

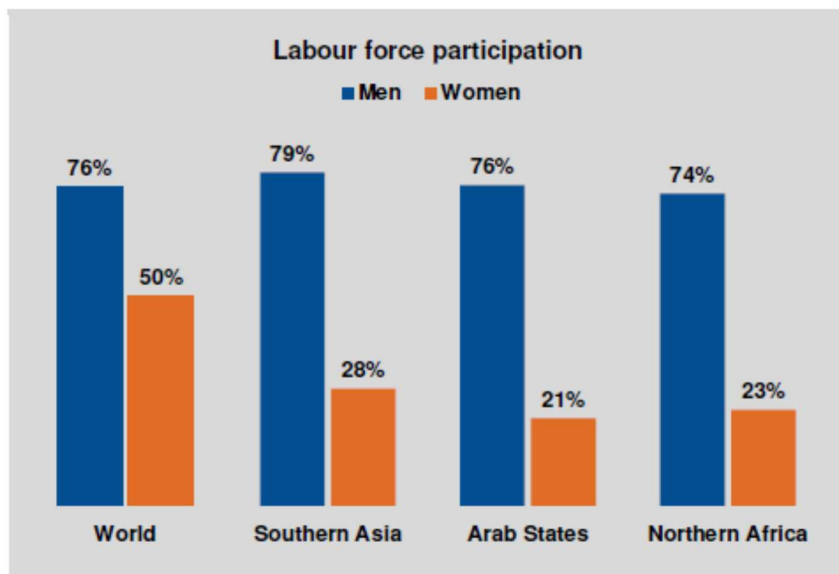
Presentation by Susan Maybud, Senior Gender Specialist, Gender, Equality, and  
Diversity Branch of the ILO in Geneva

At the Seminar: “Towards a better future for women and work: Voices of women and men”

Tokyo, 22 March 2017

To start with a little bit about the genesis of this project, “Women and Work” Initiative is one of ILO’s Centenary Initiatives for the 100 years anniversary of the organization. One of the areas that the ILO looked to explore was the reasons that women are not succeeding despite development of policy and legal frameworks as well as advancement in women’s health and education. The Director-General of the ILO was puzzled by this, and in order to better understand where the barriers are, suggested that it would help to know the attitudes and perceptions of women about work and the perceptions of men about women working. It was with this idea that the ILO contacted Gallup to launch a global survey on women and work.

The Gallup World Poll exercise was conducted between January and November 2016 in 142 countries around the world, representing 98 percent of the population, and has been the only truly world poll that exists. The survey was conducted with people with age ranging from 15 and above, covering various education and income levels. First, when the gap between women and men in labour force participation is compared at the global level, 76 percent of men are active in the labour force compared with 50 percent of women. When this is compared at the regional levels, there are areas where the gap is much wider such as Southern Asia, Arab States, and Northern Africa, which means these are the areas that actually we need to work hard on.



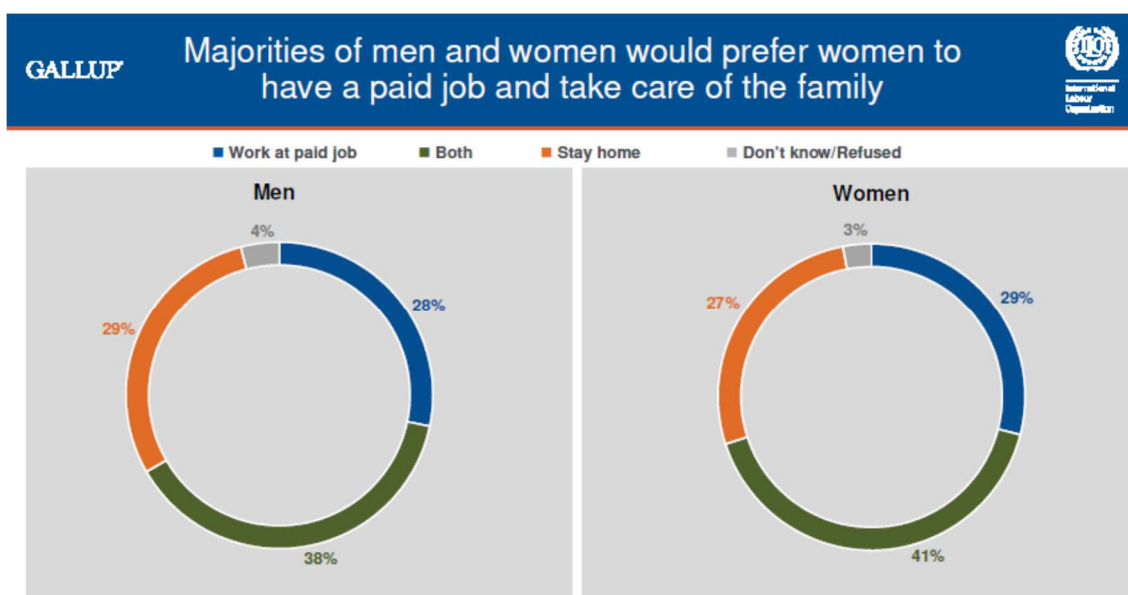
Source: 2016 Trends Econometric Models, International Labour Organization

