parliament is no longer held by any of the Nordic countries, which have been leading on this issue for decades.⁷ Instead, Rwanda is presently ranked as number one (64 per cent). Other countries or areas ranking high in the representation of women in parliament are Bolivia (53 per cent), Andorra (50 per cent) and Cuba (49 per cent). They are followed by a group of countries with representation by women ranging from 40 to 44 per cent and include Ecuador, Finland, Iceland, Mozambique, Namibia, Norway, Senegal, Seychelles, South Africa, Spain and Sweden. All these countries have reached and surpassed the international target of 30 per cent of women in leadership positions originally set by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 1990⁸ and reaffirmed in the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995.⁹ In 2015, a total of 43 out of 190 countries reached or surpassed this target. These countries cut across all levels of economic development and democratic freedoms and liberties. Most of them are located in the three regions that progressed the most over the past two decades in terms of meeting the target: the developed regions (18 countries), sub-Saharan Africa (12 countries), and Latin America and the Caribbean (9 countries). At the other extreme, 70 countries (or close to one third of all countries with parliaments) have less than 15 per cent participation of women in the lower or single houses of national

1 United Nations, 1946.

2 This right was reiterated in the Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights adopted by General Assembly resolution 2200 (XXI) of 16 December 1966. United Nations, 1966.

3 IPU, 2008.

4 In Saudi Arabia, while women and men have the right to vote, women are yet to vote in an election. In Brunei Darussalam, women and men have limited voting rights. In the United Arab Emirates (UAE) there is limited suffrage as the Parliament is indirectly elected. UN Women, 2015.

5 Out of 191 countries with parliaments, 115 have unicameral parliaments and 76 countries have bicameral parliaments (which include a lower chamber and an upper house or senate). As at 1 January 2015, there was no parliament in Brunei Darussalam, the Central African Republic and Egypt. IPU and UN Women, 2015.

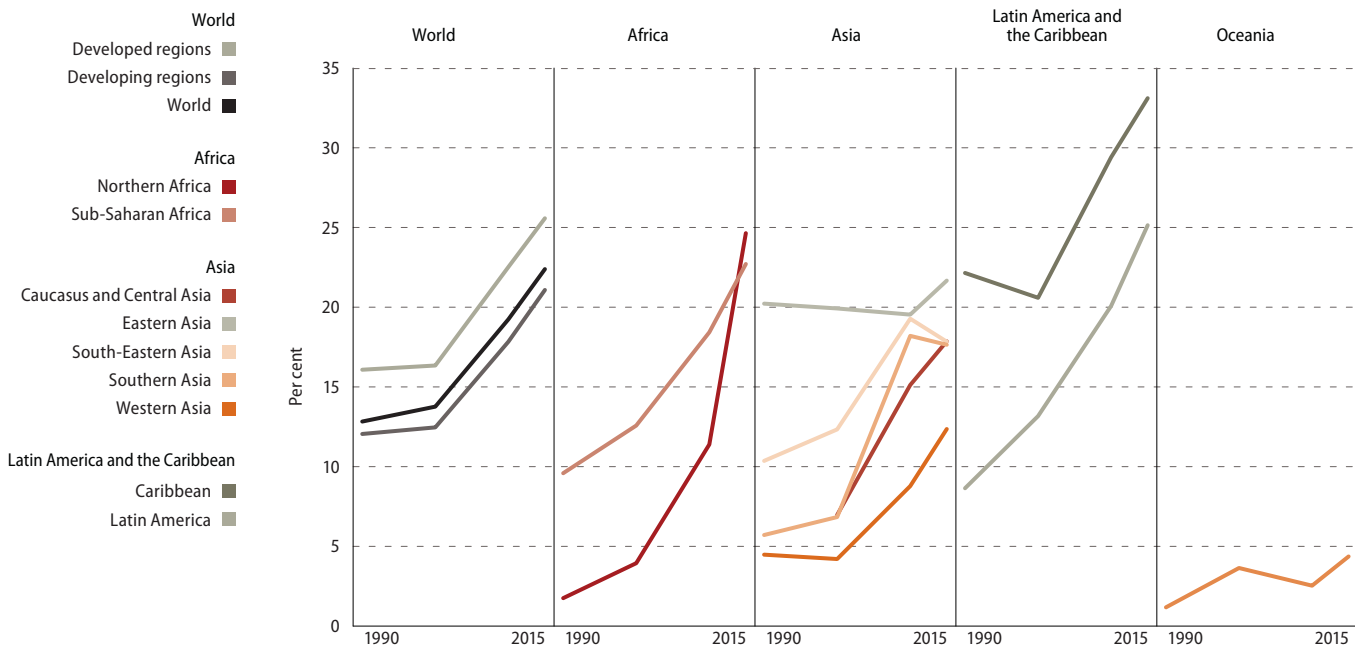
6 As at January of corresponding year. United Nations, 2015c.

7 IPU, 2011a.

8 United Nations, 1990.

9 United Nations, 1995a.

Figure 5.1
Proportion of seats held by women in single or lower houses of parliament, by region as at January 2015



Source: United Nations, Millennium Development Goals 2015: Statistical annex (2015c), <http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Resources/Static/Products/Progress2015/Statannex.pdf> (accessed 14 July 2015).

parliaments. In five of those countries, all with a relatively small population size, no women were represented as at January 2015 (Micronesia, Palau, Qatar, Tonga and Vanuatu).

Factors affecting women's representation in parliament

Less women candidates, party dynamics favouring men, political interest and knowledge may explain women's lower participation in parliaments

Several factors may explain differences in the share of women in national parliaments across countries and over time, including: the use of legislated and voluntary party gender quotas; the representation of women in high-level positions in political parties; the supply of electoral candidates; equal access to resources in election campaigns; and gender differences in political interest and knowledge, along with gender perceptions and stereotypes.

a. Gender quotas

Gender quotas aim to reverse discrimination in law and practice and to level the playing field for women in politics. They are numerical targets that stipulate the number or percentage of women that must be included in a candidate list or the number of seats to be allocated to women in a legislature. Gender quotas may be mandated in the constitution, stipulated in a country's national legislation, or formulated in a political party statute. Typically, three types of electoral quotas are used, the first two being legislated quotas (constitutional and/or legislative) and the third one voluntary: (a) reserved seats—reserves a number of seats for women in a legislative assembly; (b) legislated candidate quotas—reserves a number of places on electoral lists for female candidates; and (c) voluntary party quotas—refers to targets voluntarily adopted by political parties to include a certain percentage of women as candidates in elections.¹⁰

¹⁰ International IDEA (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance), IPU and Stockholm University, 2013.

Gender quotas are more often used in countries in Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean

Gender quotas are increasingly used to improve women's representation in parliament.¹¹ As at 2015, 74 countries had implemented some form of legislated gender quotas for single or lower houses of national parliaments. Reserved seats are used in 20 countries, all in developing regions. This type of quota is most often implemented in sub-Saharan Africa (11 countries). Legislated candidate quotas are the most frequently used type of quota, both in developing regions (36 countries) and developed regions (13 countries). They are most often used in Latin America and the Caribbean and sub-Saharan Africa. In five countries, both reserved seats and legislated candidate quotas are used (Algeria, Iraq, Kenya, Mauritania and Rwanda¹²). Finally, voluntary party quotas are used alone in 37 countries¹³ and in combination to legislated quotas in an additional 17 countries. In total, voluntary party quotas are used by 54 countries, 26 in developed regions and 28 in developing regions.

Overall, countries using gender quotas have a higher representation of women in parliament

Overall, countries with any type of gender quota have higher proportions of seats held by women in lower or single houses of parliament –26 per cent for countries with voluntary party quotas, 25 per cent for countries using legislated candidate quotas and 23 per cent for countries using reserved seats, compared to only 16 per cent in countries without any type of quota (figure 5.2).

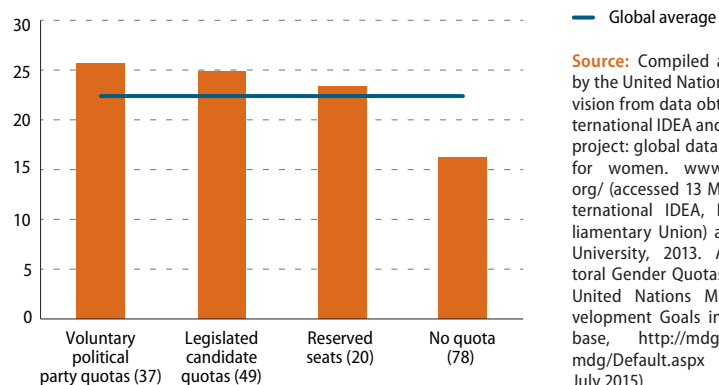
¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Kenya, Mauritania and Rwanda have quota systems that include both reserved seats and legislated candidate quotas within one level/house of parliament. A number of women are elected through the system of reserved seats, while another set are elected through a legislated candidate quota. Algeria and Iraq use unique quota systems, which combine features of legislated candidate quotas and reserved seats. The weighted average of the proportions of seats held by women in the five countries with both reserved seats and legislated candidate quotas is 29 per cent (not shown in figure 5.2). Additionally, in Georgia, the legislation on political parties sets a gender quota of 30 per cent in every 10 candidates on the list, and provides for financial incentives to those parties which comply with this requirement. No sanctions are provided for parties which decide not to comply with these requirements. Due to the non-mandatory nature of these rules, Georgia is not classified as a country with legislated candidate quotas. International IDEA, IPU and Stockholm University, 2013.

