

FACT SHEET for INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2007

*Themes: Celebrating Working Women¹ &
Ending Impunity for Violence against Women and Girls²*

CELEBRATING WORKING WOMEN *Some facts and figures on Employment Trends for Women*

More women work today than ever. Over the recent times there has been a startling increase of the proportion of women in the labour force. However, *de facto* socioeconomic empowerment for women, equitable distribution of household responsibilities, equal pay and a gender balance across all occupations is still far off. Even though the progress seems to be slow, there have also been improvements in reaching equality in the world of work.

- In 2004, 1.2 billion of the world's 2.9 billion workers (40 percent) were women, representing a worldwide increase of nearly 200 million women in employment in the past ten years.³
- Although women's labour force participation are lower than men's, the limited data available points to the importance of women in home-based work and street vending in developing countries: 30-90 per cent of street vendors (except in societies that restrict women's mobility); 35-80 per cent of all home-based workers (including both self-employed and home workers); and 80 per cent or more of home workers (industrial outworkers who work at home).⁴
- The poorer a country is the smaller is the likelihood to get regular, reliable, sex disaggregated labour market data. This is why good labour market data in Africa and Asia is rarely available.⁵
- Gender pay gaps are higher in countries where fewer women are economically active. For example, in some countries in the Middle East and North Africa, the gender pay gap was upwards of 40 per cent in recent years.⁶

¹ ILO's theme for International Women's Day 2007 is 'Celebrating Working Women: Breaking Boundaries, Driving Change'.

² The UN theme for International Women's Day 2007 is 'Ending Impunity for Violence against Women and Girls'.

³ Oostendorp, "Globalization and the Gender Wage Gap", 2004.

⁴ ILO. *Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical picture*. Geneva: Employment Sector; International Labour Office, 2002.

⁵ UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs: Statistics Division. *The World's Women 2005: Progress in Statistics*:
http://unstats.un.org/unsd/Demographic/products/indwm/ww2005_pub/English/WW2005_text_complete_BW.pdf

- In the UK, between the ages of 22 and 29, women earn 0.1 per cent more on average than men, with the pay gap not opening up until they hit their thirties, new figures show. However, the pay gap does remain. By the time women reach 39, they are paid 6.6 per cent less than men, a gap that widens during their 40s to 18.3 per cent.⁷
- Today women face higher unemployment rates than 10 years ago. In total 81.8 million women who are willing to work and actively looking for work are without a job. This means that there are 22.7 per cent more unemployed women than 10 years ago.⁸
- 66 per cent of the world's illiterate people are women.⁹
- Worldwide, only about seventeen per cent of members of parliament are women.¹⁰
- The parliament in Kuwait granted women the right to vote and stand for election on 16 May 2005. Women will be able to participate in the parliamentary elections in 2007 and the local elections in 2009.¹¹
- Nancy Pelosi became the first ever female speaker of the American House of Representatives in January 2007.
- Latin America saw the highest increase in economic activity for women between 1996 and 2006 of all regions as the labour force participation rate increased by 6.4 percentage points from 46.1 to 52.4 per cent. In total the number of economically active women in the region increased by 40 per cent.¹²
- Over the past 20 years, India has experienced a rise in female enrolment in its technical institutions from 5 per cent to 45 per cent.¹³
- At the Gender Gap Index 2006, Tanzania was ranked the highest in the category *Economic Participation and Opportunity*, whilst Saudi Arabia ranked the lowest.¹⁴
- Currently, 10 'FORTUNE 500' companies are run by women (up from 9 in 2005), and a total of 20 'FORTUNE 1000' companies have women in the top job (up from 19 in 2005).¹⁵ And in the UK it is estimated to take another 40 years to achieve an equal number of female directors in FTSE 100 companies.¹⁶
- In the United Nations system, a Gender Balance has only been achieved at P1 and P2 of the professional levels.¹⁷

⁶ ILO. *Global Employment Trends Brief*. Geneva, January 2006.

⁷ The Times. "Girls beat boys at school, now they get higher pay", 27/10/06.

⁸ ILO. *Global Employment Trends for Women: Update 2007*. Geneva.

⁹ UNIFEM Statistics on Women and Development; UN Statistics Division.

¹⁰ <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm>

¹¹ Inter-Parliamentary Union. "Women in Parliament in 2005: The year in perspective.", Geneva.

¹² ILO. *Global Employment Trends for Women: Update 2007*. Geneva.

¹³ Huyer, Sophia and Swasti Mitter. "ICTs, Globalisation and Poverty Reduction: Gender Dimensions of the Knowledge Society Part I." www.idrc.ca/uploads/user-S/10859366311partI ICT MITTER HUYSER.pdf

¹⁴ Gender Gap Index 2006: www.lesechos.fr/medias/2006/1122//300117083.pdf

¹⁵ www.money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/fortune500/womenceos

¹⁶ The Guardian, "In Norway, a woman's place is in the boardroom" Monday January 9, 2006

¹⁷ <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/pdf/Fact%20sheet%2028%20september.pdf>





International Labour Office – Geneva



Bureau for Gender Equality