The first question asked in the global survey was to measure women’s and men’s preferences on women in the world of work. When we introduced this question, we had to be very careful with the wording. We asked women respondents, “would you prefer to work at a paid job, stay at home and take care of your family and household or would you prefer to do both?” When we asked this question, we could have easily said “would you rather work or stay home?” We did not word that way because work at home is work even if it is unpaid. Care work or domestic work is a lot of work that women do not get credit for and that is invisible. We wanted to do that concept justice and we actually said “working at paid jobs” to make it very clear. The hidden part about the question is that it does not mean that those who say they are working full time are actually wanting to work full-time. We do not know whether they want to work full-time or be at home. The question here is really asked in a way to understand the preferences, not their employment status. We will get to that a bit later.

The other area that was important for us to recognize is that men are asked this question about women. Now why? First we started and we asked the question to men “would you like to, would you prefer to work at a paid job, stay home and take care of the family and house or do both?” The question did not do well at all. Men around the world in the interviews that Gallup did and field testing and focus groups were incredulous saying, “of course we have to work outside the home. What do you mean? We are men. That’s what men do. We do not stay home.” We realized that this is not going to be money well spent if we are going to get the same answer everywhere in the world.

Therefore, we turned it around and started to look at the mind-set of men about women working so that we actually find out what they are thinking. That actually ended up being very valuable for us because what men think is really going to also govern what women are going to do. It is the sound of one hand clapping if you do not have both.

The results were very revealing for us. Sixty-six percent of men preferred for women to be working at paid job and taking care of family or just working at paid jobs. Seventy percent of women thought the same thing. This is hugely revealing for us. Looking at the composition of that, close to 30 percent of men and women are saying women should be only staying home. About 40 percent of men and women prefer women to be doing both, having a paid job and taking care of the family. There is also quite healthy percentage, almost 30 percent of men and women prefer that women only work at paid jobs. Now again, when you look at that 30 percent of men and women preferring women to only be working at paid jobs, that is also understandable because there are many women who do not have children, whose children have grown up, who have very good care facilities, or who have family helping.

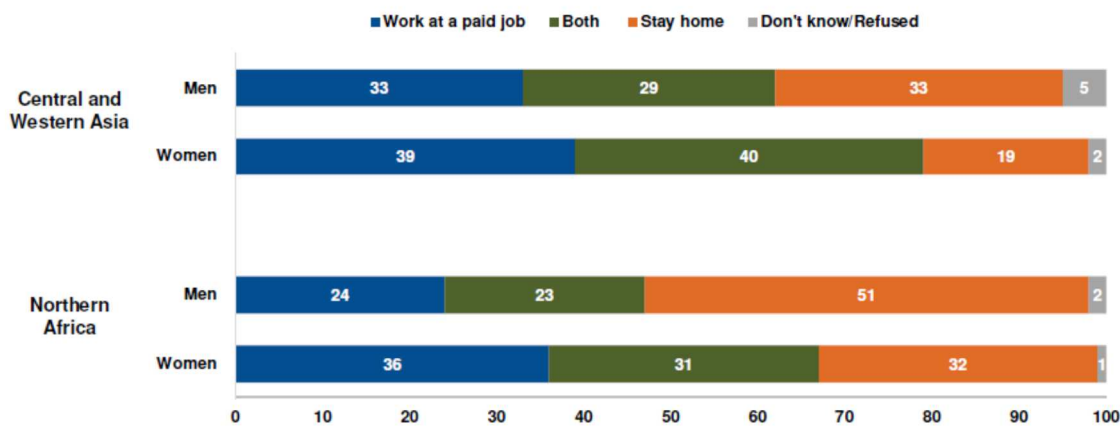


So there is actually a logic behind this that is quite interesting. In terms of policy guidance, this is fantastic because basically at the household level men and women are tracking in terms of their preferences for women working, which means the obstacles are somewhere else. It is not necessarily at that household level. Now this was actually very interesting from the ILO's point of view because regardless of the employment status the

majority of women would prefer to be working. For those who are employed, this makes sense, but those who are unemployed and those who are even out of the workforce would prefer to be working to some extent. This says a lot about the will to be contributing and the will to be earning.