¹³ At least one party in each country.

Figure 5.2

Proportion of seats held by women in single or lower houses of parliaments by the type of gender quota, as at 13 March 2015



Among the 43 countries with at least 30 per cent of representation of women in the lower or single house of the parliament, 36 (84 per cent) have implemented some type of gender quotas: 18 have legislated candidate quotas; 4 have reserved seats; 2 have both, reserved seats and legislated candidate quotas; and 12 have voluntary political party quotas. At the other extreme, among 39 countries with 10 per cent or less of representation of women in the lower or single house of parliament, 28 (72 per cent) have no gender quotas implemented.

Gender quotas have improved women's representation in national parliaments in post-conflict settings

The success of Rwanda in achieving the highest proportion of women ever recorded by a parliamentary chamber (64 per cent in 2015) is based on the electoral framework adopted after the 1994 genocide in that country. Under the framework, women's political representation is envisioned as one of the pillars of post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation.¹⁴ The electoral system in Rwanda provides for legislated quotas, both in terms of reserved seats (24 reserved seats out of 80 members in the Chamber of Deputies) and legislated candidate quotas (30 per cent women candidates for the 53 openly contested seats).¹⁵ In the 2013 elections, women took the 24 seats reserved by the Chamber of Deputies for women, 26 of the 53 openly contested seats, and one of the two seats reserved for youth.¹⁶

¹⁴ IPU, 2014.

¹⁵ International IDEA, IPU and Stockholm University, 2013.

¹⁶ IPU, 2014.

Source: Compiled and calculated by the United Nations Statistics Division from data obtained from International IDEA and others, Quota project: global database of quotas for women. www.quotaproject.org/ (accessed 13 March 2015); International IDEA, IPU (Inter-Parliamentary Union) and Stockholm University, 2013. Atlas of Electoral Gender Quotas. Geneva: IPU; United Nations Millennium Development Goals indicators database, <http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Default.aspx> (accessed 14 July 2015).

Note: Numbers in parenthesis indicate the number of countries reflected in the analysis. For the purpose of this analysis, countries using voluntary party quotas combined with legislated quotas were classified under legislated quotas. The weighted average of the proportions of seats held by women in the five countries with both reserved seats and legislated candidate quotas is 29 per cent. Georgia, where supplementary public funding incentives are implemented, has a proportion of 11 per cent.

A number of other countries have also used the post-conflict reconstruction process to introduce stronger equality and non-discrimination provisions in women's political participation and representation rights, including through gender quotas. This has been the case, for example, in South Africa, as well as in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Timor-Leste.¹⁷

Recently implemented gender quotas are fast-tracking women's representation in national parliaments

In recent years, gains in women's representation in single or lower houses of parliament have been linked to the implementation of legislated or voluntary party quotas during elections.¹⁸ Some of the largest gains were observed in Africa, including in Algeria (from 8 per cent in 2012 to 32 per cent in 2013), Senegal (23 per cent in 2012 to 43 per cent in 2013), South Africa (33 per cent in 2009 to 45 per cent in 2010) and Zimbabwe (15 per cent in 2013 to 32 per cent in 2014).¹⁹ On the other hand, in Egypt, the revocation of quota legislation in the run-up to the 2011 election resulted in a decrease of women's representation, from 13 per cent in 2010 to 2 per cent in 2011.²⁰

It is important to note, however, that the impact of quotas may vary depending on the electoral system.²¹ Gender quotas are more difficult to implement in "majority electoral systems" or single-winner systems. Typically in these systems each party nominates a single candidate per district and women get to compete directly with men in their constituencies. In such cases, political parties tend not to field women candidates, or to field them in constituencies where the party is less likely to succeed. By comparison, electoral systems based on "proportional representation" are more favourable to the use of legislated candidate quotas. This allows more women to be in-

¹⁷ International IDEA, IPU and Stockholm University, 2013.

¹⁸ IPU, 2010; IPU, 2011b; IPU, 2011c; IPU 2013; IPU, 2014.

¹⁹ United Nations, 2015a.

²⁰ International IDEA, IPU and Stockholm University, 2013.

²¹ Most electoral systems can be classified as: "majority electoral system" (requiring that candidates achieve a majority of votes in order to win. "Majority" is normally defined as 50 per cent-plus-one-vote) and "proportional representation" (the overall votes of a party are translated into a corresponding proportion of seats in an elected body — a party that wins 30 per cent of the votes will receive approximately 30 per cent of the seats). International IDEA, IPU and Stockholm University, 2013.

cluded in the list of candidates from a party and to eventually win a seat in the parliament.²²

Furthermore, gender quotas are more effective when they include specific, measurable numerical targets; are accompanied by rules on the fair placement of women on candidate lists; and are enforced by sanctions for non-compliance with the law. Only 57 per cent of countries and territories that have legislated candidate quotas have instituted sanctions for non-compliance with the provisions of the law and only 13 per cent provide for financial sanction.²³

b. Political parties

Women are underrepresented in senior positions of major political parties

Gender equality in politics requires that women participate as equal members with men in political parties. Political parties are instrumental in forming future political leaders and supporting them throughout the election process. In particular, they are responsible for drawing up candidate lists, implementing legislated candidate quotas and taking up voluntary party quotas.

Yet political parties are still male-dominated at the highest levels. For instance, in European countries, only a few political parties have women as their leaders. In 2014,²⁴ women represented only 13 per cent of all leaders of major parties²⁵ in the 28 countries of the EU. In half of the EU countries, no woman leads a major political party. Among the countries with a better representation of women were Germany (3 in 7 party leaders), Denmark (2 in 6), Croatia (1 in 3) and the Netherlands (2 in 7). Other European countries with a high representation of women among party leaders included Norway (3 in 6) and Iceland (2 in 5).²⁶

Similarly, in Latin American countries, few women hold senior positions in the organizational structures of political parties. On average, in 2009, women made up approximately 50 per cent of active party members in the seven countries for which data are available, but only 16 per cent of party presidents or secretaries-

²² International IDEA, IPU and Stockholm University, 2013.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ As at April 2014.

²⁵ Major political parties are those with at least 5 per cent of seats in the national parliament (either the upper or lower houses in case of a bicameral system).

²⁶ European Commission, 2015a (database accessed 11 March 2015).

general.²⁷ Women also occupied only 19 per cent of the seats on national executive committees of the parties, where they were relegated to the least powerful positions. Men generally held the most senior or powerful positions, including president, secretary-general, economic secretary, and programming secretary, while women held less influential positions, including minutes secretary, archivists, or director of training or culture. This lack of gender balance in the structure of political parties was also reflected in the candidate lists offered to voters. On average, only one in every four candidates, and one in every seventh first-ranking candidates was a woman.²⁸

c. Electoral systems and candidates

Women are less than 20 per cent of candidates in political elections in most developing countries

Generally, the low proportion of seats held by women in lower or single houses of parliament is a reflection of the low share of female candidates in elections (figure 5.3). This means that an insufficient number of women candidates run for national parliament. Sex-disaggregated data on candidates for the lower or single house of parliament in 99 countries with available data show that on average 28 per cent of candidates are women.²⁹ Among these countries, 55 have proportions lower than 20 per cent, mostly in developing regions. In Oceania, shares of women among electoral candidates lower than 10 per cent are common, with the exception of Fiji (18 per cent in the September 2014 elections) and Tonga (15 per cent in the November 2014 elections). In developed regions, the share of women among electoral candidates is higher than 20 per cent, except for Japan (17 per cent in the December 2014 elections) and Ireland (16 per cent in the February 2011 elections). Belgium and Cuba have the highest share of women among candidates at 49 per cent. They are followed by a group of countries with shares between 40 and 47 per cent: Tunisia (47 per cent), Sweden and Namibia (45 per cent), Poland (44 per cent), Andorra (43 per cent), Iceland (42 per cent) and France and Norway (40 per cent each).

