



International
Labour
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Decent Work and Economic Growth: Women's Participation – Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value

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1. Introduction

The BRICS countries, alongside the other G20 countries, made collective commitments to reduce the gender gap in labour force participation and agreed on a set of key policy principles to improve the quality of women’s employment. Low levels of female participation rates can have negative economic effects, like reducing potential growth rates. Indeed, gender equality is increasingly seen as key to prosperous economies and inclusive sustainable growth, besides being a fundamental human right (OECD 2017; IMF 2013, World Bank 2012).

These commitments support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in 2015, especially Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 on inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, which seeks to address gender inequalities at work. In particular, through SDG target 8.5, member States commit themselves to “achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value by 2030”.

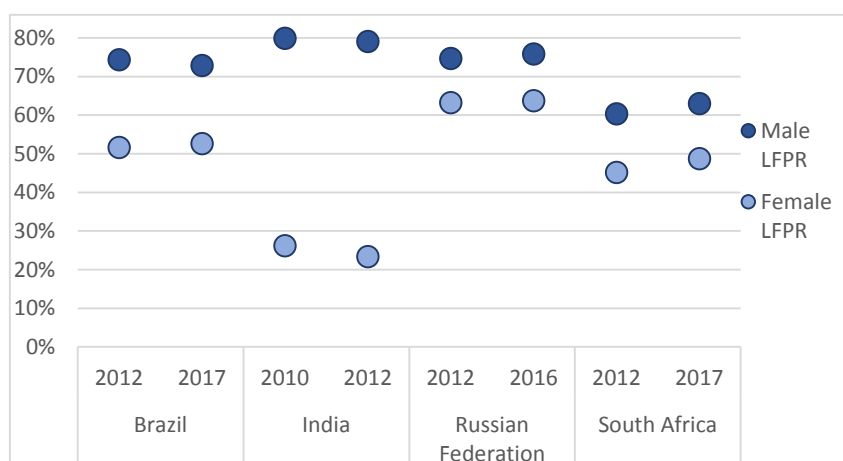
The purpose of this note is to briefly review trends regarding: (a) gender gaps in respect of labour force participation and quality of employment, according to selected indicators agreed by the BRICS; and (b) recent policy initiatives taken in the BRICS countries to close these gaps. The note also includes short country briefs.

This review is neither complete nor in-depth, but is intended to stimulate some discussion on these issues by pointing to commonalities and specificities and identifying promising policy measures.

2. Trends in the quantity and quality of women’s employment in the BRICS countries

Despite some significant progress in recent years, the gender gaps in the labour market participations remain large in BRICS countries. In some cases, the gap has widened rather than decreasing, and the years of solid economic growth have not necessarily led to higher female labour market participation (figure 1).

Figure 1. Male and female labour force participation rates (15+) in individual BRICS member countries, 2012 and 2017 (or latest available)

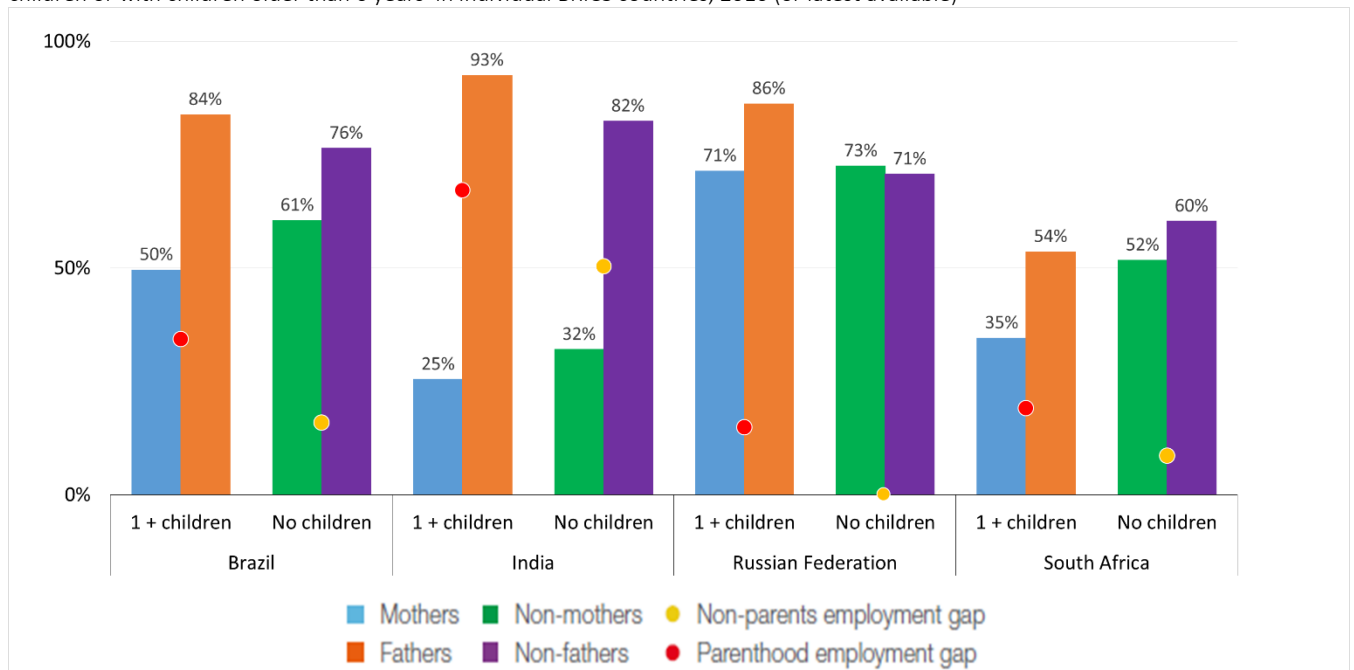


Note: LFPR refers to the labour force participation rate.

Source: ILOSTAT, 2018. Labour market data remain relatively sparse for China, referring to only a few indicators and with gaps in coverage across time. The indicators that are disseminated are often not disaggregated and are typically based on official estimates rather than surveys. Encouragingly, China’s National Bureau of Statistics began disseminating basic, urban unemployment rate statistics from the country’s labour force survey in Q2 2018.

In all BRICS countries, women living with children less than 6 years of age have the lowest employment rates compared not only with fathers in the same situation, but also with men and women without children or with children older than 6 years. Figure 2 shows that there is a “motherhood employment penalty” for women living with younger children. This is mirrored by a “fatherhood employment premium”, with fathers reporting the highest employment-to-population ratio throughout BRICS countries. The “parenthood employment gap” (namely, the difference between the employment-to-population ratio for fathers and that for mothers of young children) ranges between 67 percentage points in India and 15 percentage points in the Russian Federation.

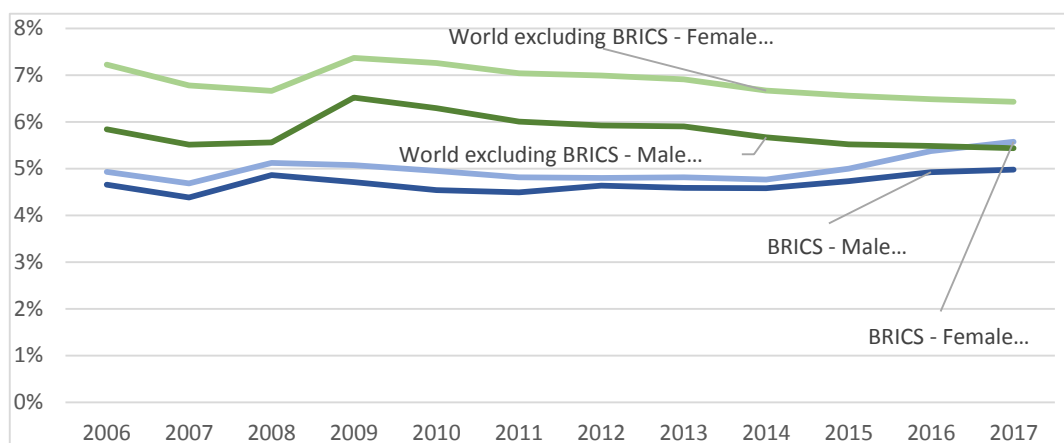
Figure 2. Employment-to-population ratios for mothers and fathers of children aged 0–5 years and women and men without children or with children older than 6 years in individual BRICS countries, 2016 (or latest available)



Note: Age group is 18–54 years.
 Source: ILO, 2018.