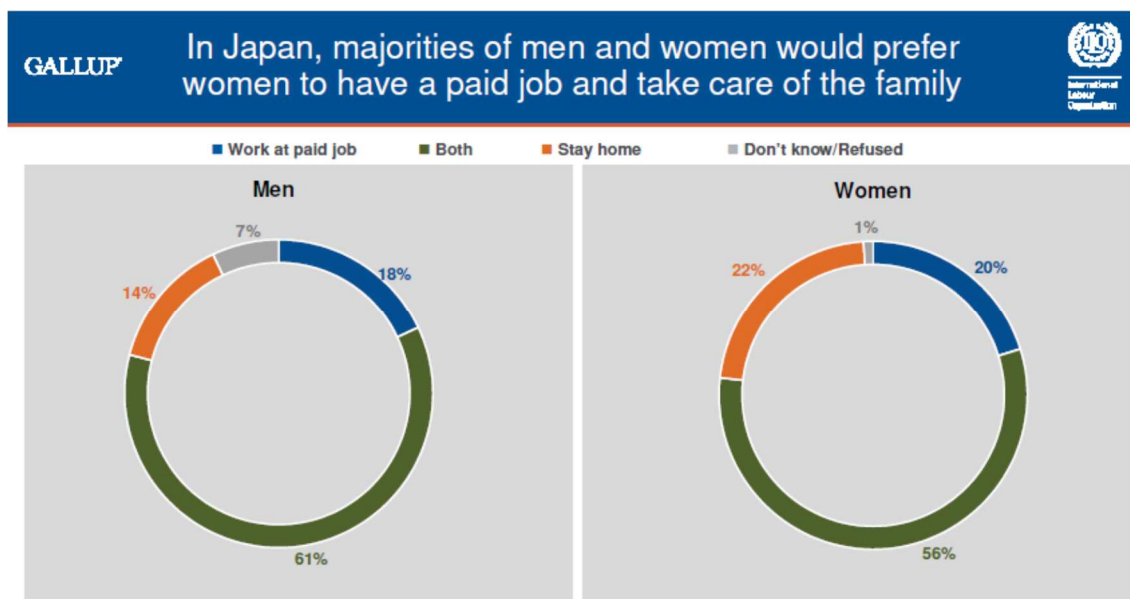
In a few regions, you have some very big gaps. In Central and Western Asia, you see gender gap between what women are thinking and what men think. Up to now we have been saying that men and women are tracking, then you look at some of these regions and see actually there is a bit of disconnect between what men are saying and women are saying. In Central and Western Asia, more men are saying they want women to stay home than women want to stay home. If you look at Northern Africa, there is a big gap, and 51 percent of men would rather women stay home while only 32 percent of women would prefer to stay home. These are the regions where you see other influences that play and that we need to be analyzing.

**GALLUP** In a few regions, there is large a gap between women's and men's desires for women to work at a paid job 



In Asia, there is not much gap between what men and women want in the different sub-regions of Asia. If you look at Eastern Asia, Japan is part of that grouping for us. This is actually tracking quite a bit the global preference. Looking at Japan, I think you would be quite pleased to note that there is a large preference for both men and women for women to be working. The largest percentage (61 percent of men and 56 percent of women) obviously is for women both having a paid job and taking care of the family. There is about 20 percent of men and women preferring women to only working