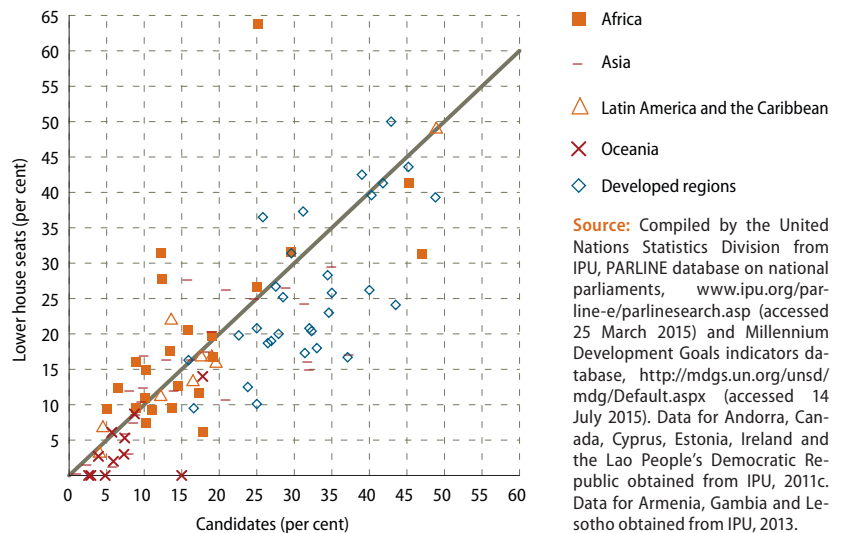
²⁷ International IDEA and IDB, 2011.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Weighted average calculated by the United Nations Statistics Division based on IPU, PARLINE database on national parliaments, www.ipu.org/parline-e/parlinesearch.asp (accessed 25 March 2015). Data for Andorra, Canada, Cyprus, Estonia, Ireland and the Lao People's Democratic Republic obtained from the IPU, 2011c. Data for Armenia, Gambia and Lesotho obtained from IPU, 2013.

Figure 5.3

Share of women among candidates for the lower or single houses of parliament in the latest election year, by the proportion of seats held by women in the lower or single house and by region, 2015



Female candidates are less likely than male candidates to win elections

In some countries, the low proportion of women in parliament is related not just to the lower proportion of female candidates but also to the lower election rates of women candidates compared to men candidates. For instance, out of 36 elections held in 35 countries for the lower or single house of parliament in 2011 or 2012, men had higher election rates than women in 18 elections, while only 10 had election rates higher for women than men. In the remaining eight elections, the rates were equal between women and men.³⁰

d. Gender norms and expectations

Gender norms and expectations drastically reduce the pool of female candidates even before elections begin. Women often report less interest and knowledge in politics than men. For example, data on interest in politics for 57 countries or areas conducting World Values Surveys in 2010–2014 show that men (52 per cent) are more likely than women (42 per cent) to be interested in politics, by 10 percentage points on average. The largest differences, of at least 19 percentage points, are noted in Poland, Tunisia, Turkey, Zimbabwe and the State of Palestine. The lowest differences, of 5 percentage points or less, but still to the advantage of men, were noted in Bahrain, Colombia,

³⁰ IPU, 2011c and IPU 2013.

Ecuador, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, the Philippines, Ukraine, Uruguay and Yemen.³¹ Other research in 10 countries (most of them in developed regions) found that, in all of them, lower proportions of women than men were able to correctly answer questions on domestic and international news related to politics and economics.³²

After women decide to run for office and are nominated by their parties, they face obstacles that may diminish their chances of being elected. For example, despite improvements in public attitudes towards gender equality,³³ strong gender stereotypes about women not being as good as men in positions of political leadership persist around the world. In the last round of the 'World Values Survey' people were asked whether they agreed with the statement that, on the whole, men make better political leaders than women. Answers varied greatly from country to country. At one extreme were Egypt, Ghana, Jordan, Qatar and Yemen, where more than 80 per cent of people agreed with the statement. At the other extreme, were the Netherlands, Sweden and Uruguay, where 11 per cent or less of people agreed with that statement.^{34, 35}

Another obstacle to the election of women to political office is gender bias in media coverage. For instance, a study on media coverage during the 2009 and 2010 elections in Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Colombia and the Dominican Republic³⁶ showed that women candidates were allocated less time and space in the media than their male counterparts—in particular, time related to programmatic issues—and were subject to a higher negative bias in coverage. Lack of media coverage of women candidates was also noted in countries in other regions.³⁷ A survey of daily election stories in the United Republic of Tanzania, for instance, revealed that men politicians dominated as both subjects and sources of election stories. In Sudan, there were reports that women were

³¹ World Values Survey, 2015 (accessed 19 March 2015).

³² Goldsmiths University of London, 2013; Guardian (The), 11 July 2013.

³³ United Nations, 2014c.

³⁴ Answers have been aggregated for the categories "agree strongly" and "agree" based on the World Values Survey, 2015.

³⁵ In some countries conducting World Values Surveys, the proportion of respondents who disagree with the statement: "on the whole, men make better political leaders than women do" increased since the mid-1990s. United Nations, 2014c.

³⁶ UN Women and International IDEA, 2011.

³⁷ IPU, 2011b.

losing out in terms of media coverage; and in Bosnia and Herzegovina, while photographs of women candidates were common, their opinions were rarely published.³⁸

Table 5.1

Countries with a woman presiding over the lower or single house of parliament or upper house or senate, by region as at 1 January 2015

Lower or single house	Upper house
Africa	
Botswana	Equatorial Guinea
Mauritius	Gabon
Mozambique	South Africa
Rwanda	Swaziland
South Africa	Zimbabwe
Uganda	
United Republic of Tanzania	
Asia	
Bangladesh	
India	
Lao People's Democratic Republic	
Singapore	
Turkmenistan	
Latin America and the Caribbean	
Bolivia	Antigua and Barbuda
Dominica	Bahamas
Ecuador	Barbados
Peru	Chile
Suriname	Dominican Republic
Oceania	
Fiji	
Developed regions	
Australia	Austria
Austria	Belgium
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Netherlands
Bulgaria	Russian Federation
Italy	United Kingdom
Latvia	
Lithuania	
Netherlands	
Portugal	
Serbia	

Source: IPU and UN Women, 2015; IPU, 2015b.

Note: Out of a total 267 parliamentary chambers (lower or single and upper houses), two have an additional 2 speakers and three have 1 additional speaker, for a total of 274 speakers.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

Women in positions of parliamentary leadership

Once elected, women parliamentarians need to hold positions of power and authority and participate in committee work if they are to influence policy direction. They also need to be positive role models for other women, work to change parliamentary procedures and, ultimately, support women's rights and pursue gender equality. Nevertheless, few women in politics reach the higher echelons of parliamentary hierarchies, particularly at the top levels as president or speaker of the house. In 2015, women presided over the lower or single houses of parliament in only 28 out of 191 countries (or 15 per cent), and over the upper house or senate in only 15 out of 76 countries (20 per cent) (table 5.1). The highest concentration of female presiding officers was found in developed regions, followed by sub-Saharan Africa. At the opposite end of the spectrum, developing countries in Oceania, the region with the lowest share of women in parliament, have only one woman presiding in parliament (in Fiji). Developing countries in Asia have no women presiding in the upper house (or senate).

Women's representation among committee chairs in parliament remains low and confined to social affairs

Committees are smaller forums of parliamentarians where members investigate the workability of legislation and government policy and make recommendations to the broader parliamentary arena. An IPU survey on parliaments conducted in 2009 and 2010 showed that men represented the majority of committee members in almost all portfolio areas, in accordance with their numerical dominance in parliament. The only exceptions were committees on women's affairs and gender equality. There, women represented 57 per cent of committee members. Although not the majority, women were found relatively more often in committees related to social affairs. Globally, the share of women in committees related to family, children, youth, older persons and persons with disabilities was 40 per cent. In education, the share was 30 per cent, and in health, 35 per cent. In other committees, women constituted between 16 and 20 per cent of members. In terms of leadership, women constituted approximately 21 per cent of committee chairs of the parliaments surveyed, and 23 per cent of deputy chair positions. Consistent with the overall composition of committees, women were most commonly chairs of committees on women/gen-

der issues or social policy. About half of women chairs were leading committees on social affairs, family and culture, and a third on legislative, justice and human rights. Women have not been completely absent as chairs of commissions traditionally held by men, including committees on the economy or foreign affairs, although their presence has been infrequent.³⁹

2. Executive branch

Heads of State or Government

Very few women get to the top position of power within their government. As at March 2015, only 10 out of 152 elected Heads of State worldwide were women, and only 14 of 194 governments were headed by women (table 5.2).⁴⁰ The total number of countries with a female Head of State or Government was 19, a slight improvement over the 12 countries in 1995.⁴¹ The vast majority of countries headed by women were from Latin America and the Caribbean and from developed regions.

Table 5.2

Countries with a female Head of State and/or Government by region, as at 17 March 2015

Head of State	Head of Government
Africa	
Central African Republic	
Liberia	Liberia
Asia	
Republic Of Korea	Bangladesh
Latin America and the Caribbean	
Argentina	Argentina
Brazil	Brazil
Chile	Chile
	Jamaica
	Peru
	Trinidad and Tobago
Developed regions	
Croatia	Denmark
Lithuania	Germany
Malta	Latvia
	Norway
	Poland
Switzerland	Switzerland

³⁹ IPU, 2011a.

