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GAME CHANGERS: WOMEN AND THE FUTURE OF WORK IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

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FOREWORD

Over the past decade, women have contributed significantly to Asia's growth, including in the manufacturing sector, the expanding care economy and other service sectors. Women are also increasingly educated and can be found across all sectors, both in business and in management roles.

Yet every labour market indicator underlines persistent gender gaps. Female workers are paid less, more frequently in vulnerable and low-skilled jobs, more often without access to social protection and more likely than men to be outside the labour force.

Discrimination, unpaid care work and family responsibilities, harassment, stereotypes and gender gaps in voice, representation and leadership in the world of work are some of the obstacles women face in moving into better quality jobs and opportunities.

ILO research shows that women perform over four times more unpaid care work per day than men. Women with care responsibilities are more likely to be self-employed or contributing family workers, or to work in the informal economy, and are less likely to contribute to social security than other women and men.

But the world of work is changing. Advancements in technology are generating new jobs, while rendering others redundant. Asia and the Pacific is ageing at an unprecedented rate, leading to a shrinking workforce. Women hold untapped potential, but will they benefit from the opportunities of a transforming labour market or will gender inequality continue to persist.

Data suggests that reducing the labour force participation gap between men and women by 25 per cent could add US\$ 3.2 trillion to Asia and the Pacific economies. Studies also underline the positive ripple effects that putting more productive resources in the hands of women can have on the health, education and welfare of families and communities.

This report highlights practical and impactful measures for women and men alike – to achieve gender equality and build a future of work that upholds the bold aspirations, dynamism and rich culture of this region and its peoples. To accelerate progress, we need more strategic actions, partnerships and champions within governments, workers' and employers' organizations, as well as other stakeholders across the region.

Game changers: Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific highlights transformative policies and actions to consider for the road ahead. In the run up to the International Labour Organization's 100th anniversary in 2019 and the launch of the Global Commission's report on the Future of Work, the ILO partnered with the Australian Government's Department of Jobs and Small Business to produce this timely report. It is intended to contribute towards building a world of work that leaves no one behind. We warmly thank the Australian Government for their ongoing support to the ILO in our shared vision to promote gender equality and decent work.



Tomoko Nishimoto
Assistant Director-General and Regional Director
ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

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The ILO would like to acknowledge, first and foremost, the generous support of the Australian Government's Department of Jobs and Small Business, without whom this would not have been made possible.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

GENDER EQUALITY IS A WIN-WIN FOR ALL. IT WILL USHER IN A FAIRER, MORE PROSPEROUS FUTURE FOR THE WHOLE REGION

Since its inception in 1919 the ILO has promoted the principles of non-discrimination and equality as fundamental values. Now, as the organization looks to celebrate its centenary in 2019 it is an opportunity to look to the future, in order to meet the challenges of the 21st century and beyond so that the future of work upholds the promise of inclusive growth and decent work for all.

The future labour market landscape looks ever more complex as major transformations are taking place: ageing populations, technology advancements, climate change and the rise of non-standard jobs or the “uberization” of work. As the future of work is discussed around the world, in most of these debates the role of women as a primary “game changer” for the future of work is typically overlooked.

WOMEN HAVE BEEN A DYNAMIC FORCE IN THE REGION’S ECONOMIES BUT HAVE NOT REAPED THE FULL BENEFITS

Globalisation and women’s work, both inside and outside the home, paid and unpaid, have fuelled the rapid economic transformation in the Asia-Pacific region over the past few decades. Major progress has been made in poverty reduction, educational achievement, industrialization, household incomes and economic growth – much of which has been driven by the greater economic engagement of women. Additionally, more and more women can be found in business and management roles, generating jobs and hiring more gender balanced teams. Yet, persistent and stubborn gender gaps in the labour markets of the region are slowing overall progress.

Countries across the region are facing significant opportunity costs associated with gender inequality. Evidence is accumulating that closing gender gaps significantly boosts gross domestic product (GDP). Closing gender gaps in labour force participation rate by 25 per cent could add as much as \$3.2 trillion to the overall Asia-Pacific GDP. However, GDP is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to gender equality-related impacts, which can be found in enterprise performance, innovation, productivity and profitability. In addition to economic returns, these gaps will impede full progress on development, women’s empowerment and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Even though the labour force participation rate of women is relatively high (except in Southern Asia), in many countries it has either stagnated or declined in recent times and gender gaps persist. In Eastern Asia, for instance, the gap between men and women is 15.6 per cent in 2018 and is expected to widen over the immediate period. In South-Eastern Asia and the Pacific, the average gap is at 22.8 per cent, and in Southern Asia, the gap is at 51.4 per cent and expected to widen over the immediate future.