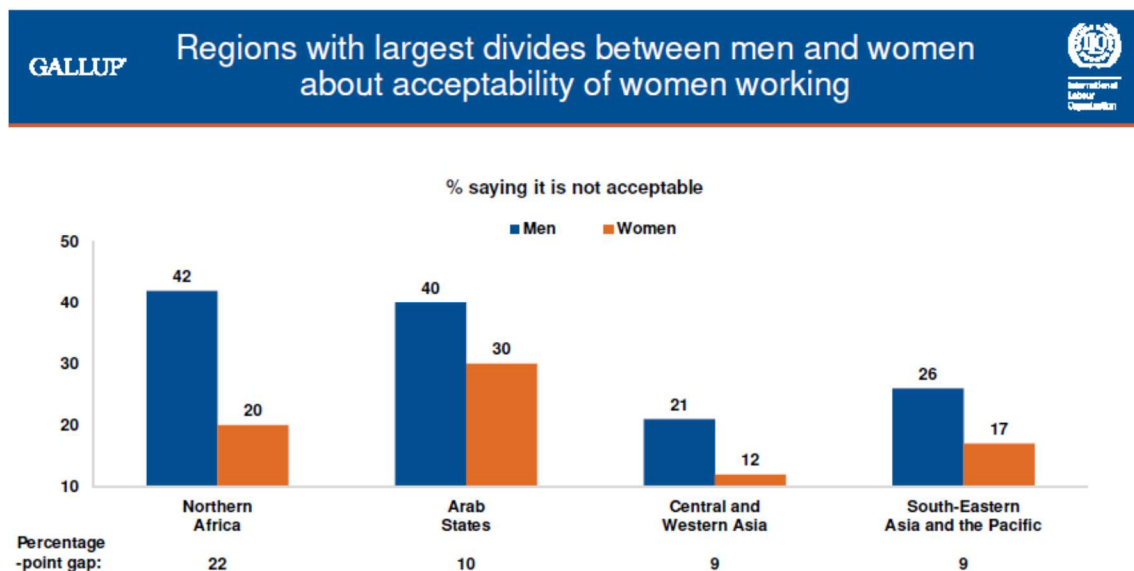
at paid jobs not worrying too much about family. When looking at the numbers about women staying home, only 14 percent of men actually would prefer women to stay home while 22 percent of women would rather stay home. This is a lot lower than the global average. I think this is something to consider that can really help policy makers to think about. Maybe things are changing and things are a bit different here.



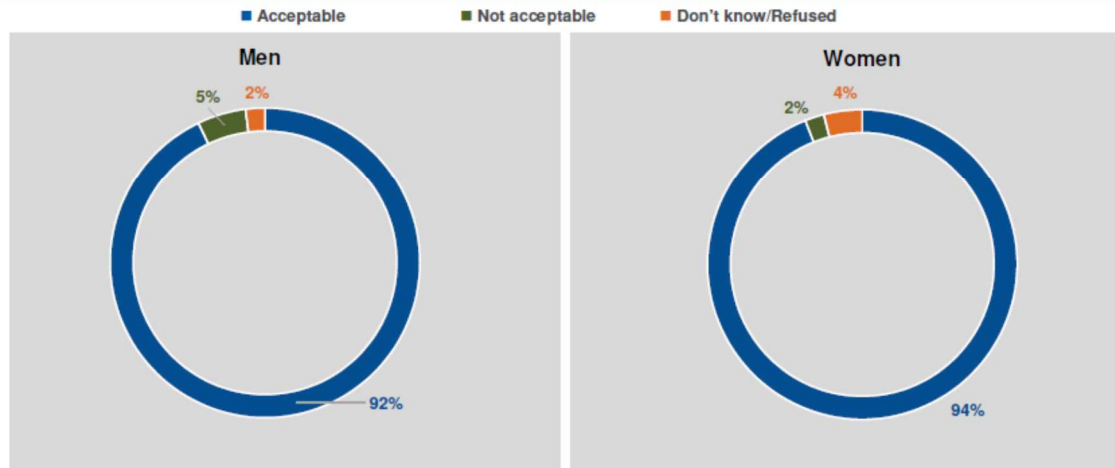
The second question we asked is about the acceptability at work. We are asking these questions in very simple terms because not everybody in the world understand words such as “discrimination” or “convoluted concept like social economic implications of women working.” We had to cross preference with acceptance of women working to be able to try to determine whether there are other discriminatory barriers that are at play. The question was worded, “do you agree or disagree with the statement that it is perfectly acceptable for any women in your family to have a paid job outside the home if she wants one?” We have the word “perfectly” in there for reason because we did not want ambiguities with answers such as “well, yes only if the children are over 20 and the husband is sick, etc.” We wanted to be sure that there was a binary yes or no. It was also important for us to use that phrase “if she wants one (if she wants a job outside the home)” because that is the indication of choice. That is the women’s choice. That is not that she is forced to stay at home but she rather has the job. It is really trying to clarify that. So this was one way of us to be able to mirror, and we got some very interesting results from this. Seventy-seven percent of men and 83 percent of women actually find it

perfectly acceptable for women to be working outside the home. Again we were quite surprised. We thought the figure was going to be quite lower.