⁴⁰ United Nations Protocol and Liaison Service website. www.un.int/protocol/sites/www.un.int/files/Protocol%20and%20Liaison%20Service/hspmfm.pdf, accessed on 19 March 2015.

⁴¹ United Nations, 2010b and IPU, 2006.

Source: Compiled by the United Nations Statistics Division from the United Nations Protocol and Liaison Service website. www.un.int/protocol/sites/www.un.int/files/Protocol%20and%20Liaison%20Service/hspmfm.pdf (accessed 19 March 2015).

Note: Only elected Heads of State have been considered. Countries with King or Queens, Governor-Generals or Sultans are excluded in the count of Heads of State.

Ministers

Women continue to be underrepresented in cabinet appointments in all regions of the world. The cabinet—also called council of government, government, or council of ministers—is a group of senior officials who provide advice to the Head of State and/or Government. Globally, the share of women among cabinet ministers was 18 per cent in 2015.⁴² Although low, it represents important progress since 1994, when the average share was 6 per cent.⁴³

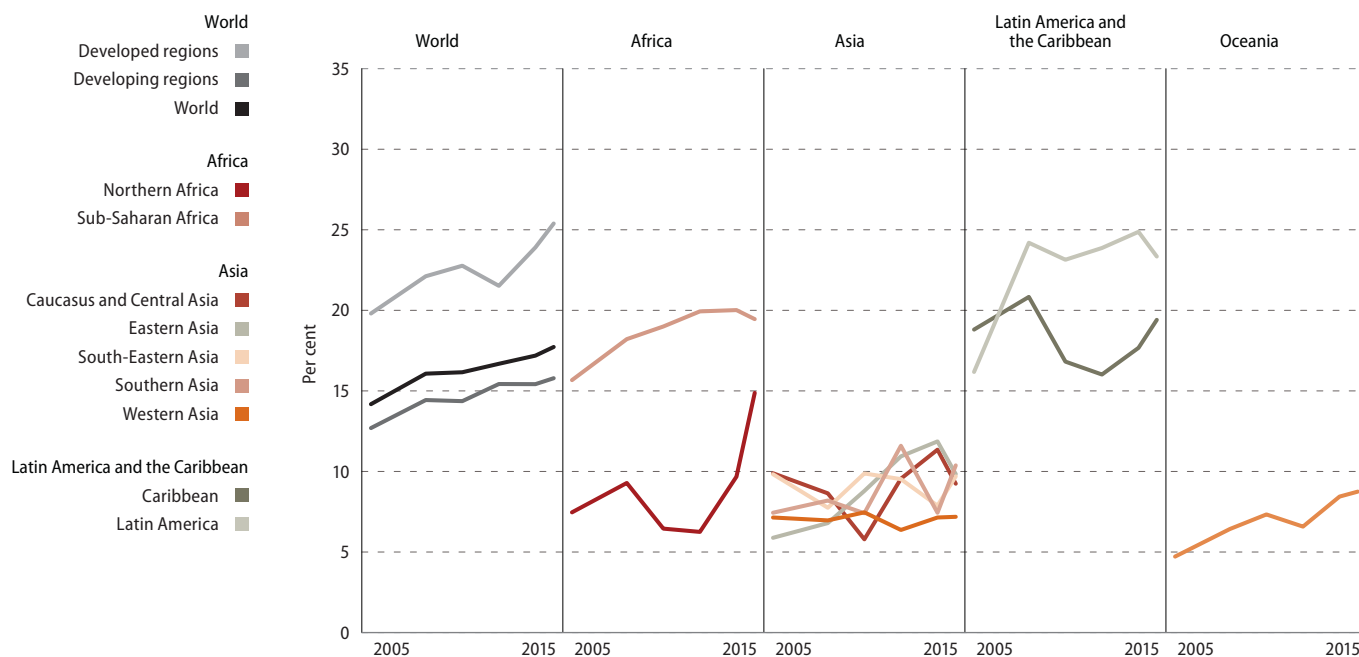
Progress among regions over the past decade has been uneven (figure 5.4) and the highest level of representation of women among ministers reached by the developed regions was only 25 per cent followed by Latin America at 23 per cent. The share of women among ministers remained low, at 15 per cent or less, in all regions of Asia, Northern Africa and Oceania.

Between 1994 and 2015, the number of countries with no female minister declined notably, from 59 countries⁴⁴ to eight. Over the same period, the number of countries with 30 per cent

or more women among ministers increased from five countries to 31. In 2015, only three regions have countries reaching the 30 per cent threshold: the developed regions (18 countries), sub-Saharan Africa (8 countries), and Latin America and the Caribbean (5 countries). At the country level, only 5 countries have reached or surpassed gender parity among cabinet ministers: Finland (63 per cent), Cabo Verde (53 per cent), Sweden (52), France and Liechtenstein (50 per cent each). These countries are closely followed by Nicaragua, Norway and Netherlands (47 per cent each).

In 2015, at the global level, most of female appointed ministers were assigned portfolios related to social issues such as: social affairs; environment, natural resources and energy; women's affairs and gender equality; family, children, youth, older persons and persons with disabilities; and education. By comparison, fewer female ministers had portfolios related to finance and the budget, and the economy and development.⁴⁵ More detailed data available for selected regions⁴⁶ show that, overall, women continued to

Figure 5.4
Share of women among ministers by region, 2005–2015



Source: Compiled and calculated by the United Nations Statistics Division from the information available in IPU and United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, Women in Politics (2005, 2008, 2010 editions) and IPU and UN Women, Women in Politics (2012, 2014 and 2015 editions).

Note: Data as at 1 January of corresponding year.

⁴² Calculated by the United Nations Statistics Division based on IPU and UN Women, 2015.

⁴³ United Nations, 1995b.

⁴⁴ United Nations, 2000a.

⁴⁵ IPU and UN Women, 2015.

⁴⁶ UNECE, 2015 (database accessed 20 March 2015).

be underrepresented among core ministers, including the cabinet of the prime minister, and in the Ministries of Home Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Finance, Defence and Justice. There were no women among core ministers in five out of seven countries with available data in the Caucasus and Central Asia and in 15 out of 38 countries with available data in developed regions. On the other hand, women were represented among core ministers in the highest numbers in Denmark, Finland and Norway (3 out of 6), Switzerland (3 out of 7) and Sweden (2 out of 5).

Civil service

Women are underrepresented among senior-level civil servants

Women also tend to be underrepresented among senior-level civil servants,⁴⁷ including government administrators, administrators at intergovernmental organizations, ambassadors and consul-generals. The latest available data between 2006 and 2013 for 24 developed countries on senior-level civil servants indicate that the share of women in those posts ranges widely, from 16 to 77 per cent. The lowest shares of women (below 30 per cent) are observed, in ascending order, in Luxembourg (16 per cent), Belgium (17 per cent), Ireland (19 per cent), Denmark and Norway (22 per cent), France (23 per cent) and Netherlands (26 per cent). The highest shares of women (above 60 per cent) are found, in descending order, in Hungary (77 per cent), Russian Federation (62 per cent) and Bulgaria (61 per cent).⁴⁸

Women are particularly underrepresented among the highest-ranking civil servants, including chief statisticians, governors and board members of central banks, ambassadors and permanent representatives to the United Nations.

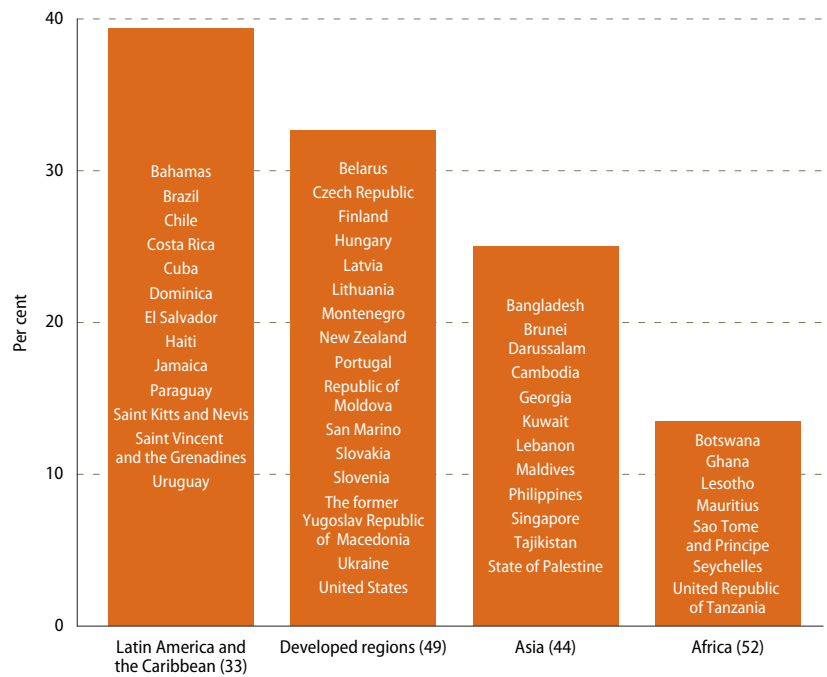
A quarter of national statistical offices worldwide are headed by women

A particularly high-ranking administrative position in a country is that of chief statistician, the person in charge of the government entity responsible for producing official statistics. Worldwide,

as at 20 March 2015, 47 of 190 national statistical offices (25 per cent) had a woman as chief statistician.⁴⁹ Women chief statisticians were more common in Latin America and the Caribbean (39 per cent) and in the developed regions (33 per cent). Oceania is the only region with no woman among heads of national statistical offices (figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5

Proportion and list of countries or areas where the national statistical office (NSO) is headed by a woman, by region



Source: United Nations Statistics Division, Contacts database (accessed 20 March 2015).