More than 64 per cent of women who are employed in the region are in informal employment. While a sizeable proportion of men are also present in the informal economy, women tend to be concentrated in the poorest segments of informal employment. Also, the female share of vulnerable employment remains high, especially

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Closing gender gaps must remain a priority if we want to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls by 2030.

*ILO Director-General
Guy Ryder, International
Women's Day, 2018*



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It is vital to hear the voices of women in Asia and the Pacific; their learnings and their challenges, and how they turn their challenges into opportunities.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific



in Southern Asia, at 79 per cent in 2017. In Eastern Asia, it dropped slightly to 32 per cent, though in South-Eastern Asia and the Pacific, it has stagnated, at around 52 per cent in 2016–17.

WOMEN WANT TO WORK AND MEN AGREE - FAIR SHARE OF HOUSEHOLD AND CARE RESPONSIBILITIES IS KEY

The share of women as contributing family workers decreased dramatically between 1997 and 2017, on average from 41 per cent to 13 per cent across the region. In South-Eastern Asia and the Pacific, contributing family work decreased, from 40 per cent to 22 per cent, while the share of women in wage and salaried work increased, from 33 per cent in 1997 to 46 per cent in 2017. Positive long-term trends in Eastern Asia show an increased share of women in wage and salaried work by one third between 1997 (when it was 45 per cent) and 2017 (when it became 66 per cent).

Today's female workforce is more educated and more set on career progression than ever before. Despite this, women constantly confront obstacles that are similar across countries related to employment access, choice of work, working conditions, employment security, wage parity, occupational segregation, discrimination and balancing work and family responsibilities.

Across the region, the majority of women want to work outside of the home in paid jobs, and most men agree with their ambition, as a recent report by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and Gallup revealed. However women cannot do it alone and the demands on their time are likely to grow in the future, with ageing populations which will increase the need for caregiving. Fair sharing of household and care responsibilities between women and men and in society is critical for women to gain a stronger foothold in the workforce and benefit from future economic growth, which can in turn benefit families.

WOMEN CONTINUE TO FACE DIRECT AND INDIRECT DISCRIMINATION WHICH HINDERS THEIR ABILITY TO ACCESS HIGHER QUALITY JOBS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Discrimination results in women being concentrated in a limited number of sectors and in the lower value segments of the labour market, often in vulnerable and informal work. While trends show a decrease in some areas over the long term, discrimination remains pervasive.

Women in the region experience deeply rooted direct and indirect discrimination that prevents them from enjoying the same rights and opportunities as men. This, in turn, affects their labour market outcomes. Discrimination may be direct, such as legislation that establishes different retirement ages for men and women or legal differences in property rights based on gender. Or it can be indirect, in the form of rules and practices which appear neutral but in practice inhibit opportunities and lead to disadvantages or 'unconscious biases' that undervalue women and girls. Discrimination is even more pronounced where gender inequality intersects with other characteristics, such as ethnicity, indigenous status, caste, disability and gender identity and sexual orientation.

Age discrimination is another factor impeding women's opportunities. At both ends of the age spectrum, young women and older women are likely to experience employment

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We shall overcome together. We need a woman to woman connection and women to women voices from grassroots.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

discrimination. In particular, Southern Asian countries stand out for their higher rates of young women who are 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEET), often due to their family responsibilities and their lower levels of access to education. Women of childbearing age are not immune either, with some employers reluctant to hire them because they perceive a lack of attachment to the labour market or because they do not want to cover maternity responsibilities.

Important also is the undervaluing of women and girls. The practice of sex selection in favour of boys before birth has resulted in a serious gender imbalance within some country populations. The long-term impacts of this are starting to emerge. With fewer women available for marriage, the trafficking of women for marriage is increasing. The future labour markets in these countries will also have a scarcity of women workers.

The opening of new jobs, opportunities and sectors holds promise for reversing this trend and enabling more women, alongside men, to compete for jobs of the future. However this will require accelerated effort, coordination, partnerships, accountability and leadership to make this a reality for the future of work.

BIG CHANGES IN LAWS BUT SLOW CHANGE IN PRACTICE DUE TO INHIBITING SOCIAL NORMS AND ATTITUDES AND UNCONSCIOUS BIASES

Progress has been made in laws and policies to eliminate discrimination, however significant gaps remain both in law and practice. In several countries across the region, prohibitive laws continue to limit the jobs and sectors where women can operate, and a few countries still enforce different mandatory retirement ages for women and men. Even where there are laws and regulations promoting gender equality, change has been slow at the levels of institutions and practices due to inhibiting social norms, attitudes, unconscious biases, limited capacities and weak accountability systems.