Unemployment rates have been on the rise in the BRICS countries since 2014, with the increase being larger for women (figure 3). The only exception to this trend was the Russian Federation in which the female unemployment rate was lower than the male unemployment rate by a few percentage points (ILO STAT, 2018).

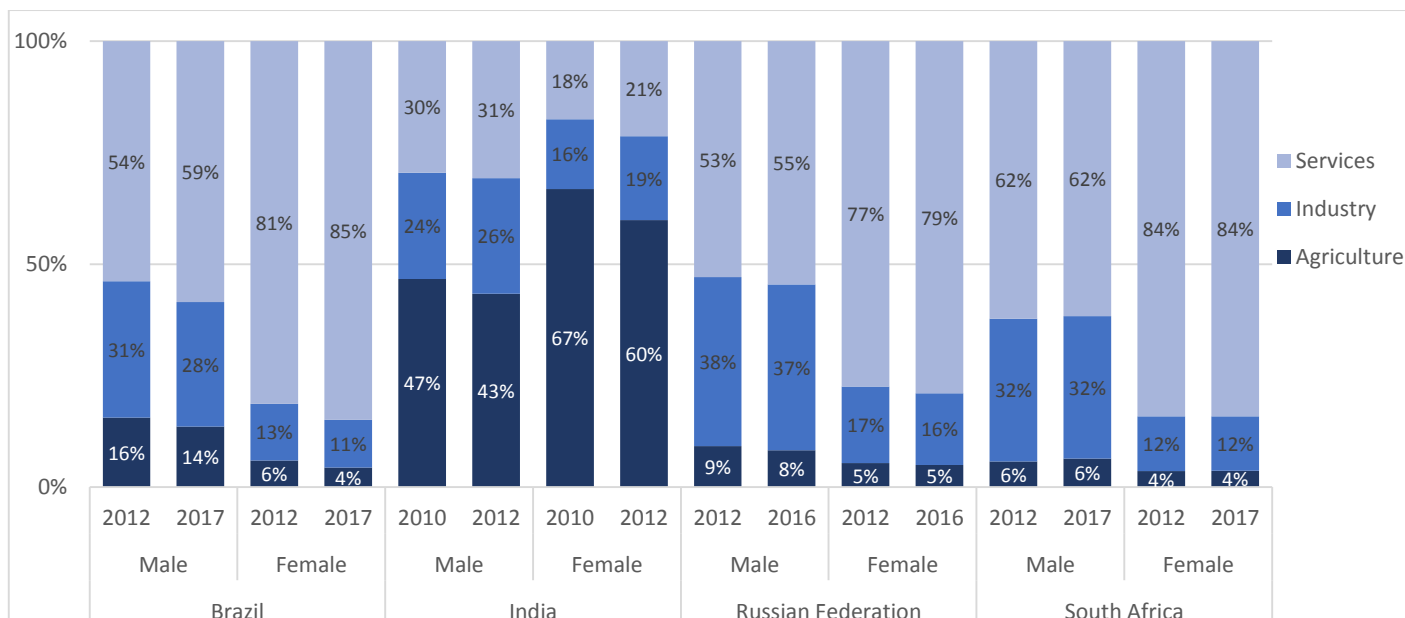
Figure 3. Male and female unemployment rate trends in the BRICS and the rest of the world, 2006–2017



Source: ILOSTAT, 2018. For the data concerning China, please refer to the technical note of Figure 1.

As regards **the gender patterns in the sectorial employment distribution**, during the last five years, the share of employment in services went up for both men and women while that of employment in agriculture decreased for both genders in Brazil, India and the Russian Federation. On the other hand, the employment distribution by sector and gender remained rather stable in South Africa. In Brazil, the Russian Federation and South Africa, women are concentrated in the services sector, where their share of employment is between 22 and 26 percentage points higher than that of men. Conversely, agriculture remains the predominant sector for both genders in India, but women’s share of employment in agriculture was over 16 percentage points higher than that of their male counterparts in 2012 (figure 4).

Figure 4. Male and female employment distribution by broad sector in individual BRICS countries, 2012 and 2017 (or latest available)



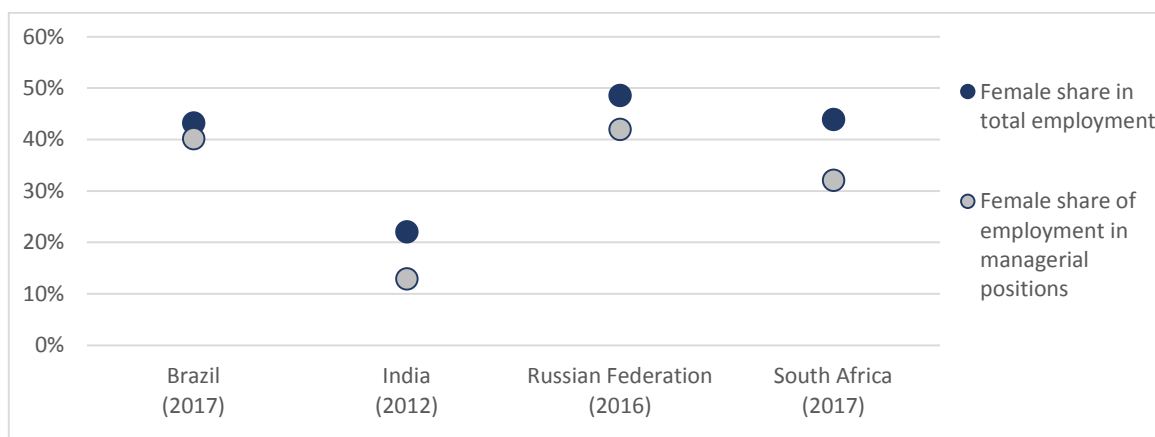
Note: Agriculture refers to section A of ISIC Rev.4; industry to sections B to F; and services to sections G to O.

Source: ILOSTAT, 2018. For the data concerning China, please refer to the technical note of Figure 1.

In all BRICS countries with available data, the share of youth (aged 15 to 24 inclusive) who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) is larger among women than among men, most strikingly in India, where women’s youth NEET rate is over 41 percentage points higher than that of men (ILO STAT, 2018).

In all BRICS countries, the share of employers is systematically larger for men than for women, and the female share of employment in management is always smaller than the female share in total employment, although important variations exist by country. This shows that women still face a glass ceiling hindering their access to top-level managerial positions in the BRICS labour markets (figure 5).