Looking at the regional breakdown, we have Northern Africa where there is a big divide on acceptability. Forty-two percent of men say it is not acceptable for women to work, while only 20 percent of women share the same view. So there is a bit of a gap here and a bit of a disconnect. There are similar trends in the Arab States, and also a little bit less in Central Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific. There are areas in the world with a large gap between what men and women are thinking. If you look at Arab States and Northern Africa, you see there is a bit of consistency in terms of lower labour participation, lower preference and lower acceptability. So there is a pattern that is emerging that is going to be very useful for policy makers to address. One important thing to note is the strong family influence over work preferences for women. When women are in households in which it is not acceptable for women to work outside the home, most women there will say that they prefer not to work. In households in which it is acceptable, a majority of women do want to work. That shows you the strong influence that family can have on women especially on younger women.

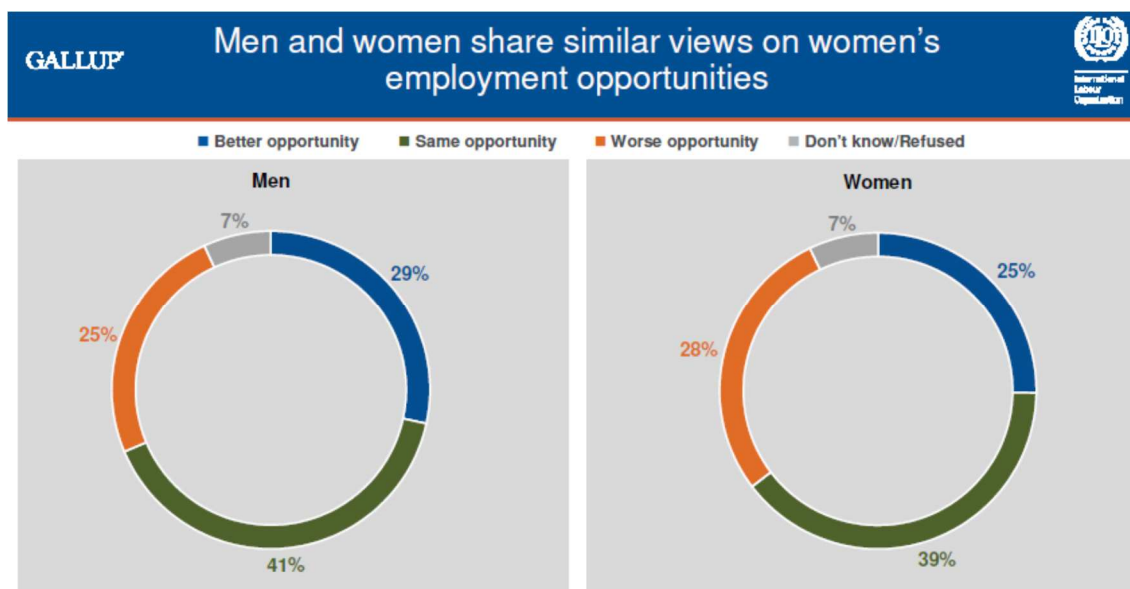


In Japan, there is a very high rate of acceptability by both men and women. That is actually approaching the Nordic countries in terms of the percentage that finds it acceptable. Very few are actually saying not acceptable. Again, this is something to work with that can indicate that any policies will be behind what population is thinking. We have something to work with here, so this is actually a very important finding.



