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Target 3.A

Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015

Indicators

3.1 Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education

3.2 Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector

3.3 Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament

3. Promote gender equality and empower women

Gender equality and the empowerment of women are essential to overcome poverty. The achievement of all of the Goals depends on progress under MDG 3. The ILO works to advance understanding of the vital links between decent work, poverty reduction and gender equality. Women's greater access to employment and income underpins efforts to close the gender gap in education and employment to empower women.

Decent, productive jobs are the most effective route out of poverty. But gender inequality in the labour market persists through occupational segregation, wage gaps, higher relative unemployment rates, overrepresentation in the informal economy, inadequate social protection and economic insecurity.

Decent work and gender equality

Gender equality cross-cuts the ILO Decent Work Agenda, which encompasses rights, employment and income, social protection and social dialogue. The ILO mainstreams gender concerns in all of its policies and programmes through:

- the promotion of equality of opportunity in access to jobs, income-earning activities, assets, education and training
- gender-specific measures and action aimed at both men and women
- social protection initiatives
- women's empowerment through employers' and workers' organizations
- social dialogue and collective bargaining for gender equality
- the promotion and realization of rights
- ratification and implementation of international labour standards.

Progress towards MDG 3

Gaps between women's and men's wages, treatment and opportunities in the workplace are gradually shrinking, and women's education and entrepreneurship are rising. More women are completing higher education and moving into management positions. Yet discrimination based on gender still pervades the labour market and the global economic crisis is placing the recent advances at risk. Inequality between women and men is a determining factor in world poverty, with women comprising the majority of the world's working poor.

A new gender gap may be emerging. Although women's overall labour force participation is growing, women are denied equal pay for work of equal value, remain disproportionately represented in poorly-paid jobs, in vulnerable employment, part-time work, home-based and informal work. This work, along with unpaid care work continues to be undervalued. In addition, HIV/AIDS is a persistent problem in high prevalence countries, and the pandemic's face is increasingly young, poor and female. Gender equality is a key element in the ILO goal of promoting opportunities for women and men to obtain decent work.

The ILO places gender concerns at the heart of all its policies and programmes in order to create employment, promote training, develop entrepreneurship and improve access to the labour market under fair and equal conditions for both women and men.

The strategic course of the ILO's work on gender equality is reflected in the resolution concerning gender equality at the heart of decent work, adopted by the International Labour Conference in June 2009.

Girls suffer discrimination in access to education. Of the 72 million primary school age children out of school, 44 million are girls. Failure to educate girls costs developing countries US\$92 billion a year.

“There remains a huge untapped labour potential of women, and economic growth and development could be much higher if social and economic readjustments are made so as to provide every woman with the opportunity of decent employment.”

– ILO, *Global Employment Trends for Women, 2009*

What the ILO does

■ Successful tools to advance and measure progress toward gender equality and decent work

The ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2010-15 is the ILO's tool to implement its policy on gender equality and mainstreaming. It uses a results-based approach and guides staff in order to support constituents' gender equality policies and initiatives as part of the Decent Work Agenda.

Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) are the main vehicle for delivery of ILO support to countries. Gender concerns are mainstreamed through DWCPs, and their incorporation into poverty reduction strategies and UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) is promoted. The involvement of employers' and workers' representatives is key to the sustainability of such activities.

The participatory gender audit is a unique tool for assessing and monitoring the achievement of gender equality both within the Organization and in the world of work. It identifies strengths and areas for improvement at the individual, work unit and organization levels on how to mainstream gender practically and effectively.

■ International labour standards

Promoting the ratification and implementation of the four key gender equality Conventions (the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100); the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111); the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156); and the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183) is fundamental to the ILO's goal of overcoming discrimination against women in employment opportunities and treatment at work.

■ Technical cooperation for development

Technical cooperation projects are designed, implemented, monitored and evaluated in cooperation with the ILO Gender Network to support capacity building of constituents on gender mainstreaming, conduct participatory gender audits and expand the ILO's global knowledge of gender issues in the world of work. Many projects include a specific allocation for gender equality in their budgets, thus ensuring that a gender perspective is both visible and accountable in their implementation.

■ Research and information

The ILO is the lead agency tracking progress in relation to the employment of women in the non-agricultural sector (Indicator 3.2). In order to improve understanding of the specific challenges women face in securing decent work, the ILO collects, monitors and analyzes labour market information and shares this data widely.

ILO research and information on gender equality in the world of work covers a wide range of themes, such as women's entrepreneurship, the roles of men and women in the formal and informal economy, gender equality issues in social security, the gender dimension of HIV/AIDS, migration, post-conflict reconstruction, child labour and forced labour. The knowledge base is disseminated on-line and in print through research papers, publications, statistics and news and through the ILO Gender Network.

■ Knowledge development, training and capacity building

The ILO conducts training and capacity building that provides methodology and tools for integrating gender equality into analysis, planning and practice. The Gender and Non Discrimination Programme of the ILO Training Centre in Turin includes regular training courses on gender mainstreaming. The ILO also publishes a wide range of gender-specific training materials.

Highlights

The ILO's commitment to gender equality is embodied in the Decent Work Agenda and the 2008 Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization.

In June 2009 the International Labour Conference (ILC) adopted a resolution concerning gender equality at the heart of decent work, calling for measures to facilitate women's economic empowerment through entrepreneurship development, to address the pay gap between women and men, to enhance social protection for all, to strengthen women's participation in social dialogue, and to prevent and eliminate violence against women at work.