Gender-biased norms and attitudes in the labour market continue to constrain women's visions and opportunities. Related to this, occupational segregation, both horizontal and vertical, are endemic in the region. It generally confines women to occupations with lower pay, worse prospects for advancement and poorer working conditions. It contributes to the gender pay gap, and it hinders women from taking up jobs and occupations in sectors with job growth.

Gender-based violence and harassment, also remain prevalent despite improved legal frameworks and many enterprise-level initiatives aiming to prevent and address them. The abuse affects girls and women disproportionately. It is evident that more work needs to be done to create a world of work that is free from violence and harassment, whether it be changing social norms and attitudes or strengthening the legal frameworks and their enforcement.

There are hopeful signs of champions pushing for progress in equality both in the public and private sectors and renewed energy from civil society in some countries to maintain calls for more accountability and transparency towards women and gender equality commitments.

With growing media attention on the issue of sexual harassment in the workplace, companies and organizations alike are also stepping up their efforts to address this issue of violence and harassment which negatively affects individuals, the workplace

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Mindsets and attitudes need to change. We need to recognize that women can contribute and women can perform.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific



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We are confronted today with evidence of a submerged iceberg of misconduct, which disfigures and contaminates the world of work and renders it all too frequently a particularly hostile and intimidating environment to women.

ILO Director-General Guy Ryder, 107th session of the International Labour Conference

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In our countries, we rely on women, care workers and domestic workers to go out and prop our economies.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

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Acknowledge a domestic worker as a worker, as a skilled worker and also allow us to form a union.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

environment and productivity. At the global level, the ILO and its constituents are considering new standards to eliminate violence and harassment in the world of work, which should be decided upon in 2019.

HOW WE VALUE AND DISTRIBUTE CARE WORK MUST CHANGE

Managing work and family responsibilities are major constraints for workers, and women in the region in particular. In the ILO-Gallup report, women and men cited work-family balance, affordable care and unfair treatment as the top challenges to women in the workforce. Other recent ILO analysis from 64 countries around the world revealed that 16.4 billion hours are spent in unpaid care work every day, corresponding to 2 billion people working eight hours per day with no remuneration.

If such services were valued based on an hourly minimum wage, they would amount to 9 per cent of global GDP, which corresponds to \$11 trillion. The average time spent on unpaid care work by women and men in Asia and the Pacific is 262 minutes and 64 minutes, respectively. This amounts to women spending fourfold the time that men do on unpaid care. According to the findings, on average, men from this region performed the lowest share of unpaid care work across all regions.

By 2050, more than 46 per cent of the population in Asia will be aged 60 or older. As the region continues its ageing-population trajectory, the demand for both paid and unpaid care work will increase and it will affect future levels of stress on women and girls if care responsibilities continue to be undervalued and borne disproportionately by women and girls. This will also affect their opportunities for accessing decent work. Without changes in labour market and care policies, women will continue to face challenges in participating in labour markets. And with the ageing population and a shrinking workforce, most countries are likely to see reductions in GDP. Increasing women's labour force participation in all countries is likely to be the biggest contributor to growth and prosperity.

Ageing populations will also increase the demand for paid care services and generate new jobs and opportunities in the future. Many countries in the region have made considerable progress in valuing care work and providing quality care jobs, but much more needs to be done, especially to uphold the rights, value and ensure decent working conditions for domestic workers, whose numbers will continue to grow.

WOMEN CAN BENEFIT AND BE HINDERED BY THE TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGES AHEAD

Technological changes will profoundly shape future labour markets. It will be essential to ensure that women are not left behind as the region moves towards high-skilled and value-added production. Women's participation in jobs and sectors related to technology is low compared with men's participation, and women are less likely to be connected to the Internet. In Southern Asia, for instance, only 17 per cent of women had access to the Internet in 2017.

The impacts of future technological change will be both positive and negative for women. Automation, for example, will displace many low-skilled jobs in manufacturing, particularly in the garment sector. But at the same time, technological advances may open jobs for women in industries previously dominated by men, where physical strength is no longer a prerequisite. While low-skilled jobs may become redundant,

technological advances in production are likely to usher in new highly skilled and knowledge-based jobs. It is therefore important to frame this process of job reduction and job creation as an important opportunity to shift women from predominately low-skilled work to higher-skilled work.

Technology offers other potential benefits for women: from labour-saving devices in the home that may free up time for engaging in paid work to the empowerment effects of financial products, online information on legal rights, job opportunities, market opportunities and reproductive health information that may have been previously inaccessible. There is scope too, to bolster labour market entry by women, including women with a disability and women from rural areas, with a flexible work environment made possible by digitalization.

The digital platform economy is expanding rapidly in Asia and the Pacific, encompassing work ranging from taxi services and domestic services to professional, legal and creative services. While the job growth potential is enormous, and technology and innovation hold the potential to transform the workplace, there are concerns that traditional employment relationships are unclear, which could lead to legal gaps in rights and protections and widening inequalities. Moreover, there are emerging issues of gender pay gaps and concerns that the perceived flexibility of work may result in the intensification of women's care burdens rather than easing them.