Note: Numbers in parentheses indicate the total number of countries in the region.

Women remain excluded from central banks decision-making

Central banks, the entities responsible for overseeing a country's monetary system, are dominated by men. Worldwide, as at 3 August 2015, only 14 out of 176 central banks (8 per cent) for which data were available had a woman as governor: five in developed regions (Cyprus, Russian Federation, Serbia, Ukraine and the United States); four in sub-Saharan Africa (Botswana, Lesotho, Sao Tome and Principe and Seychelles); and the remaining five in other developing regions (Bahamas, Malaysia, Maldives, Samoa and the State of Palestine).⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Senior-level civil servants are defined according to ISCO 1120: senior government officials (e.g. government administrators, administrators at intergovernmental organisations, ambassadors, consul-general, etc.).

⁴⁸ UNECE, 2015 (database accessed 20 March 2015).

⁴⁹ United Nations Statistics Division (database accessed 20 March 2015).

⁵⁰ Compiled by the United Nations Statistics Division from the database on women and men in decision-making,

Sex disaggregated data on the membership of the boards of central banks in 158 countries with available data show that on average 24 per cent of the members are women. The representation of women ranges widely, from zero per cent (in 50 out of 158 countries) to 75 per cent in Lesotho where there are 6 women out of 8 members. In addition to Lesotho, only 10 more countries have reached or surpassed parity: Swaziland (63 per cent), Jamaica (57 per cent), Albania (56 per cent), and Fiji, Israel, Namibia, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Suriname and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (50 per cent each).⁵¹

Finally, in 2014, women were underrepresented in key institutions of global economic governance. The share of women among the membership of boards of directors for selected intergovernmental and private financial and regulatory

institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the Bank for International Settlements, and the International Organization of Securities Commissions ranged from 4 to 20 per cent.⁵²

Women and men do not equally represent their governments at the international level

Male ambassadors outnumber female ambassadors in all countries for which data are available. In most of these countries, the share of female ambassadors is lower than 30 per cent. The few exceptions include Finland, Germany, Slovenia and Sweden, where the share of female ambassadors is between 30 and 46 per cent.⁵³ Permanent representatives to the United Nations at UN Headquarters are also mainly men. Women held this position in only 40 out of 194 countries as at 11 March

Box 5.2

Women and men in the United Nations

Women are underrepresented among senior professionals and managers within the United Nations system

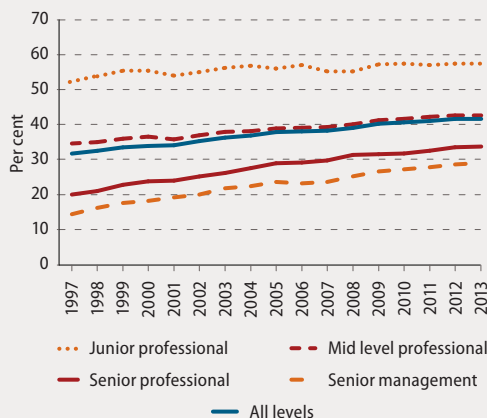
United Nations staff members are yet another category of civil servants in which women are underrepresented at the higher levels. The Beijing Platform for Action called on the United

Share of women among professional staff in the United Nations System, as of 25 April 2014

Source: Compiled by the United Nations Statistics Division from the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) website, <http://unsceb.org/content/hr-statistics-tables> (accessed 25 April 2014) and from its reports on personnel statistics from 2001, 2011, 2012 and 2013 (UN documents: CEB/2003/HLCM/22, CEB/2012/HLCM/HR/16, CEB/2013/HLCM/HR/12 and CEB/2014/HLCM/HR/21).

Note: Senior management refers to grade levels D-2 and above; senior professionals to levels D-1 and P-5; mid-level professionals to levels P-4 and P-3; and junior professionals to levels P-2 and P-1.

- ^a United Nations, 1995a.
^b United Nations, 2014b.



Nations to implement specific employment policies to achieve overall gender equality at the professional level and above by 2000, which was also the target date set for women to hold 50 per cent of managerial and decision-making positions in the United Nations.^a As shown in the figure, women's participation among the professional staff of the UN system has grown steadily. In 2013, women represented 42 per cent of all UN professional staff (31,244 total staff), compared to 32 per cent in 1997 (15,192 total staff).

Women's representation is high at the junior professional level (57 per cent), but has not reached parity at any of the higher levels. Women's representation decreases as levels of decision-making and responsibility increase. They represent only 34 per cent of senior professionals and 29 per cent of senior managers. At the very top of the hierarchy, no woman has been appointed Secretary-General of the United Nations since its establishment in 1945.

The pattern of underrepresentation of women in senior management positions is observed across UN agencies, with the exception of UN Women, where the majority of staff are women and, regardless of the level, the shares of women among professionals are always higher than 60 per cent.^b

European Commission, 2015a; and official websites from central banks (accessed August 2015).

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² UN Women, 2015.

⁵³ UNECE, 2015 (database accessed 20 March 2015).

2015.⁵⁴ The developed regions have the highest absolute number of countries represented by women at the United Nations (11 out of 50 countries), followed by Asia (10 out of 45 countries) and Latin America and the Caribbean (9 out of 33 countries). Finally, women rarely hold the position of President of the General Assembly, the main organ of the United Nations where deliberations and multilateral discussions on international issues take place. Out of the 114 Assembly sessions (including special and emergency special sessions) held since 1946, only four were led by a woman as president (in 1953, 1969 and two in 2006, one regular and one emergency special session).⁵⁵

3. The judiciary

National courts

As at April 2015, women's representation in the judiciary varied widely across countries. Among the 76 countries with available data, the share of women among judges and magistrates varied from less than a quarter in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Japan, Nigeria, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Togo and the United Kingdom to more than three quarters in Jamaica, Latvia, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Slovenia. Overall, women are outnumbered by men in about half of countries.⁵⁶

However, women's representation declines at higher levels up the judicial hierarchy. The situation is less positive for women judges in the Supreme Court, the apex of judicial power within the national judiciary. Currently, women represent the same or a higher share than men among Supreme Court judges in only a few countries and areas. This is the case, for example, in Bulgaria, Latvia, Luxembourg, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (out of 34 countries with data in Europe) and in Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Venezuela (out of 36 countries and areas with data in Latin America and the Caribbean).⁵⁷

⁵⁴ 193 United Nations Member States plus State of Palestine. United Nations, 2015d.

⁵⁵ United Nations, 2015b (website accessed 20 March 2015).

⁵⁶ UNODC, 2015. Crime and criminal justice statistics, <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/statistics/crime.html>. Accessed 16 April 2015.

⁵⁷ European Commission, 2015a (database accessed 11 March 2015) and UNECLAC, 2015 (website accessed 20 March 2015).

Box 5.3

Women in decision-making roles in UN conflict resolution and peace-building

The United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security urges Member States to “ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflicts”. It also encourages the United Nations Secretary-General to “implement his strategic plan of action (A/49/587) calling for an increase in the participation of women at decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes”,^a among others. The Commission on the Status of Women adopted agreed conclusions on the equal participation of women and men in all the decision-making processes at all levels in 1997 and 2006 and on women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and resolution and in post-conflict peace-building in 1998 and 2004.^b However, these decisions have yet to be fully implemented. A set of 26 indicators to monitor the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) was designed in 2010 (S/2010/498).^c

According to the latest report of the Secretary General on women and peace and security (S/2014/693), women are still underrepresented at decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes. For example, in the 33 countries and territories reviewed in the report, women held on average 31 per cent of leadership positions in 2013, compared to 27 per cent in 2012 across 13 national human rights institutions and one ombudsperson institution. In 2013, in eight of 11 formal mediation processes, at least one negotiating delegate was a woman, compared with six of nine processes in 2012.

The situation is more severe when looking at the heads of field missions. As at 31 December 2013, women headed five out of a total of 27 (19 per cent) active UN field missions, compared with four (15 per cent) in 2012 and six (21 per cent) in 2011.^d In peacekeeping missions, women's share of senior positions^e has not changed since 2011, remaining at 21 per cent.