The Global Jobs Pact, adopted by the ILC in June 2009 to help mitigate the social impact of the crisis, calls for recovery packages that integrate gender equality concerns in all measures.

The ILO Campaign on Gender Equality at the Heart of Decent Work 2008-09 has increased awareness and understanding of gender equality and shown how women and men are affected differently in their access to rights, employment, social protection and social dialogue. Built around 12 decent work themes, the campaign material (brochures, posters, postcards, videos and a comprehensive website) continues to be used, highlighting what can be done to advance gender equality, addressing issues such as girls' and boys' education, migrant workers, green jobs, work and family by addressing them with a gender-sensitive approach. Awareness of workers' rights concerning equality of opportunity and treatment has increased across all regions and the ILO Global Campaign has helped empower women and men workers to demand their rights.

Participatory gender audits have been conducted in many countries to help constituents combat inequalities in their structures and activities more effectively. This tool has also helped UN country teams in Africa and Asia integrate gender into their respective actions and programmes. A multiplier effect was achieved by training gender audit facilitators amongst constituents, national gender experts and ILO and UN staff.

ILO initiatives, based on the Women's Entrepreneurship Development (WED) Programme, have fostered women's entrepreneurship by contributing to economic empowerment and mainstreaming gender equality issues into enterprise development. The WED programme has covered over 25 countries, 14 of which are located in Africa, and aims to reduce poverty through the creation of decent work and women's empowerment.

ILO Conventions offer a road map to strengthen action to advance gender equality and women's rights in countries worldwide:

- 167 countries, including 24 since 2000, have ratified the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100) which provides that men and women are to be paid equally for work of equal value
- 169 countries, (28 since 2000) have ratified the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111) which provides for equality of opportunity and treatment in employment
- 40 countries have ratified the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156) which aims to enhance equality of opportunity and to enable workers with family responsibilities to harmonize their family and working responsibilities
- 18 countries have ratified the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183) which sets out the basic requirements of maternity protection, including maternity leave, cash benefits during maternity leave, employment protection and non-discrimination, health protection and the right to breastfeed a child after return to work.

The first International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) World Women's Conference, "Decent Work, Decent Life for Women", held in 2009, highlighted the need to reach out to the most excluded women, such as domestic workers; the need to enhance women's participation in trade unions; and the important role of collective bargaining and the need to extend protection.

The International Organisation of Employers (IOE) has worked closely with the ILO to develop a Small and Medium Enterprise Toolkit, an important part of which is the Female-Male Operated Small Enterprises tool, which guides internal assessments of how organizations serve the needs of female- and male-operated small enterprises as clients.



PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN –

The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) forbids discrimination based on sex in all fields of women's lives, including employment.

All ILO Member States are obliged to promote, respect and realize the elimination of discrimination in employment and occupation, forced labour and child labour, as well as ensure respect for freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining.

2009 was the 10th anniversary of the ILO's policy on gender equality which mainstreams gender equality into all aspects of ILO work.

The 2010 International Labour Conference will mark an important step on the path to recognising domestic work as work. The 2010 conference will begin the process of developing a legal instrument on domestic work.

Priorities

In accordance with the Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, the resolution concerning gender equality at the heart of decent work and its follow-up offers guidance on the strategic course for future work on the four strategic objectives of the ILO. The following are also key to improving progress on MDG 3:

Employment creation

- Increase economic opportunities for women in conditions of decent work
- Address gender equality in all aspects of employment creation, including supportive macroeconomic frameworks, active labour market policies, skills development, enterprise development and employment-intensive infrastructure development policies
- Orient education and skills enhancement policies towards equality of opportunity for girls and women
- Encourage men to assume care-giving responsibilities so that women can re-enter the labour market
- Ensure respect for the principle of equal remuneration between men and women for work of equal value
- Enhance women's access to and control over productive resources including land, technology, market information and credit to ensure the viability of their enterprises.

Social protection

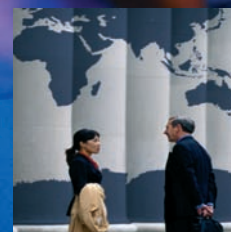
- Improve social protection by widening eligibility conditions and increasing benefits
- Make pension schemes financially sustainable and remove the unequal treatment of women
- Protect women workers' health through the improvement of their working conditions and working environment
- Improve the response to HIV/AIDS in the world of work
- Combat the trafficking of persons
- Promote appropriate policies to address men's and women's specific occupational safety and health needs, including reproductive health
- Help governments to integrate maternity protection in social and economic policy
- Tackle gender-based violence in the workplace
- Promote gender-sensitive labour migration policies.

Rights

- Ratify and effectively implement the ILO's fundamental Conventions, in particular the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100); the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111); the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87); and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98)
- Ratify and effectively implement the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183) and the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156); the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) and make efforts to take into account the special situation of girls
- Train judges, labour inspectors and government officials to better identify and redress gender inequalities
- Review legislation from a gender perspective to ensure that laws do not have an adverse or discriminatory effect on women or men
- Make use of affirmative action laws to redress sex-based inequalities in the labour market.

Social dialogue

- Strengthen and promote women's engagement in social dialogue, including in collective bargaining
- Make measurable progress in the representation of women at decision-making levels to attain balanced participation with men in key positions in government, employers' and workers' organizations, and in social dialogue institutions
- Train negotiators and other representatives of the social partners, both men and women, in gender equality and equal pay.



MDG 3

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WOMEN



Published by the International Labour Office (ILO) with financial assistance from the European Union under the ILO/EC project "Implementing the UN CEB Toolkit within the Decent Work campaign".