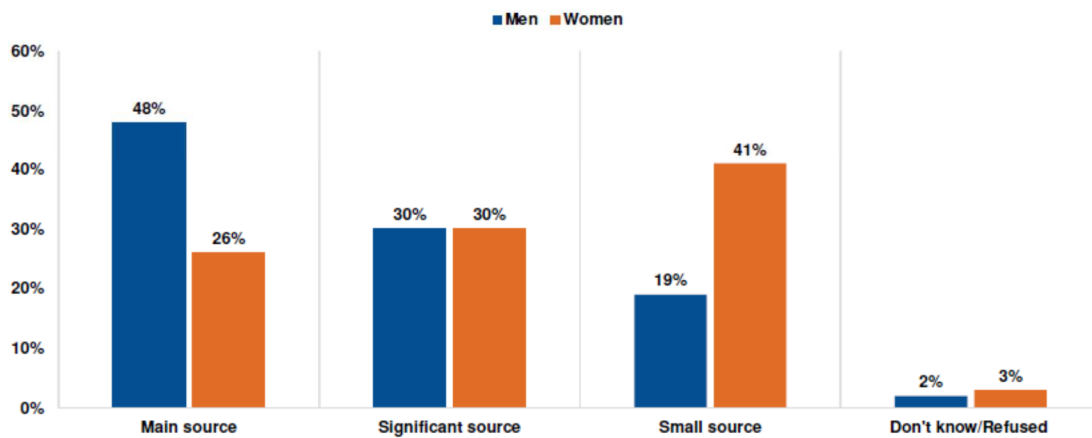
The third question is about the equal opportunity search for good jobs. The question was if a woman has similar education experience to a man, does she have a better opportunity, the same opportunity or a worse opportunity to find a good job in the city or area of the country where you live. Interesting point here is that we added similar education and experience to a man to emphasize value for value also looking at the fact that you are having both at a same level. Findings here show that the majority, around 40 percent of both men and women think there is same opportunity. The number that said there is better opportunity is what really surprised us. There is such a high number of both men and women thinking that women have a better opportunity at employment. However, we know that that is not quite true, so where is this coming from? Where are these attitudes and perceptions coming from? It could be because we are making so much more noise about women getting into the workforce, empowerment and etc. So that could explain why everyone, both men and women, is thinking that women actually have even better opportunities than men. Maybe another explanation would be that there are more opportunities for women but they are, as we know, lower paying jobs. They are in jobs considered “female jobs.” So if you look, for example, at Asia there are a lot of “female jobs” in the garment industry and export processing zones, and in domestic work and areas that are considered for female, and therefore there are more opportunities to find work in those. Men can find work in these areas too. And it is not a question of skills mismatch. It is more question of identity mismatch. Men can do the work but do not

engage very often because those are considered women's jobs and they want to do the heavy lifting, the more manufacturing jobs for example. So this is an area that we would like to explore a bit more.



The fourth question is about financial contributions to households. Here, this question was a very simple one, which was asked to employed men and women. This reduces the number of respondents because if we are covering the world not everyone is actually employed. We wanted to know from them when you are talking about better opportunities or you are talking about preferences, what it is that they are earning. We know that the majority of the world actually earns their money from work. You have other income as well, but jobs are the main source. So it was important for us to ask the question "please think about what you earn at your job and how it contributes to your household income. Would you say it's the main source, a significant source or small source of your household income?" In a household you can have one, two, three or maybe even more incomes. Here, actually you see that men are the ones who say and who probably do provide the main source of income globally. Globally, 26 percent of women say that they provide the main source of income. This is actually quite a significant number, but did not surprise us. Thirty percent of men and 30 percent of women say that they provide significant amount, and those are dual income households where men and women are earning more or less the same.





However, the majority of women globally think that they contribute small source of their household income. Forty-one percent of women as opposed to only 19 percent of men say they provide a small source of their household income. This is actually also revealing for us because it is tracking the different areas we are looking at. If you look at what we saw previously about opportunities and you look at this, you would have an impression that there may be more job opportunities for women but the amount of income being provided is small. So again we get a mirror of the fact that these may be lower income jobs that they are holding. The gender gap actually decreases with education. We do know that when women are better educated, the gap in earnings does reduce. So education does play an important role.

While we do not have data on Japan for this question, in Eastern Asia, 61 percent of women say they provide small source of their household income. Again, this fits with the types of jobs that we do see women holding in Eastern Asia. Globally, 41 percent of women say they provide small source of their household income, which is also quite high.