As for missions' military experts, the share of women has remained at 4 per cent over the period 2009–2014. Over the same period, the share of women among troops was at a low 3 per cent. In the case of police officers, the number of women police officers involved in peacekeeping missions rose from 9 per cent in 2009 to 16 per cent in 2014.^f

^a United Nations, 2000b. Resolution 1325.S/RES/1325 (2000).

^b UN Women, 2014.

^c United Nations, 2010a.

^d In Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Haiti, Liberia and South Sudan—all peacekeeping missions.

^e Senior positions refers to levels P-5 to D-2.

^f United Nations, 2014e.

In Europe, 37 per cent of all Supreme Court members in the 28 EU countries were women in 2014, twice as high as in 2003, when the share was 19 per cent. In all European countries, there was at least one woman on the Supreme Court. The lowest share of women among judges on the Supreme Court was in the United Kingdom, at only 8 per cent (1 out of 12). Higher up the judicial hierarchy, only 8 out of the 28 EU countries (28 per cent) had a female president of the Supreme Court in 2014,⁵⁸ almost 10 percentage points higher than the global figure (19 per cent, based on a review of 171 countries with data).⁵⁹ Among other countries in the developed regions, women represented one third of judges in the Supreme Court of the United States (headed by a male president) and almost half in Canada (where a woman also presided).

In Latin America, the share of female judges on the Supreme Court was 26 per cent in 2013. That was three times as high as in 1998, as most countries in the region have shown steady progress. Nevertheless, Panama and Uruguay still reported no female judges in the Supreme Court in 2013.⁶⁰

International courts and tribunals

Women's representation in international courts remains limited. For instance, women are under-represented among members of European courts and tribunals. Two courts and one tribunal have been established within the EU: the European Court of Justice, the General Court and the Civil Service Tribunal. In addition, the European Court of Human Rights serves all 47 member States of the Council of Europe. The representation of women in these European judiciary bodies has remained relatively stable, although still far from parity, since 2007, with the highest representation recorded in 2014 (38 per cent) in the European Court of Human Rights (table 5.3). Furthermore, no woman has ever presided over any of these regional courts and tribunals. As for other international courts, in 2015, women represented 56 per cent of members of the International Criminal Court, while no woman was among the members of the Caribbean Court of Justice and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (table 5.3).

Table 5.3
Number and share of women among judges in international and regional courts

	2006/07			2014/15		
	Number of Women	Total	Percentage of women (%)	Number of Women	Total	Percentage of women (%)
International						
International Court of Justice	1	15	7	3	15	20
International Criminal Court	7	18	39	9	16	56
International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea	0	21	0	1	21	5
Regional						
Caribbean Court of Justice	1	7	14	0	6	0
Andean Court of Justice	1	4	25	2	4	50
Inter-American Court of Human Rights	1	7	14	0	7	0
European Civil Service Tribunal*	1	7	14	1	7	14
European Court of Human Rights*	14	45	31	18	47	38
European Court of Justice*	6	35	17	5	28	18
European General Court*	7	27	26	6	28	21

Source: 2006 data obtained from the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), *Progress of the World's Women 2008/2009* (2009), p. 79; 2015 data obtained from the International Court of Justice website, the International Criminal Court website, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea website, the Caribbean Court of Justice website, the Andean Court of Justice website and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights website (all accessed 18 February 2015).

* European Commission, Database on women and men in decision-making. http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/index_en.htm (accessed 11 March 2015). Data refer to 2007 and 2014.

⁵⁸ European Commission, 2015a (database accessed 11 March 2015).

⁵⁹ Compiled by the United Nations Statistics Division from the database on women and men in decision-making, European Commission, 2015a; and official websites from national Supreme Courts (accessed in August 2015).

⁶⁰ UNECLAC, 2015 (website accessed 20 March 2015).

4. Local government

Women's participation in decision-making positions in local government is a first step in ensuring that their needs, priorities and perspectives are taken into account in local policies and budget allocations. A comparative analysis in 13 countries in Asia and Oceania found that women in local governments focus more on social issues (such as health services, poverty alleviation and community development) and have a different management style (being more inclusive, collaborative and consultative and people oriented).⁶¹ Furthermore, another study in India found that female panchayat (local governing council) heads tend to prioritize issues surrounding the provision of drinking water while male heads tend to place more emphasis on irrigations systems.⁶²

Fewer women than men hold elected positions in local government in all countries with available data (see Box 5.1 in this chapter). Elected positions in local government include mainly mayors and councillors of municipalities or their equivalent, although in some cases all tiers of government at the subnational level are taken into account.⁶³ In the 28 EU countries, for example, only 14 per cent of mayors or other leaders of municipal councils were women in 2013. Among all European countries with available data, the lowest share of women among mayors was observed in Cyprus and Liechtenstein, where there were no women elected mayors, and in Greece, Romania and Serbia, where less than 5 per cent of all mayors were women. At the opposite extreme, Iceland and Sweden were the only two European countries with more than a 30 per cent share of women among mayors.⁶⁴

Women also tend to be mayors of smaller municipalities. In Italy, in 2012, for example, there were very few women mayors in municipalities with a population larger than 60,000. As the size of the municipalities declined, the percentage of those with a female mayor increased. The highest percentage of municipalities with a female mayor was observed in those with a population of less than 2,000.⁶⁵ A similar pattern was observed

in the United States, where, as at January 2015, only 245 (or 18 per cent) of the 1,392 mayors of cities with populations over 30 thousands were women. Among this group of female mayors, one oversees a city of over 2 million and another a city of 1.3 million people. The 243 remaining women are mayors of cities with populations between 30,000 and 750,000.⁶⁶

In European countries, women have a higher representation among municipal councillors than mayors. The share of women among members of municipal councils in the 28 EU countries was 32 per cent on average in 2013. The lowest share was observed in Greece, at 16 per cent. There were 10 European countries in which at least 30 per cent of local councillors were women, with Iceland and Sweden reaching shares of 40 and 43 per cent, respectively.⁶⁷

Women are also outnumbered by men in local governments in Latin America and the Caribbean, despite significant progress in many countries (figure 5.6). Within the region, all countries have less than 30 per cent of elected female mayors, except Nicaragua, which stands out with 40 per cent of women among elected mayors, after a surge of over 30 percentage points between 1998 and 2013. Other countries making strong advances in the share of women mayors include Cuba and Uruguay (figure 5.6). Overall, women's representation among councillors was higher, and improved more than that among mayors. Yet, only Bolivia and Dominica slightly surpassed the 40 per cent share of women among elected city councillors, and six countries surpassed the 30 per cent threshold.

In Asia and Oceania,⁶⁸ women's representation in local government⁶⁹ is below 40 per cent in all countries and areas with available data. India, Niue and Nauru have the highest share of women among elected local government members (37 per cent), followed by China (32 per cent) and Australia (30 per cent). The lowest shares of women (less than 5 per cent) are observed in

⁶¹ UNESCAP and LOGOTRI, 2001.

⁶² UN Millennium Project, 2005; Chattopadhyay and Duflo, 2004.

⁶³ Data comparability across countries may be limited by some variations in local government structures and tiers of subnational governments taken into account.

⁶⁴ European Commission, 2015a.

⁶⁵ Demofonti, 2012.

⁶⁶ Center for American Women and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey (accessed 20 March 2015).

⁶⁷ European Commission, 2015a (accessed 11 March 2015).

⁶⁸ Analysis based on 26 developing countries and 3 developed countries. UNDP, 2014.

⁶⁹ Local government includes all tiers of government below the national level. The representation of women in local government is calculated as an average of shares of women across all tiers of the subnational government.

Kiribati, Sri Lanka, the Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu.

In Western Asia, four out of six countries with data have proportions of women in local councils or municipalities higher than 20 per cent, with Iraq and Jordan at the top of the list with 25 per cent. In Northern Africa, where only data for two countries are available, Morocco stands at 12 per cent, and Egypt at 5 per cent.⁷⁰

Figure 5.6
Share of women among elected mayors, Latin America and the Caribbean, as at 11 August 2014



Source: UNECLAC, CEPALSTAT: databases and statistical publications, estadisticas.cepal.org/cepalstat/WEB_CEPALSTAT/estadisticasIndicadores.asp?idioma=i (accessed 20 March 2015).

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate the years for which data are plotted. The starting point of the arrow represents the level at the earliest year and the arrow head indicates the level at the latest year.

B. The media

The media play a key role in shaping public opinions and attitudes. The Beijing Platform for Action recognizes the importance of women's expression and decision-making in and through the media, and of balancing clichéd portrayals of women in the media with non-stereotypical roles.⁷¹ Still, 20 years after the Platform for Action was endorsed by governments, the media remain a male-dominated industry that reinforces gender stereotypes.

⁷⁰ UNESWCWA, 2015.

⁷¹ United Nations, 1995a.