Figure 5. Female share in total employment and in managerial employment in individual BRICS countries, latest available

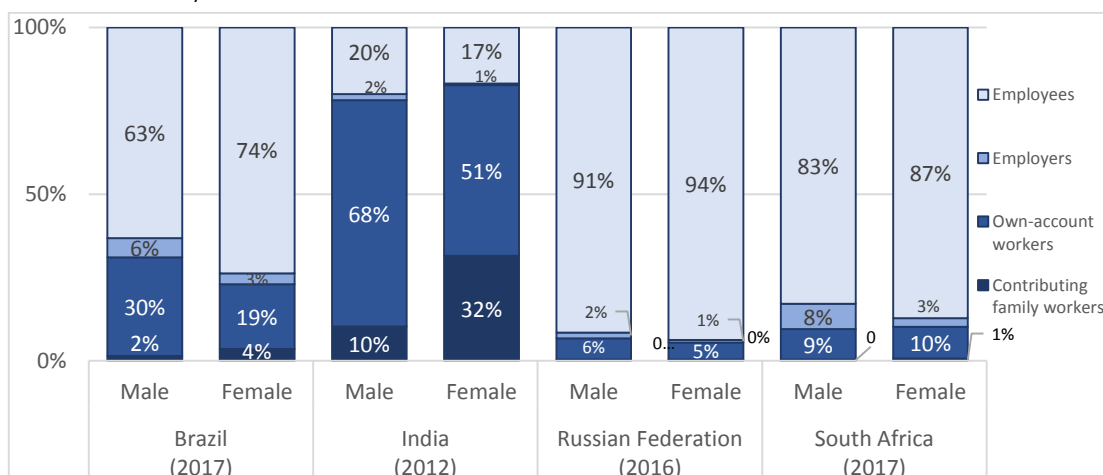


Source: ILOSTAT, 2018.

Note: Managerial positions refer to total management, that is, major group 1 of ISCO-08 or ISCO-88. For the data concerning China, please refer to the technical note of Figure 1.

The employment status is a proxy for the quality of employment, with the category of “employee” usually considered to be associated with more satisfactory working conditions than that of contributing family members or own-account workers, regarded as proxies for informal employment. In the BRICS countries, the percentage of employees increased significantly during the past decade, and particularly during the 2006–2011 period, and was accompanied by a marked decline of the share of own-account workers and especially of contributing family workers in total employment. Despite this promising downward trend, contributing family workers and own-account workers still represented almost 47 per cent of total BRICS employment in 2017. However, BRICS countries display significant differences among them. While in Brazil, the Russian Federation and South Africa, paid employment is the norm and the share of employees is higher among women than among men; in India (figure 6) over 64 per cent of total employment in 2012 were own-account workers. In India, the share of employees and that of own-account workers are higher among men, while the share of contributing family workers is considerably larger among women.

Figure 6. Male and female employment distribution by status in employment in BRICS member countries, latest available year

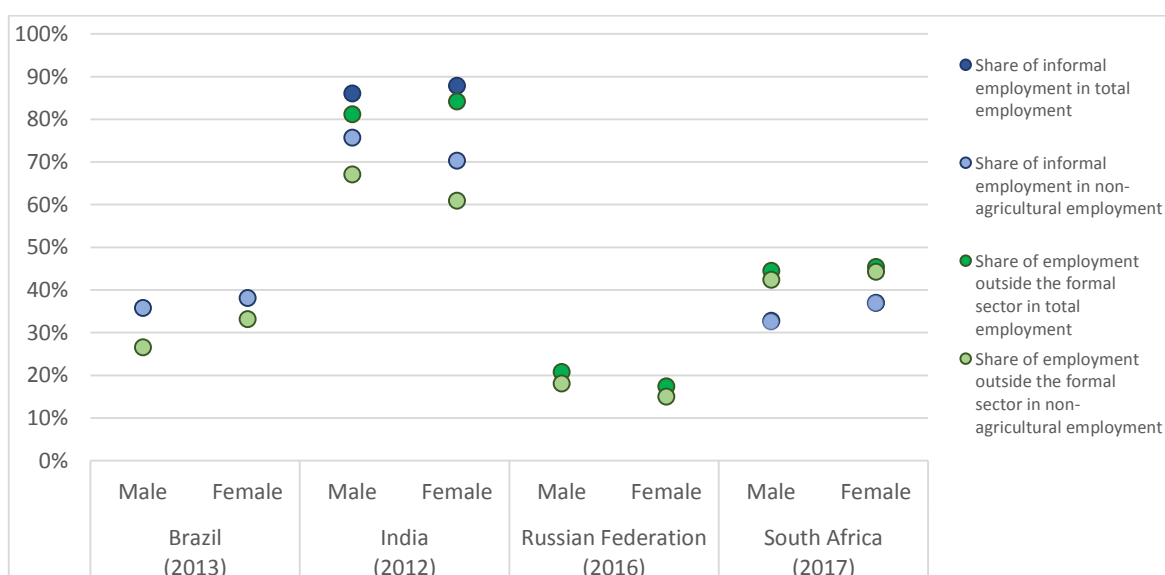


Source: ILOSTAT, 2018. For the data concerning China, please refer to the technical note of Figure 1.

Informal employment and employment outside the formal sector are also another important indicator for the quality of employment. In all BRICS countries with available data, the share of persons employed in informal employment and/or in employment outside the formal sector is far from negligible. Informal employment amounts to well over a third of non-agricultural employment in Brazil and South Africa, and close to three-quarters of non-agricultural employment in India, but, when including also agriculture, informal employment amounted to almost 87 per cent of total employment in 2012.

In Brazil and South Africa, women have higher informal employment shares and shares of employment outside the formal sector than men, whereas in the Russian Federation, it is men who have the highest share of employment outside the formal sector. In India, women have the highest informality shares when looking at the economy as a whole (figure 7).

Figure 7. Male and female informal employment and employment outside the formal sector in BRICS member countries, latest available



Note: Data for India, the Russian Federation and South Africa derived from harmonized ILO processing of survey microdata using standard definitions and criteria for informal employment and employment outside the formal sector. Data for Brazil refers to national definitions and criteria and may thus not be strictly comparable with ILO-harmonized data.

Source: ILOSTAT, 2018.

The gender pay gap is significant in all BRICS countries for which information is available. In Brazil, in 2013, men earned on average 16 per cent more than women per hour. In 2014, in the Russian Federation men earned on average 24.4 per cent more per hour than women. The difference is even larger when referring to monthly earnings rather than hourly earnings, which suggests that women tend to work fewer hours than men in paid employment. The following section of this note highlights a number of policy measures adopted by BRICS countries in the past few years to improve both the quantity and quality of women’s employment with the aim of reducing the corresponding gender gaps (figure 8).

Figure 8. Low pay and gender pay gap

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Low pay rate (%)											
Brazil	23	22	23	22							
China		22	22								
South Africa		32									
Gender wage gap based on hourly earnings (as a % of male hourly earnings)											
Brazil	14.8	14.7	15.5	14.3	18.0	16.4	16.9	16.0			
Russian Federation									24.4		
Gender wage gap based on monthly earnings (as a % of male monthly earnings)											
Brazil						23.9	23.4	23.8	23.0	21.2	
Russian Federation				32.1					27.4		
South Africa					21.6	19.0	20.9				

Note: Data for Brazil, India, and South Africa derived from harmonized ILO processing of survey microdata. India - Non-calendar year. Source: ILOSTAT, 2018. Brazil - ILO INWORK Estimates (low pay rate), National Household Sample Survey (hourly gender pay gap), Continuous National Household Sample Survey (monthly gender pay gap). China - ILO INWORK Estimates (low pay rate). Russian Federation - Establishments sample survey on employees' wages by occupation (hourly and monthly gender pay gap). South Africa - Quarterly Labour Force Survey (monthly gender pay gap).

3. Policy action

Over the past decades, all BRICS countries have put in place a set of policies and measures to promote gender equality at work and women’s economic empowerment. These policies can be divided into five broad categories: national or sectoral policies for gender equality and women’s empowerment; policies to increase women’s participation in the labour force and reduce occupational gender segregation; policies to raise the quality of women’s earnings; policies to facilitate work-family balance; and policies for a safer working environment.