The fifth and the final question, which is hugely important, is on the biggest challenges for women in paid jobs in women's and men's words. This question was asked open-ended, unassisted and in the own words of the people who were responding. Think about the women who work at paid jobs in your country or territory. What do you think is the biggest challenge these women face? We knew that we were going get some critical

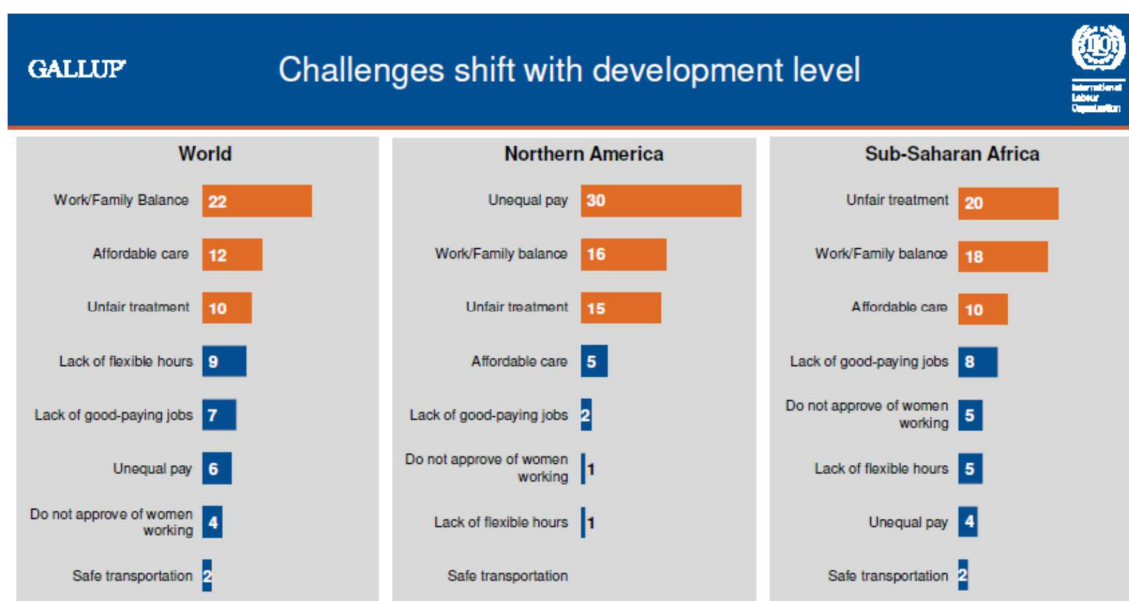
answers, so with Gallup we had created buckets of answers that could come. These included the following:

- Balance between work and family
- Lack of affordable childcare as well as eldercare which are becoming important with shifting demographics
- Unfair treatment at work, abuse, and harassment
- Lack of flexible work hours that fits with work and family because if men are expected to work long hours, we are not using the tools or telework flexibility like we could be
- Lack of good paying jobs
- Unequal pay
- Family members not approving of women working so we have the acceptability question but here we wanted to hear it on their own words
- Lack of transportation, lack of safe transportation, this is actually an issue in some of the regions of the world. Safety to and from work is a big issue.
- People preferring to hire or promote men
- Lack of skills, experience or education

We think we cover it all up and we have a lot of the gaps there that we think we need to be looking at. So let's see what the world said. The three top world figures were work-family balance, affordable care, and unfair treatment. The work-family balance came out in practically all the regions either in number one or number two. Men and women agree, and the numbers in fact were so close between men and women on this question so we actually grouped them together. There was hardly any difference that this is really the big issue. Affordable care is linked to work-family balance because one is affordable care and the other is quality and reliable care for children. With regards to unfair treatment, interestingly, the breakdown by age reveal that younger women suffered more from unfair treatment and abuse.

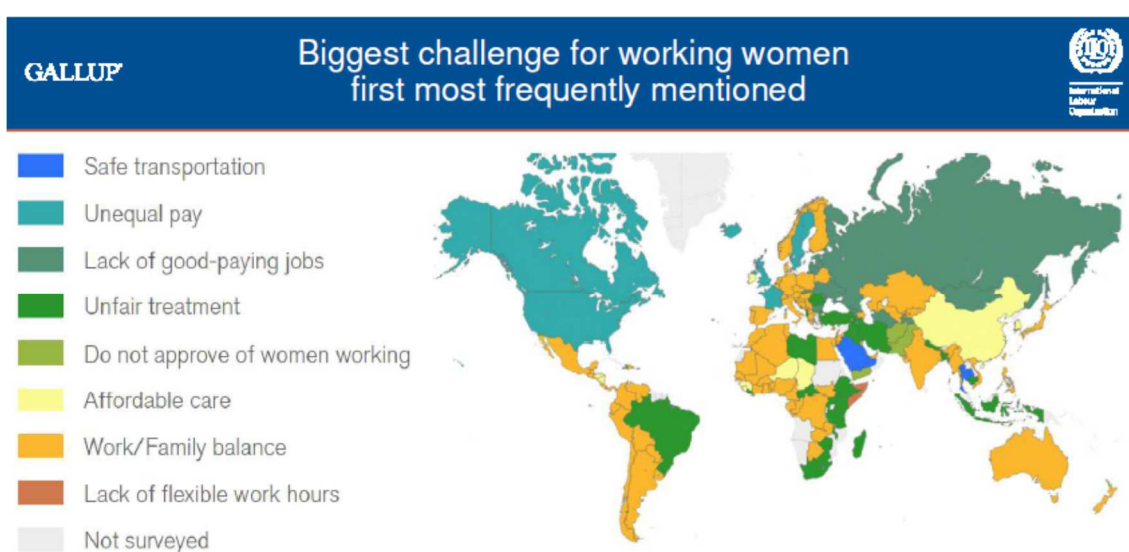
Let's look at North America and you will see that the order changes. The top is unequal pay. Work-family balance is the second but by quite a margin. Then unfair treatment comes below work-family balance. So there are shifts with more women in the workforce, more requests for equality and equal pay, and this shows that there is a shift with development. Let's look at another region diametrically opposed and that is Sub-