Gender stereotypes are perpetuated through the media

Gender stereotypes of women continue to be reinforced by the media. For instance, a study of 120 films produced by 11 countries⁷² and released between January 2010 and May 2013 highlighted striking differences in the depiction of women and men.⁷³ The proportions of women who were thin, partially or fully naked, and dressed in sexually revealing attire more than doubled those of men portrayed in these ways. Comments about appearance were also directed five times as often to women as to men.

The study also showed a gender bias in the portrayal of women's and men's occupations; 69 per cent of male characters were employed compared to 47 per cent of female characters. Women were less often portrayed than men as working in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Out of 121 characters identified with a job in these fields, only 12 per cent were women. Female characters in these films were also less likely to hold executive positions in the corporate world. Out of the 127 political officials, legislators and leaders, only 12 (9 per cent) were portrayed by women. Similarly, only 11 per cent (6 out of 53) of the executives, developers and investors were female characters.

The study⁷⁴ found that films directed by women had more girls and women on screen than those without a female director or writer, suggesting that some of the gender bias in selecting and depicting a film's main characters may be partially linked to the continued male dominance of the film industry. In the study mentioned above, men represented an estimated 93 per cent of directors, 80 per cent of filmmakers, 80 per cent of writers and 77 per cent of producers.

Films are not the only media dominated by men. A study of 7,000 opinion articles in 10 media out-

⁷² The study included 120 films "roughly equivalent" to a Motion Picture Association of America rating of G, PG, or PG-13. Films were originally from Australia, Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and the United States. Smith, Choueiti and Pieper, 2014.

⁷³ Additional studies have reached to similar results. For example, Lauzen, M. Martha (2015). It's a Man's (Celluloid) World: On-Screen Representations of Female Characters in the Top 100 Films of 2014. <http://women-intvfilm.sdsu.edu/files/2014> (accessed 10 March 2015); New York Film Academy. Gender inequality in film. Blog. www.nyfa.edu/film-school-blog/gender-inequality-in-film/ (accessed 29 June 2014).

⁷⁴ Smith, Choueiti and Pieper, 2014.

lets over a 12-week period between September and December 2011 showed that the vast majority were produced by men. Only 33 per cent of total articles in the Huffington Post and Salon, 20 per cent in the New York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times and the Wall Street Journal, and 38 per cent of college media such as Columbia, Harvard, Princeton and Yale Universities were written by women. Nevertheless, some improvement in women's contributions to op-ed writing was noted between 2005 and 2011. For example, in the Wall Street Journal, the percentage of op-eds written by women increased from 10 to 19 per cent. In spite of the progress, a breakdown of contributions by subject reveals that women continue to author higher proportions of articles on subjects that women have traditionally written about, including gender, food, family, style and health, than men.⁷⁵ The underrepresentation of women among writers and the gender segregation by type of topic were also noted in the production of online material⁷⁶ and in other studies.⁷⁷

The news media in general is dominated by men at all occupational levels. Overall, women represented an estimated 35 per cent of the news workforce in 2008–2010, as shown by a study of women and men in the news media covering 522 organizations (including newspapers, radio and television stations) in 59 countries.⁷⁸ The study found that women represented 36 per cent of junior-level professionals (including junior or assistant writers, producers, sub-editors, and correspondent and production assistants). The share increased to 41 per cent among senior-level professionals (including senior writers, anchors and producers). Still, the representation of women diminished at higher levels of power and decision-making. Women held only 27 per cent of the top management jobs and 26 per cent of seats on the boards of news companies.⁷⁹

The findings above are supported by more recent data on 49 publicly-owned broadcasting organizations (television, radio and news agencies operating at the national level) in EU countries. In 2014, women represented 30 per cent of executive directors and 32 per cent of non-executive direc-

tors. They also represented 31 per cent of board members. At the very top level of power and decision-making, women held only nine out of 49 positions (18 per cent) as board president and six out of 48 (13 per cent) as chief executive officer.⁸⁰

Gender differences are often observed in employment conditions in the news media industry. Higher proportions of men are full-time regular employees, whereas higher proportions of women are part-time regular employees or hold part-time contracts.⁸¹

C. The private sector

Women's underrepresentation in top positions in the private sector is increasingly perceived not only as a fairness and equality issue but also as a performance issue, since some studies show that gender diversity within corporate management is associated with improved performance.⁸² Yet, women remain a minority among senior managers in the private sector. Some of the main obstacles to women's representation in managerial positions are linked to less favourable employment conditions, including the exclusion of part-time workers and irregular workers from career advancement, and inequality in sharing domestic and family responsibilities (see Chapter 4 on Work). A study showed that while women and men have similar ambitions to become top managers, women are less likely to perceive that they can succeed in doing so.⁸³ This is consistent with persistent gender stereotypes among the general population. The World Values Survey asked people for the 2010–2014 round whether they agreed with the statement that, on the whole, men made better business executives than women. The proportion of the population sharing this opinion ranged widely—from 8 per cent in the Netherlands and Sweden to 80 per cent in Egypt—showing that some countries still lagged behind in terms of attitudes and values towards gender equality.⁸⁴

⁷⁵ OpEd Project (The), 2012.

⁷⁶ Gender Report: A Closer Look at Gender and Online News, 2013 (accessed 29 June 2014).

⁷⁷ Guardian (The), 23 October 2012 (accessed 29 June 2014) and Women's media center, 2014 (accessed 29 June 2014).

⁷⁸ International Women's Media Foundation, 2011.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ European Commission, 2015a (database accessed 11 March 2015).

⁸¹ According to the source, part-time regular persons are those who work less than full time and are on the regular, continuing payroll of the organization; part-time contract persons are those who work part time on a fixed-term contract arrangement. International Women's Media Foundation, 2011.

⁸² Catalyst, 2014b; European Commission, 2012.

⁸³ McKinsey & Company, November 2013.

⁸⁴ World Values Survey (accessed 19 March 2015).

1. Managers

As shown in Chapter 4 on Work, women are less likely than men to be employed, and when employed, are less likely than men to hold managerial positions. Figure 5.7 also illustrates this point. The latest data from 59 countries show that the share of women in senior- and middle-level management positions, including both corporate managers and legislators and senior officials,⁸⁵ is not only far below 50 per cent, but also much lower than the overall share of women in employment. Only about half of the 59 countries with data on women in managerial positions have shares of 30 per cent or above. Countries with more than 40 per cent are, in ascending order, the Philippines, Latvia, El Salvador, Aruba, Belarus, the Dominican Republic and Panama. At the other extreme, countries with shares of less than 20 per cent are, in descending order, Cyprus, Liberia, Turkey, State of Palestine, Luxembourg and Cambodia.

The share of women in managerial positions, however, has increased since 1995 in many countries. Among the 25 countries with available trend data, 19 showed an increase in women's share in managerial positions. Five countries recorded an increase of at least 10 percentage points, namely, Denmark, Greece, Slovenia, Spain and Switzer-

land. In five out of six countries experiencing a decrease in women's share of managerial positions, the magnitude of the decrease was small (3 percentage points or less). The only exception was Hungary, which recorded a decline of 31 percentage points between 1995 and 2013.

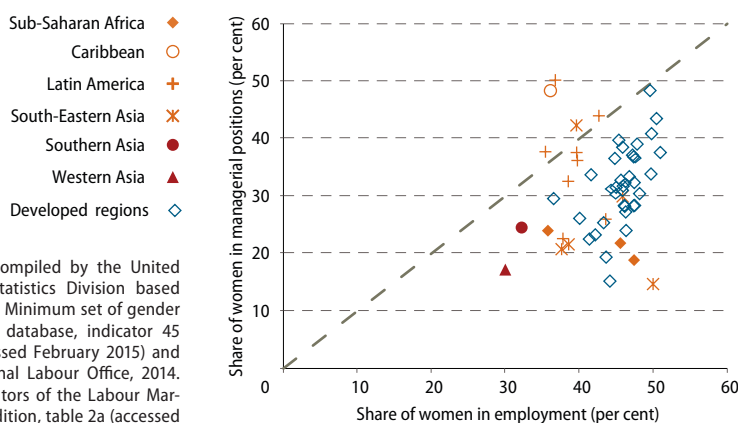
2. Executive boards

The share of women among corporate board members of large companies remains very low, despite the increasing number of countries passing legislation on the issue. For instance, among the 43 countries with data compiled by Catalyst,⁸⁶ Norway has the highest proportion of seats held by women on executive boards (41 per cent). Two neighbouring countries, Finland and Sweden, follow at some distance (both at 27 per cent). The shares of women on corporate boards in 7 out of 15 countries in Asia, mainly Western Asia, are the lowest (below 2 per cent) among countries with available data. Among them are Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, with 1 per cent or fewer women on corporate boards.⁸⁷ Figures on women's representation among the chairs of corporate boards are even more discouraging. Of 42 countries with data, only eight (Israel, Italy, New Zealand, Poland, South Africa, Sweden, Turkey and the Philippines) have women at the helm of at least 5 per cent of their corporate boards.