National or sectoral policies for gender equality and women’s empowerment. All countries have adopted either comprehensive women-specific policies, plans or programmes – namely, the China National Program for Women’s Development (2011–2020); the Indian National Policy for Women (2016), which outlines the Government’s action plan in the coming 15 to 20 years; and the recently-established Brazilian Women’s Network – or have set out national development plans, e.g. South Africa’s Vision 2030 or Russia’s National Strategy 2017–2020, in which the promotion of gender equality in employment figures prominently. All these plans acknowledge the need for addressing gender-based discrimination and gender inequalities in all walks of life, and call for greater synergies and coordination among concerned government agencies. The enhanced disadvantages that certain women face in the labour market because of the conflation of gender, class, origin and race are also highlighted, e.g. Brazil and South Africa.

Policies to increase women’s participation in the labour force and reduce occupational gender segregation. Raising women’s participation in the labour force and increasing their access to better paying occupations and jobs are common objectives. For instance, the Russian Federation has adopted legislation banning discriminatory vacancy announcements against women and seeks to encourage their higher representation

in high-technology industries; China has set specific targets to increase women's representation among "employees" (40 per cent) and "high-level professional and technical personnel" (35 per cent); while South Africa is expanding public employment to provide work for the unemployed, especially the youth and women. Enhancing and diversifying women's skills and education is seen as key to reducing women's current concentration in a narrower set of sectors and low-paying occupations. In India, for instance, the skilling of women in non-traditional occupations and training on how to make workplaces more gender-inclusive is part of the National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, which seeks to secure the additional 100 million workers required across 24 sectors by 2022; training for low-income women in rural areas in occupations allied to agriculture is also being delivered to counter the feminization of poverty. In Brazil, training programmes in non-traditional jobs, especially for low-income women, are accompanied by childcare services to make it easier for mothers to benefit from this training.

Boosting female entrepreneurship is considered by all BRICS countries as a promising path towards women's economic empowerment. This goal is pursued through multiple avenues: by providing fast-track support to women on the establishment of their enterprises (South Africa); through grants and professional competitions for women innovators (e.g. the Russian Federation and South Africa) or assistance to banks that support women's entrepreneurs (e.g. the Russian Federation); or by supporting women's start-ups (China). In Brazil, as part of the broader efforts to formalize micro and small undertakings, training and technical support, together with financial incentives and measures to reduce the cost of formalization, was offered to low-income self-employed women.

Policies to raise the quality of women's earnings. Improving the quality of women's earnings and promoting equal pay for work of equal value is also a concern in most BRICS countries. Enhancing girls' and women's education in respect of attainment levels and subject choice (e.g. Brazil) or training in non-traditional occupations, as seen above, is instrumental in widening the range of jobs, and better-paid jobs, that women can aspire to. However, women will not be able to fully reap the benefits of investments in education and training, if restrictions persist concerning the occupations that are allowed to them, e.g. the Russian Federation and India. In labour markets with a high incidence of informal employment, efforts to formalize micro or small-enterprises or "invisible" female-dominated occupations, such as domestic work or home-based work, go a long way towards enhancing both the level and the stability of women's earnings and improving other working conditions, e.g. Brazil and South Africa. Further, if properly designed, minimum wages can make an important contribution to narrowing the gender pay gap at the bottom of the scale distribution. Women have indeed a higher probability than men of receiving very low wages because of the sectors and occupations in which they are concentrated, which, in some instances, are excluded from the scope of minimum wages systems. Some promising developments are taking place in India and South Africa where reforms are currently being considered to ensure that all employees, irrespective of the sector of employment, are entitled to a minimum wage protection. But also where minimum wages cover all employees, upward adjustments to real minimum wages, such as the Russian Federation, are likely to reduce the gender pay gap. Similarly, increases in remuneration in sectors in which women are predominantly employed, such as public education and health, help narrow the overall gender pay gap, e.g. the Russian Federation. All the BRICS countries have enacted legislation to address gender discrimination in remuneration systems and structures. However not all countries, e.g. China and India, have *reflected* the full principle of "equal pay for work of equal value", but have focused instead on the narrower principle of "equal pay for equal work". This is a matter of concern, given that the majority of women work in different sectors and occupations than men. A failure to reveal and address gender biases in the way in which "female work" is assessed would not only contribute to the persistence of gender inequality in pay, with negative implications for women's poverty in older age, but would also reinforce occupational segregation as men would have no incentive to diversify their own occupational choices.

Policies to facilitate work-life balance. Interesting developments in selected BRICS countries relate to the spectrum of policies aimed at facilitating work-family balance of working parents. These policy measures range from the extension of the duration of paid maternity leave, e.g. India, and paternity leave, e.g. South

Africa and Brazil; investments in the expansion and affordability of publicly-provided childcare facilities, e.g. Brazil and the Russian Federation; or laws making it mandatory for establishments of a certain size to provide crèche facilities, either separately or in common premises within a prescribed distance, e.g. India.

Policies for a safer working environment. Sexual and other forms of harassment against women can hinder their entry, stay and progress in the labour market. They may discourage women to go to work or to undertake training and may also deter them from entering non-traditional and better-paying jobs, thereby perpetuating pay inequality for women. Almost all BRICS countries recognize harassment as a form of discrimination against women and have adopted legal provisions against sexual harassment, including in the workplace, but enforcement may be a challenge, which requires enhanced attention.

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4. Appendix – Country Briefs

BRAZIL

Trends

Brazil has observed a slight decline in the gender gap in labour force participation between 2012 and 2017. This was the result of the slim decrease of men's participation rate to 72.9 per cent in 2017 and the modest rise in women's participation rate at 52.7 per cent in 2017 (ILOSTAT, 2018 – Summary Fig. 1).

In Brazil, women living with children less than 6 years of age have the lowest employment rates (49.7 per cent) compared not only with fathers in the same situation (83.9 per cent), but also with men (76.5 per cent) and women without children or with children aged 6 years and above (60.6 per cent). (ILO, 2018c).

The unemployment rate has steadily increased since 2014, with women being systematically more affected than men: in 2017, men's unemployment rate was 11.8 per cent, while women's unemployment rate was over 3 percentage points higher. Young women are especially vulnerable to unemployment, with an unemployment rate of 35 per cent in 2017 compared to 26.5 per cent for their male counterparts. Young women are also more likely to be neither in employment, education or training (30 per cent versus 19.9 per cent of young men) (ILOSTAT, 2018).

The gender pay gap (average real wages) fell from 27.69 per cent in 2009 to 25.83 per cent in 2014. Men were paid more than women on average in all sectors, except for construction, but that difference has been decreasing. When taking into account remuneration from formal work only, the gender pay gap has remained virtually unchanged since 2002 (17.66 per cent in 2002 to 17.65 per cent in 2013), with the gender pay gap being particularly wide among highly educated workers. Black women were the least paid as they earned slightly more than half of what white men made. They are also disproportionately represented in domestic work, which absorbs 18 per cent of economically active women (ILO, 2018a). Over the past 5 years, from 2012 to 2017, Brazil has witnessed a positive increase in women in managerial positions from 38.0 to 40.2 per cent (ILOSTAT, 2018). However, only 10 per cent of the members of the Chamber of Deputies and of the Senate are women (Oxfam, 2017) and there are quotas for candidate lists in Parliament (WB, 2016).

Policy action

In terms of **overarching policies and measures to increase participation of women** in the labour market the Government has promoted, for a number of years now, national programmes that involve line ministries, civil society and the private sector to address gender and racial discrimination in the workplace. These programmes include medium and large enterprises and foster citizenship promotion, pay equity, and inclusive workplaces, also through the dissemination of good practices among enterprises. "Rede Brazil Mulher", or "Brazilian Women's Network", was established in 2017 through a national Decree signed by President Michel Temer with the aim of facilitating synergies and coordination across different actors and sectors on healthcare, education, violence and women's economic empowerment.