Saharan Africa, and unfair treatment is the highest because there, it is actually even hard to get into the workforce. Work-family balance is second and they are actually close. Affordable care comes after that. So actually when you group flexible work hours, when you group work and family, when you group affordable care, these are all part of the same issues of working family. So this really is a very big challenge. Now if you look at the world, you'll see on the map where you have the different developments, you see different needs that the women and men are expressing.



In Japan, the biggest challenge is work-family. The second one that came up

was affordable care, also linked to work-family balance. There are other concerns but these are top issues that the Japanese people responded as their key concerns, so I think this is something to think about. Now the ILO has many tools to deal with work-family issues. We have a wonderful maternity protection convention and we know that in Japan there are good provisions for maternity. There is paid leave, and there are the number of weeks before birth and after birth. There are facilities that are being considered that are actually increasing, getting more men involved in childcare. So there is movement on that side.



Again we have the work and family responsibilities convention and if you notice that is not women with family responsibilities convention that is a convention we did in the 50s. Now it is workers with family responsibilities, men and women. So already we had the foresight years ago to be looking at what this means for both men and women. So these are the tools that are actually very helpful, and we have a lot of policy guidance on that. We also have the only convention in the world on equal pay because that is a huge issue, and I hope you get to that point after you solve the work-family one because looking at figures for Japan, I believe there is a gender pay gap that is quite significant. Then, of course there is the issues of discrimination. Perhaps, discrimination is a strong word but there is unconscious bias definitely. In every meeting that we have been to this week, this issue came up as an issue where maybe not on purpose but women do end up finding themselves with the shorter end of the stick. Women find themselves having these difficulties in their workplaces in subtle ways such as meetings being called at 5 o'clock

when women are going home to pick up children. So I think it's important to recognize that.

Now here are a few takeaways. These are not conclusions or recommendations but things for you to think about. Social norms and traditions are very important backdrops. But as with this poll, we need to challenge the assumptions. Who would have thought that in many cases men and women are tracking in what they are identifying as the issues, or in fact preferring women to work or having acceptance of women working? So we have to challenge conventional wisdom. We cannot just keep falling back and blame that on our culture. There is not a country I have gone to in the world in which the people have not turned around and say these issues are in their cultures. Of course they are in the culture, but culture changes and we are responsible for that. So challenge conventional wisdoms. Sometimes you will find that it is actually not as conventional as you think and new ideas are maybe a lot wiser than you think. So they are worth doing. Structural barriers need to be challenged. I think that is an area if Japan solves that, you are going to fly on gender equality and getting more women into the workforce. I was talking with our colleague from OECD, and we were saying Japan is at a point. It is not only nice to have women in the workforce anymore, but Japan is at the point where you must have women in the workforce to support the economy, to support the country, and to support the growth. So it is very important. Maybe it is time to sweep away the old economic models that you have that existed, replace them with family-friendly provisions making easier for women to get into the workforce, and take on new ways of approaching work which is clearly going to serve the population well.

Again there is no one size fits all, you need a multifaceted approach, and you need a good mix of policies. The world right now is trying to transform. By 2030 we have the sustainable development goals and we have given ourselves short time to actually achieve quite a lot. I think right now Japan is really well placed to truly transform its society. Thank you very much.