Here again, some progress has been noted. Data compiled by Credit Suisse⁸⁸ on a selected set of 2,360 companies in 46 countries around the world showed an increase in the proportion of corporate boards with at least one woman member (from 41 per cent in 2005 to 59 per cent by end 2011). The Credit Suisse report attributes this increase to government intervention. For example, in the five years preceding the report, seven countries passed legislation mandating female board representation and eight set non-mandatory targets. In general, developed countries lead the list of countries with the highest proportions of companies with one or more women on their executive boards. In Finland, Israel and Sweden, for example, all companies included in the Credit Suisse database had at least one woman on their corporate boards in 2011. The share was around

Figure 5.7

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



Source: Compiled by the United Nations Statistics Division based on data in Minimum set of gender indicators database, indicator 45 (last accessed February 2015) and International Labour Office, 2014. Key Indicators of the Labour Market, 8th edition, table 2a (accessed October 2014).

Note: Data refer to employment under ISCO-88 categories 11 (legislators and senior officials) and 12 (corporate managers). ISCO-88 sub-major group 13—general managers—is not included in the calculation of this indicator since it mainly includes general managers of small enterprises.

⁸⁵ Data cover senior managers from the public and private sectors. Data refer to employment under ISCO-88 categories 11 (legislators and senior officials) and 12 (corporate managers). ISCO-88 sub-major group 13—general managers—is not included in the calculation of this indicator since it mainly includes general managers of small enterprises.

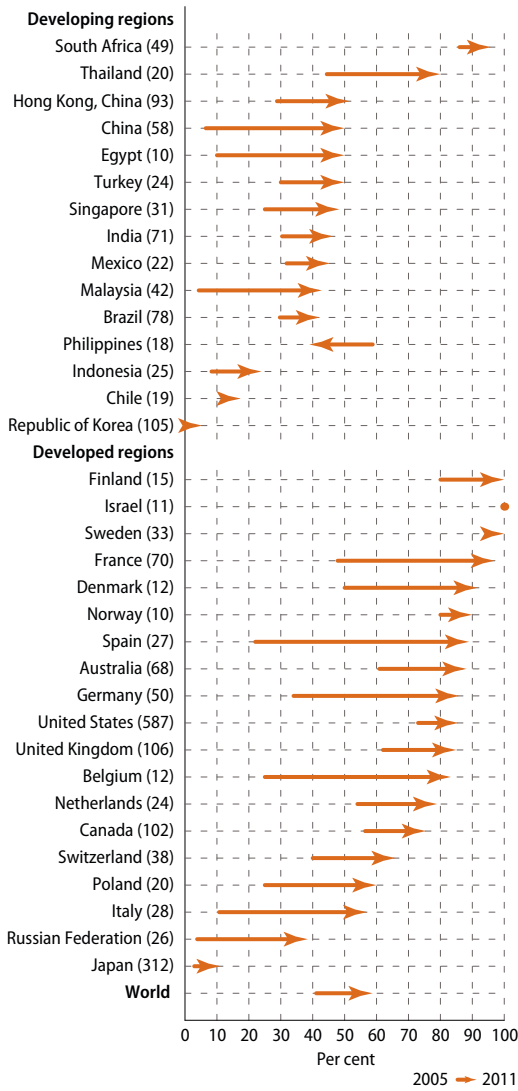
⁸⁶ Catalyst is a nonprofit organization and has the mission to expand opportunities for women and business. <http://www.catalyst.org/who-we-are> (accessed April 2015).

⁸⁷ Catalyst, 2014a (accessed 23 March 2015).

⁸⁸ Credit Suisse AG Research Institute, 2012.

90 per cent for companies in Australia, Denmark, France, Norway, South Africa and Spain (figure 5.8).

Figure 5.8
Proportion of companies with at least one woman on their executive board in 2005 and 2011, by country



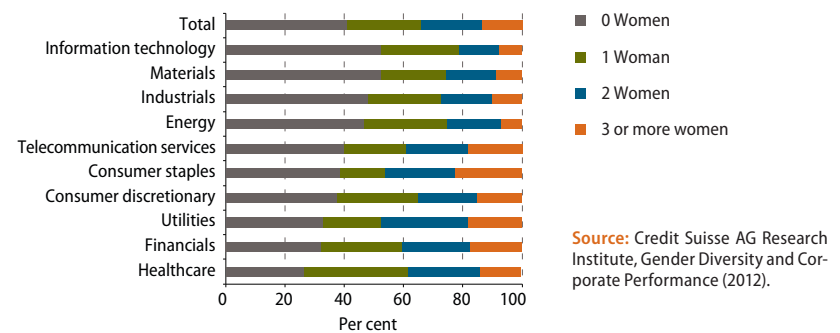
Source: Credit Suisse AG Research Institute, Gender Diversity and Corporate Performance, (2012).

Note: The starting point of the arrow indicates the proportion of companies with at least one woman on the board in 2005, and the arrowhead indicates the level in 2011. Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of companies reflected in the analysis.

The number of women on corporate boards varies by the economic sector in which the company operates (figure 5.9). The highest proportion of companies (23 per cent) with three or more women on their boards is observed in the “consumer staples” sector, followed by “utilities” and “telecommuni-

cations services” (each with 18 per cent). “Materials” and “information technology” are the sectors with the highest proportion of companies (53 per cent) having no women as board members, followed by “industrials” (48 per cent) and “energy” (47 per cent). In general, sectors that are closer to final consumer demand have a higher proportion of women among board members.⁸⁹

Figure 5.9
Distribution of companies by number of women on their corporate board, by economic sector (end-2011)



Source: Credit Suisse AG Research Institute, Gender Diversity and Corporate Performance (2012).

Some countries have considered adopting regulations regarding women’s representation among executive board members in private companies. A number of them in Europe, for example (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom) have adopted self-regulations regarding the gender composition of boards.⁹⁰ In the United Kingdom, “the government has asked FTSE 100⁹¹ companies to aim for a minimum of 25 per cent female board representation by 2015.”⁹² Legislation adopted in July 2011 in Italy, which requires publicly listed and state owned companies to have at least one third of the under-represented gender on both management and supervisory boards by 2015, helped double the proportion of women on the boards of Italian companies between October 2011 and October 2012 (from 6 per cent to 11 per cent). In Iceland, legislation introduced in 2010 set a deadline of September 2013 for companies with more than 50 employ-

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ European Commission. Women on boards Factsheets 2 Gender Equality in the Member States.

⁹¹ The FTSE 100 is a share index of the 100 largest companies listed on the London Stock Exchange (LSE).

⁹² Credit Suisse AG-Research Institute, 2012.

ees to have at least 40 per cent of each gender on their board. By October 2012, the proportion of women on the boards of Iceland's largest companies had reached 36 per cent, an increase of 16 percentage points over the previous year.⁹³ Furthermore, the European Commission, with support from the European Parliament and a number of member States, recently proposed a target of 40 per cent of each sex as non-executive directors by 2020. In November 2013, the European Parliament voted to back the proposed directive, which as of January 2015 was under discussion by the EU Council.⁹⁴

Examples of countries considering gender quotas for managerial positions are also found in developing regions. In Malaysia, all public and limited liability companies with over 250 employees are required to have at least 30 per cent women on their boards or in senior management positions by 2016.⁹⁵

⁹³ European Commission. Women on boards Factsheets 2 Gender Equality in the Member States.

⁹⁴ European Commission, 2015b.

⁹⁵ Credit Suisse AGResearch Institute, 2012.

3. Chief executive officers

Women chief executives are uncommon in the private sector

Very few women are able to reach the position of CEO. At the global level, data confirm that the glass ceiling remains most impenetrable in the largest corporations, which are still essentially male domains. In 2014, fewer than 4 per cent of CEOs heading the world's 500 leading corporations were women.⁹⁶ Data for 2014 on women and men in managerial positions in 613 companies within the 28 EU countries illustrate how women's representation in decision-making positions within the private sector diminishes at the highest levels of power and authority. On average, women represented 21 per cent of non-executive directors. Their representation dropped to 13 per cent at the level of executive directors and plunged to 3 per cent of CEOs.⁹⁷

Women remain severely underrepresented in the highest decision-making positions within the private sector in developed regions. The situation is unlikely to be more encouraging in developing regions, although not enough data exist to confirm or refute this. Compared to the underrepresentation of women in top leadership and decision-making positions in the government, judiciary and civil service, the situation in the private sector is even more extreme.

⁹⁶ The 500 major companies in the world are ranked based on their revenues for their respective fiscal years ending on or before the indicated year in the Global 500 list. Compiled by the United Nations Statistics Division from Fortune, 2014 (accessed 8 October 2014).

⁹⁷ Data cover senior executives and non-executive directors in the two highest decision-making bodies in each company, which are usually referred to as the supervisory board and the management board (in case of a two-tier governance system) and the board of directors and executive/management committee (in a unitary system). European Commission, 2015a.