Women's entrepreneurship development and businesses' formalization is also high on the Government's agenda. The approach pursued is two-pronged: the cost of formalization is reduced, while technical support and incentives are provided to low income self-employed women to formalize. Common measures include: tax reduction, subsidized interest rates, training in management, technical consulting and simplified registration procedures. Between 2011 and 2014, the Secretariat for Women's Policies has invested over 48 million Brazilian reais (BRL) in cooperation agreements with municipal and state governments, as well as non-governmental organizations to improve women's entrepreneurship and employability in both rural and urban areas, and 46,436 women have benefited from these initiatives.

In the field of **skills and education**, the government has invested in a National Programme for the Access to Technical Education and Employment targeting different groups, including poor women and people with disabilities. The programme has a strong focus on training in non-traditional occupations cum childcare services. Additionally, the **Bolsa Família Companion Program**, a partnership between Brazil's Social Development Ministry and Promundo, promotes women's economic empowerment by engaging men as allies. The National Programme for the Documentation of Rural Woman Worker gives guidance to women, including *quilombola* and indigenous women, in family farming, artisanal fishers, and provides them with access to civil, social and labour documents, free of charge to strengthen their autonomy and allow them to access public programmes (ILO, 2018a).

The **Labour Law Act, Article 461 of the Brazilian Labour Code - Salary Equalization** states that when workers' functions are identical, provide equal value, and are provided to the same employer at the same locality, the workers shall be compensated with equal salary, regardless of sex, nationality, or age. The ILO Committee of Experts on C.100 in 2017 (ILO, 2018a) noted that four Bills covering the following matters are still being considered by the national Senate and Congress; the promotion of equality (No. 6653/2009), equal opportunities and treatment for women in employment (No. 136/2011), combating unequal remuneration between women and men (No. 130/2001) and prohibiting unequal pay for equal work, including by establishing monitoring and enforcement mechanisms (No. 371/2000).

In terms of **women's labour market security**, the adoption of the Constitutional Amendment No. 72 (2013) was an important milestone for the rights of domestic workers as it extended 16 labour rights to them, including protection against arbitrary dismissal, unemployment benefits and a minimum wage guarantee. In addition, the National Plan for Combatting Informality includes improvement of labour inspections, policy integration, encouragement of social dialogue, dissemination and awareness raising for social actors with gender equality lenses.

Improvements in respect of a more equal gender division of care responsibilities, can be seen in the field of **paternity leave**. In 2016 the "Legal Framework for Early Childhood" became a law which expanded paternity leave from 5 to 20 days for the employees of all Brazilian companies that participate in the Government's *Programa Empresa Cidadã* ("Corporate Citizen Program"). Participation in the program, created in 2010, is voluntary for private corporations and participating companies receive tax benefits. Employees of participating companies can take up to six months of maternity leave and 20 days of paternity leave (Men Care, 2017).

Moreover, according to the 2015 Amendments (Art 10) to the Constitution, employment protection regulations were introduced to prevent employers from making women redundant in the event of pregnancy.¹

Investments have also been made at the municipality level to improve access to **childcare** and nursery centres. Since 2011, 3,100 nurseries and preschools were built. A Bill was presented to the Chamber of Deputies in 2017, which proposes to measure the contribution of the care economy to the Brazilian GDP, as a means of granting greater visibility and recognition of the role of care provision, including unpaid care work.

From 2012, a large national programme to eradicate extreme poverty (Brazil Sem Miséria), which operates in coordination with other programmes such as Bolsa Família, has been rolled out with attention to women as a primary target.

As it concerns prevention of **sexual harassment** in the workplace a significant barrier to women's access to and mobility in labour markets, the Brazilian Government enacted Law No 10.224, which defines harassment as an embarrassing conduct performed by a worker in a superior hierarchical position against someone hierarchically inferior, in order to obtain advantages or sexual favours. This law makes sexual harassment a

¹ Applicable to all the employees as it is one of the substantive requirements for dismissals (justified and prohibited grounds) http://www.ilo.org/dyn/eplex/termmain.showCountry?p_lang=en&p_country_id=79 [17 Apr. 2018].

crime with imprisonment from one up to two years defining, setting Brazil apart from most countries where harassment is dealt with under civil law. A number of bills on equality and non-discrimination in employment are currently before Congress that include sexual and other forms of harassment as amounting to discrimination against women. Most recently, as a result of collaboration between the Ministry of Labour and the ILO, a guide has been produced to clarify definitions, concepts, measures to identify and address sexual harassment (Ministry of Public Works, 2017).

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CHINA

Trends

The labour force participation rate of women has decreased between 1990 and 2013, from 72.7 to 63.9 per cent, and that the difference between men and women in this regard has widened from 12.1 per cent in 1990 to 14.4 per cent in 2013, along with the observation that this can be in part attributed to the elimination of positions in the public sector. Moreover, the second largest decline in participation rates has been witnessed for women aged 25 to 34 years (following school-aged girls), which can be attributed to reigning social beliefs about women and their place in society, as well as decreased institutional support provided to workers with family responsibilities for childcare.

The decline in women's participation in the labour force was partly driven by lower participation of young men and women aged 15-24 years who study longer and enter the labour market later, which is a positive development. However, the female labour force participation of the 15-24 age group, the child bearing age, has declined as well. The lower retirement age for women is also a factor as they retire at 50 or 55 years, depending on their occupation, while men retire at 60 years (Dasgupta et al, 2015).

Overall, since the beginning of the 2000's, the share of agricultural employment in China has been declining steadily, while the share of employment in services has been growing and that of the industrial sector has been more volatile. In 2015, agriculture accounted for 28.3 per cent of employment, services for 42.4 per cent and industry for 29.3 per cent (ILOSTAT, 2018).

Sectorial and occupational gender segregation is significant, with more women than men engaged in low productivity agriculture and services (44.5 per cent of women compared to 33 per cent of men in 2012), and more men than women employed as "unit heads" (only 25 per cent of women were employed as "unit heads") as of 2012 (Dasgupta et al, 2015). Further the share of women in manufacturing in urban units has also declined between 2003 and 2012 (Dasgupta et al, 2015).

In spite of women's high labour force participation, only 16.8 per cent of senior managers are women and this places China at the 88th rank amongst 126 countries when it comes to progress on women in top management levels. In addition, 40 per cent of Chinese companies are composed of all male board members (ILO, 2015).

The scarcity of data limits simple analysis of earning differences between men and women and across occupations and sectors. However, according to the 2013 earnings data for the non-agricultural sectors by occupation and by sector, the emerging occupation for women – business service personnel – had the lowest average recorded earnings at 39,300 yuan renminbi (CNY) (US\$6,339)² per annum, followed by the second most important emerging occupation – production and transport equipment operators – at CNY40,000 (US\$6,452). Hence, while the move out of agricultural work may have resulted in some improvements in the earnings of women and men, women tend to dominate in the lowest-paying occupations (Dasgupta et al, 2015).

While gender differences in education and skills may explain in part these wage disparities, studies using a simple decomposition analysis converge in showing that over 90 per cent of the gender wage gap remains unexplained. Possibly, part of this can be attributed to discrimination and stereotypes concerning men's and women's roles, preferences and attitudes (Dasgupta et al, 2015).

Policy action

The Chinese Government in recent years has made significant efforts at the legal and policy level to ensure that women enjoy equal rights with men in terms of participation in politics, economy, culture, and social and family life. In 2001, the State Council, promulgated the National Program for Women's Development in

² 1 US\$ = 6.20 CNY, annual average exchange rate in 2013 from World Bank, World Development Indicators.

China (2001–2010), which set objectives, strategies and measures according to six priority areas: **women and the economy; women's participation in decision-making and management; women's education; women and health; women and the law; women and the environment**. For its current mandate (2011–2020), the programme has set additional and more ambitious objectives and targets, such as ensuring that 40 per cent of working women will be employees by 2020, and progressively expanding the number and share of urban female workers. The programme also seeks to reduce the gender gaps in employment rate and the income gap between men and women in non-agricultural sector, and to raise the proportion of women among high-level professional and technical personnel up to 35 per cent. It also sets the goal to fully implement the policy of equal pay for equal work for men and women by establishing a sound, scientific and rational income distribution system.

The Government is **also strengthening** the competent national bodies, and improving social awareness. For instance, the **National Working Committee on Children and Women (NWCCW)**, established in 1990, organizes, coordinates, guides, and oversees government agencies concerned with the promotion of gender equality and women's development. The Committee is chaired by a member of the State Council leadership; the number and range of its ministerial-level members have expanded over the years to include the National Development and Reform Commission and the Ministries of Education, Human Resources, Social Security and Finance, among others. In addition, **All-China Women's Federation (ACWF)**, is the largest women's organization in China responsible for promoting government policies on women, and protecting women's rights. It implements measures to improve the capacity of young female entrepreneurship and employment through mentorships, small-sum guaranteed loans, and financial interest subsidies; and conducts research regarding the situation of gender discrimination in employment. Finally, the **Women's Associations for Promotion of Fair Employment of Women** has been introduced to ensure employment equality for women. Programmes including Women Entrepreneurship and Innovation Actions and Poverty Reduction Actions have been implemented and they promote business start-ups and innovation.

With regard to addressing gender discrimination in pay, the **Law on the protection of women's rights and interests (adopted in 1992 and amended in 2005)** and the **Labour Law of the People's Republic of China** both stipulate "equal pay for equal work" for women and men, which is narrower than the principle of "equal pay for work of equal value" contained in Convention No.100, ratified by China in 1990.

As it concerns women's labour **market security**, China is moving towards universal health coverage (R. Marten et al., 2014). Coverage is now at 97 per cent of the population and health insurance is provided through three main schemes: for urban workers, for urban residents and for rural residents. The first scheme provides a comprehensive benefits package that covers about 81 per cent of insurable costs. The other two schemes are voluntary insurance schemes that cover more than half of the insurable medical costs and reach 1.1 billion people. As a general rule for poor families, the Government covers part or all of their out-of-pocket expenditures.^{3&4}

Regarding the **working conditions** for working parents, maternity leave days and related policies vary by province. Since 2016, all provinces, but two, grant a paternity leave from 7 to 30 days, with 15 days in most cases, paid at full earnings. Overall in China, women do more than two times unpaid care work as than their male counterparts. In rural China, having young children in the household adds three times more unpaid care time to women than men. The presence of household members who are older than 70 years also intensifies the unpaid care time of prime-age women as well mature women and men (ILO, 2018).

³ ILO, "World Social Protection Report 2017–19 Universal Social Protection to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals."

⁴ In spite of the rapid coverage expansion, though, stark disparities remain between formal workers and others depending on the package they have access to and between urban and rural residents. Indeed, whilst total wage employment is 40 per cent rural, only 13 per cent of care workers in health are in rural areas (ILO, *Care Jobs and the Care Economy A challenge and an Opportunity for the Future of Decent Work*, forthcoming).

In terms of **harassment in the workplace**, the Law on the protection of women's rights and interests, 2005, bans sexual harassment against women and provides for the right of the alleged victims to lodge complaints before the competent authorities. More recently, in 2012, the Special Rules on the Labour Protection of Female Employees were the first state-level labour regulation to prohibit sexual harassment at work and to establish the employer's duty to prevent and prohibit sexual harassment against female employees in their work places.

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INDIA

Trends

Women's labour force participation rate remains persistently low and has been declining in recent years, falling from 26.2 per cent in 2010 to 23.4 per cent in 2012. Likewise, the participation of young women (15-24) has shrunk from 17.6 per cent to 14.7 per cent in the same period. The fall in female labour participation rates can be attributed in part to the effect of girls studying longer and higher levels of household income, which reduces the need for female labour (Dasgupta and Verick, 2016).

In India, women living with children less than 6 years of age have the lowest employment rates (25.5 per cent) compared not only with fathers in the same situations (92.6 per cent), but also with men (82.4 per cent) and women without children or with children aged 6 years and above (32.1 per cent). (ILO, 2018).

Informality in India seems to be shrinking slowly, although it is still pervasive. Between 2010 and 2012, the share of informal employment went from 87.9 to 86.5 per cent, and the share of employment outside the formal sector decreased from 84.4 to 81.9 per cent. This was matched by changes in the employment distribution by status in employment: the share of employees increased from 16.7 in 2010 to 19.3 in 2012, while the share of own-account workers and contributing family workers, typically strongly exposed to informality, dropped from 82.1 to 79.2. This trend is more salient for women than for men, as the share of employed women who are employees has increased by 4.3 percentage points versus a 2 percentage point increase for men (ILOSTAT, 2018).

The slow growth in wage and salaried employment is limiting the prospects for both men and women in the labour market. Furthermore, Indian women are disproportionately concentrated in occupations that experience little to no employment growth. Gender occupational segregation is influenced by women's level of education, with only 25.7 per cent of working-age women having completed a secondary or higher level of education, and household's composition. But biased gender norms concerning the type of work that is most suitable for women and men, and their role in the family and society also seem to play an important role (Dasgupta and Verick, 2016). Young women are particularly vulnerable in India's labour market, with the share of young women not in employment, education or training reaching 49.3 per cent in 2012 compared to only 8 per cent for young men (ILOSTAT, 2018).

While female workers are paid a lower wage rate than their male counterparts in each employment category and location, differences are narrower – on average – in urban than in rural areas. In 2011–12, the gender wage gap oscillated between 22 and 39 per cent across different categories by location and type of employment, and is lowest among regular urban employees (22 per cent) (ILO, forthcoming).

Policy action

Equality is a foundational value of the Constitution of India, and a number of **overarching policies and measures** have been put in place in recent years to promote gender equality in all spheres of life, including in the labour market.

In 2016, the National Policy for Women, which defines the Government's action plan in the next 15-20 years, was unveiled. It aims at "re-scripting" women's empowerment by following a "socially inclusive rights-based approach", in which women are no longer seen as mere recipients of welfare benefits but as actors engaged in the development process. The National Policy recognizes women's contribution as producers and workers in the formal and informal economies alike, and highlights the need for revisiting the conventional concepts of work to better capture such contribution. It also acknowledges the need for effective strategies and policies to counter the feminization of poverty and increased gender inequality in respect of working conditions and unsafe working environment, especially in rural areas and the informal economy. To this end, training women in soil conservation, social forestry, dairy development and other occupations allied to agriculture are put forward, in view of the critical role of women as producers therein. The Policy also recognizes the need for an enabling environment towards women's economic empowerment, through the

expansion and improvement of the infrastructure for care services, like child care facilities, both publicly-provided and in the workplace, and homes for the elderly and the disabled. The prevention and punishment of sexual harassment at the place of work and the protection for women workers working formally and informally, including through the enforcement of the Equal Remuneration Act and the Minimum Wages Act.

The Government has recently embarked on a number of important reforms to labour regulation aimed at simplifying, amalgamating and rationalizing the relevant provisions of the Central Labour Laws. The underpinning rationale is to help create employment opportunities, without diluting the protection of safety, security and health of workers. One important area of reform pertains to wages. The Code on Wages Bill is the first to have been sent to Parliament on 10 August 2017. It is expected that Parliament will present the new "Code on Wages Bill, 2017" no later than the end of Monsoon Session, 2018 (July-September session). Currently minimum wages only apply to so-called "scheduled employments", which is a list of sectors/occupations that are determined in large part at the State level. **The new Code on Wages is expected to ensure minimum wages to all employees irrespective of the sector of employment.** Under the new system, no State Government will be allowed to fix the minimum wage below the National Minimum Wages for that particular area as notified by the Central Government. Further, the Code on Wages Bill 2017 provides that the Central Government, before fixing the national minimum wage, may obtain the advice of the Central Advisory Board, having representatives from employers and employees, and one-third of its members at least shall be women. By extending legal coverage to a broader section of low-paid workers, the new minimum wage system is expected to make a positive contribution to reducing the gender pay gap. **Women in India have a higher probability than men of receiving very low wages, and this is partly due to the fact that many of them are excluded by the current minimum wage system** (Belser and Rani, 2011).

Equally important is also the **National Policy for Skills Development and Entrepreneurship** that provides for the skilling of women in non-traditional occupations and for the creation of more gender-inclusive workplace environments, as part of broader efforts to meet the additional 100.7 million qualified workers required across 24 key sectors by 2022. The policy also aims at increasing the pool of women trainers. To this end, existing training institutes need to earmark a certain percentage of training seats for women, while the creation of new training institutes targeting women only by women trainers is being envisaged. The policy also encourages reliance on internet platforms to connect skilled women and employers, and promotes the institution of awards to reward successful male and female entrepreneurs below the age of 30 years, at district, state and national levels.

Numerous national programmes to facilitate entrepreneurship and generate employment in the medium- and small-sized enterprises are in operation. They range from programmes, such as the Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP), which seeks to bring together relevant actors to support women's entrepreneurship development; or the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY)/Mudra Yojana Scheme for Women, which provides funding for women's start-ups, while the Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) supplies micro-finance services to poor women, or yet the Support to training and employment programme (STEP), which provides skills training to women to become self-employed/entrepreneurs.

In addition, India's early childhood education programme offers crèches, and a daily meal. Services are extended to informal working women through a range of institutional arrangements. Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) were placed close to primary schools, which was an effective way of improving girls' school attendance and facilitating children's transition from the ICDS to first grade (ILO, 2018).

Moreover, the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017 makes it mandatory for establishments employing 50 or more employees to provide crèche facility, either separately, or along with common facilities, within a prescribed distance. The same Act also more than doubled the paid maternity leave entitlements from 12 to 26 weeks for all women in establishments with more than 10 employees, with certain caveats, e.g. a woman with two or more children would only be entitled to 12 weeks, and the leave for adoption/children born through a surrogate is 12 weeks.

The Prevention, Prohibition and Redress Act 2013 covers all women, irrespective of their age or employment status, and protects them against sexual harassment in the workplace, both in the public and private sector, whether organized or unorganized. Furthermore, specific regulations for the health sector exist in a number of States. For instance, in Tamil Nadu, specific legislation requires the employer to take preventive measures, including by establishing a violence prevention committee and removing unruly parties from the premises of the employer.

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THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Trends

The labour force participation rates of men and women have increased in Russia during the past decade, although the men's rate has grown more than women's. As a result, the gender participation gap has widened, exceeding 12 percentage points in 2016, when the male labour force participation rate stood at 75.9 per cent and the female's at 63.8 per cent. Men's unemployment rates are also higher than women's as are men's time-related under-employment. However, in 2016 the share of young women not in employment, education or training (NEET) was 14.6 per cent compared to 10.3 per cent for young men (ILOSTAT, 2018).

In the Russian Federation, women living with children less than 6 years of age have the lowest employment rates (71.5 per cent) compared not only with fathers in the same situation (86.3 per cent), but also with women without children or mothers of children aged 6 years and above (72.6 per cent). (ILO, 2018).

Differences in earnings between men and women are substantive: in 2014 women earned on average 24.4 per cent less than men per hour. The gap was 3 percentage points higher when monthly earnings were taken into account. However, the gender gap in monthly earnings has declined from 32.1 to 27.4 per cent between 2009 and 2014 (ILOSTAT, 2018).

One important reason for these pay inequalities is the representation of men and women in different areas of employment. Statistics provided by the Federal State Statistic Service to the ILO in 2011 show significant horizontal occupational gender segregation, with women being concentrated in hotel and restaurant services, education, health care and social services, and men in transport and communications, construction and production, and the distribution of electricity, gas and water.

Women earn less than men in all sectors and all occupational categories (managers, specialists, other "white-collar" workers and "blue-collar" workers), but there are important variations by skills levels: among average-skilled workers, women get 57 per cent of men's wages, while among unskilled workers women earn up to 84 per cent of men's earnings. Part of the gender pay gap is due to the fact that men obtain financial compensation for harmful and dangerous work, which is prohibited to women, as well as for overtime, work on weekends and public holidays, which is not allowed to "certain categories of women" such as pregnant women.⁵

On a positive note, the share of women in managerial positions has increased between 2006 and 2016 from 38.8 to 42.0 per cent, and has increased more than the share of women in total employment, even though women remain under-represented in management with 42 per cent of managers being women (ILOSTAT, 2018). This is an encouraging development that will certainly help reduce the gender occupational segregation in the country. However, **456 tasks and occupations and 38 branches are still prohibited to women under section 253 of the Labour Code** (ILO, 2014).⁶

Policy action

As part of its commitments to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and corresponding Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Russian Federation has prioritized the creation of conditions for full and equal participation of women in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres of the society. The

⁵ Overtime work is not allowed for workers under eighteen years of age (Article 286) and pregnant women (Article 259) of the Labour Code 2001.

⁶ Truck driver in agriculture; freight train conductor; deckhand (boatswain, skipper, assistant skipper, and sailors of all denominations) on ships of all types of fleets, as well as floating docks and cranes for loading grain, cement, coal, and other dusty cargo; worker in integrated teams and longshoreman engaged in loading and unloading in ports and harbours; woodworker; installer of antennas at high places; mining rig operator; operator of chemical treatment of wells; lift machinist in oil and gas industry; bulldozer machinist; plumber involving the repair of sewer networks; metal and alloy smelter; driver of loading machine; pipe, furnace and flue cleaner; controller of speed of train wagons (Men Care, 2017).

recently adopted National Strategy 2017-2022 provides **overarching measures** to increase women's participation in the labour market by scaling up efforts to upgrade women's skills and promoting their higher representation in high-technology industries through grants and professional competitions for women-innovators. According to UNESCO, 41 per cent of people in scientific research are women (UNESCO, 2018). The strategy also envisages measures to reduce the gender pay gap and to support women workers with family responsibilities, through the provision of childcare, and additional training and retraining after parental leave. Women's entrepreneurship development also features highly on the strategy and a range of measures are envisaged to this end: financial and material support; leasing instruments; support to banks that support women; 'plug in' of women enterprises into infrastructure; improvement of normative and legal regulations concerning women's entrepreneurship; and incentives to innovative women's enterprises. The Government is also planning to take measures to address informal employment, especially in sectors where women exhibit a higher incidence of informality, such as trade, finance, education and hospitality.

To lower the obstacles that women may face in entering particular jobs, anti-discrimination measures have been adopted that prohibit job vacancies that require job applicants to meet specific requirements in respect of gender, age or family status.

To improve the quality of women's earnings and reduce the gender pay gap, step-by-step increases in public sector wages are being adopted, notably in education, science, health and culture, in which women prevail. A major minimum wage reform is currently taking place. The Government has decided last year, after consultations with social partners, to bring the minimum wage up to the level of subsistence minimum through two major hikes, +21 per cent on 1 January 2018 and +18 per cent on 1 May 2018. This is likely to reduce the gender pay gap, as earlier research has shown that females are twice more likely than males to be directly affected by the minimum wage provisions (Lukiyanova, 2011).

The Government has also looked into the creation of favourable conditions for combining work with family responsibilities, especially the upbringing of children, including children with disabilities and children with health problems, in particular, through access to pre-school education by children aged from 3 to 7 years. Employment services provide vocational training, retraining and skills upgrading for women on leave with children under three years old. In 2014, 16,300 women received vocational training and other 16,700 received vocational guidance from local employment offices (ILO, forthcoming). Mothers have access to 140 calendar days of maternity leave at 100 per cent of their salary. Paid parental leave can be used by the mother or father or the child's primary caregiver. It consists of 18 months of paid leave at 40 per cent of the salary. An additional 18 months of unpaid leave can be taken by either parent. Parental leave benefits can be transferred to grandparents or other caregivers.

At the same time, family-friendly working time arrangements are in place that allow for reduced working hours and flexitime with a view to also facilitating the nursing and breastfeeding of infants. The Russian Federation is one of middle- and low-income countries where the right to reduced working hours and flexitime (as well as part-time work) is widespread (ILO, 2018).

More recently, tax deductions for families with children have been increased.

No legislation against sexual harassment in the workplace exists.

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SOUTH AFRICA

Trends

Increases in labour force participation rates have been noted both for men and women. Respectively men's labour force participation rates increased from 60.5 per cent in 2007 to 63.0 in 2017. For women the rate increased from 45.3 per cent in 2007 to 48.8 per cent in 2017 (ILOSTAT, 2018. Summary Fig. 1).

In South Africa, women living with children less than 6 years of age have the lowest employment rates (34.6 per cent) compared not only with fathers (53.7 per cent), and non-fathers (60.4 per cent), but also with women with children with 6 years and above (ILO, 2018).

South Africa has the highest unemployment rate in the BRICS region, which reached 27.3 per cent in 2017. Unemployment affects women more than men with 29.5 per cent compared to 25.5 per cent men's unemployment rate (2017) (ILOSTAT, 2018). Unemployment has seen an irregular, but worrying, upward trend in the past decade, particularly affecting the youth. More than half of the youth labour force was unemployed in 2017 (53.5 per cent), with young women's unemployment rate reaching 58.6 per cent. Similarly, young women seem more likely not to be in employment, education or training (NEET) than young men: the youth NEET rate was 33.8 per cent for women compared to 28.6 per cent for men (ILOSTAT, 2018).

During the International Women's Conference in August 2017, the South African Parliament painted a picture of the challenges facing South African women. Women are generally poorer than men, and spend more hours in caring for others, which reduces the time available to engage in income-generating activities. As a result, women suffer more from poverty and have less economic opportunities and rights. Occupational segregation is a concern, as highlighted by the 16th Commission for Employment Equity (CEE) (2015-2016) annual report, which pinpoints that men represent the majority of top and senior management positions in every sector. Women are most represented in the community, social and personal services sector (30.7 per cent) where there is a large representation of governmental employers, followed by catering and accommodation (29.5 per cent) (CEE, 2015). Black women are especially affected as they face disadvantages stemming from the conflation of gender, race and class.

Understanding the gendered distribution of pay is a critical aspect of income, poverty and inequality in South Africa. The 2015 Labour Market Dynamics in South Africa Report finds that the median wage for employed women in 2015 was 77.1 per cent of the wage for employed men, and this persists across the income distribution (Stats SA, 2016). For the bottom 25 per cent of wage earners, the median wage for women is only 75.0 per cent of that for men. Overall the proportion of women earning low wages is significantly higher in certain sectors than that for men. This is particularly so in mining, construction and trade.

Policy action

In response to these challenges, South Africa's Vision 2030 sets out a plan where gender equality features prominently. It builds on a rich legislation⁷ to address overall discrimination and promote women's economic empowerment. The **National Development Plan 2030** includes expanding public employment to provide work for the unemployed, with a specific focus on the youth and women. It advocates the elimination of social, cultural, religious and educational barriers standing in the way of women's access to the job market and establishes measures, such as creating security of tenure for communal farmers, especially women, while providing for the regular assessment of their impact. Women's business development is seen as a promising path towards women's economic empowerment, and a number of government programmes have been

⁷ Legislation was passed by Parliament to ensure greater economic empowerment of women: the National Education Act (No. 27 of 1996); the Extension of Security of Tenure Act (No. 62 of 1997); the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (No. 75 of 1997); the Employment Equity Act (No. 55 of 1998); the Skills Development Act (No. 97 of 1998); the Labour Relations Amendment Act (No. 127 of 1998); the Land Restitution and Reform Law Amendment Act (No. 63 of 1997 & No. 18 of 1999); the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (No. 4 of 2000); the Preferential Procurement: Policy Framework Act (No. 5 of 2000), as well as the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act (No. 53 of 2003).

launched to this end. The B'avumile Skills Development Initiative, aimed at developing women's expertise in the production of marketable goods and the creation of formal enterprises in the creative industry, is one such example, as is the Technology for Women in Business (TWIB) programme, which seeks to increase the quantity and quality of the products produced through technological innovations, or the South African Women Entrepreneurs' Network (SAWEN) programme, which provides fast-track support to women concerning the establishment and consolidation of their enterprises.

In February 2017, after long negotiations, led by the quadripartite National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC), the Government and the Social Partners of South Africa adopted a **national minimum wage policy and a code of good practice on collective bargaining**. NEDLAC had been charged with the responsibility of tackling wage inequality, promoting labour market stability and addressing violent and protracted strikes. The national minimum wage set at R 20/hour is expected to come into effect in 2018⁸ and will be adjusted every year by the national minimum wage commission. The Commission acknowledged that the people at the bottom of the wages and poverty pyramid are overwhelmingly women and that minimum wages could be one element of a policy to overcome poverty and reduce inequality, including between men and women, by promoting the right to equal remuneration for work of equal value. When the national minimum wage is introduced, domestic workers will be paid 75 per cent and agricultural workers will be paid 90 per cent of the national minimum wage, but both groups will be brought up to 100 per cent of the national minimum wage level within 2 years pending research by the national minimum wage commission, which will be tasked to assess the impact of the policy.

Efforts have also been made to address the **labour market insecurity of low-income women in rural areas or in informal occupations**. The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), for example, provides an important safety net for women, 63 per cent of whom were the programme's beneficiaries in 2010. This result was achieved through different means, including the introduction of explicit quotas (a target of 40 per cent of women's participation in EPWP).

The Domestic Workers Act was introduced in 2002 to set a minimum wage and working conditions, such as hours of work, overtime pay, salary increases, and leave entitlements. Research shows that the earnings of all employed domestic workers have risen in real terms since the Act came into effect, while the actual number of hours per week have fallen. The Unemployment Insurance Act covers domestic workers and seasonal workers. They are entitled to unpaid maternity leave for 17 weeks, but can claim between 38 and 58 per cent of their salaries, tax-free, from the Unemployment Insurance Fund for that period. Some employers do pay their employees in part or full. Leave is also provided where a child is adopted. The Government is planning to also expand the coverage of compensation for occupational injuries to domestic workers.

Other important policy measures relate to maternity and paternity leave. In 2017, South Africa increased the percentage of wages received during maternity leave from 60 to 66 per cent, and passed in a bill that affords fathers the right to ten days' paid paternity leave.

Harassment is regulated by the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (PEPUDA), which defines discrimination and harassment. The Department of Labour is responsible for sexual harassment and aims at its elimination from the workplace. It provides procedures to deal with the problem and prevent it from recurring. The Protection from Harassment Act 17 of 2011 also provides for the issuing of protection orders against harassment and affords effective remedies to victims of harassment.

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⁸ The ILO has accompanied these processes by supporting a high-level International Minimum Experiences Workshop in 2015 and the sharing of international experiences on minimum wages and collective bargaining to NEDLAC constituents and to the members of the National Minimum Wage Panel set up by the Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa to help reach a final agreement, which will benefit millions of workers as well as sustainable enterprises through a more stable and peaceful business environment.

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