The impacts of technology and the low representation of women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields point to the urgent need for enabling women to access a range of skills-training opportunities provided by both the public and private sectors. It also underscores the need for social dialogue and social protection to address job displacements. It is important to bring all efforts together to ensure that the full potential of technologies and innovation will be utilized for social good and for addressing inequalities.

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE OF WORK MEANS PREPARING ALL WOMEN WITH RELEVANT SKILLS

More and more women can be found in business and management roles but the numbers are quite low, indicating the presence of glass ceilings and glass walls. Women own and manage approximately 30 per cent of the region's businesses mainly in self-employed, micro and small enterprises although some run large companies. Women are a minority in senior managerial positions in most countries and even a smaller proportion when it comes to Chief Executive Officers. Women can and are challenging stereotypical beliefs and proving they are just as capable as men to take on leadership positions in businesses and organizations.

Climate change impacts are already being felt in the region, with rising sea levels and increasing weather events, particularly in the Pacific. Green job opportunities to combat climate change will continue to grow substantially in the region, and it will be essential that women gain the skills required for these jobs. Women are over-represented among vulnerable workers, and climate change threatens to increase their unpaid care burden and widen the existing gender gaps in the world of work.

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Women in STEM are impassioned and inspired, but there are too few in these fields.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific



Skills shortages already present a major hurdle for the just transition to environmental sustainability, particularly for certain sectors and occupations, such as wind, wave and tidal power; renewable energies for manufacturing, construction and installation; expansion of the environmental industries; and the green building and construction sector. Women have the potential to play a role as change agents across all sectors to transition to greener economies and jobs.

It is not only green sector jobs that will expand in the future. Job growth will be seen in the science, technology, engineering and mathematic-related fields, in services and in knowledge-based production, among others. As economies evolve rapidly and lower-skilled work decreases, it will be critical to ensure that women can make the shift from their current concentration in low-skilled work to higher-skilled and value-added work.

ACCELERATING PROGRESS ON EQUALITY: GAME CHANGERS FOR A BETTER FUTURE FOR ALL

The future of work remains to be determined. Women in the region have proven their role as change agents for inclusive, fairer and more egalitarian societies. As workers, entrepreneurs, family members, migrants, grassroots leaders and business and political leaders, they have been the driving force for the profound economic transformations in the Asia-Pacific region over the past few decades. Nevertheless, persistent gender inequalities continue to constrain women's opportunities and hinder future prosperity in the region. This report identifies five game changers which have the potential to accelerate progress on equality and usher in a fairer, more inclusive world of work. These five game changers are: (i) transforming adverse gender norms and attitudes; (ii) amplifying women's voice, representation and leadership; (iii) valuing and redistributing unpaid care work; (iv) ensuring equal opportunities and treatment of women in future jobs and sectors; and (v) reinforcing accountability for progress on gender equality.



RECOMMENDATIONS TO TRANSFORM ADVERSE GENDER NORMS AND ATTITUDES



GOVERNMENT



EMPLOYERS



WORKERS

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS



- Undertake reforms in the legal and regulatory frameworks to remove any discriminatory laws or regulations that could impede progress for gender equality; monitor, report in a transparent manner and continue to ensure progress, including preventing and ending violence and harassment in the world of work.
- Collect more data and evidence on what works on changing adverse social norms and attitudes around women in the economy and society and for a better understanding of opportunities, trends and shifts in mindsets at the national and local levels, including measures to prevent and end violence and harassment in the world of work.
- Design and implement multipronged and time-bound strategies to shape positive social norms towards women in the world of work and to remove discrimination by, for example, promoting awareness-raising campaigns on gender roles at all levels, encouraging male champions and thought leaders to implement policies and use technologies that encourage people to “do the right thing” and providing space to discuss adverse norms in the workplace.
- Ensure that women are well represented in decision-making and policy-making processes at all levels of world-of-work institutions; and support the organizing of women through trade unions, enterprise associations, cooperatives, self-help groups and online communities so that they can advocate for their priorities, including in the informal economy.
- Engage people who have power and influence to demand results for gender equality (such as leaders among workers’ and employers’ organizations, the government and other development and business partners, thought leaders and social cause champions); provide them with guidance to leverage their influence as change-makers.
- Engage local leaders and male champions to foster positive attitudes among men to uphold women’s rights; and provide support within communities where norms may be restrictive for women and girls, including on eliminating violence and harassment.



RECOMMENDATIONS TO AMPLIFY WOMEN'S VOICE, REPRESENTATION AND LEADERSHIP IN THE WORLD OF WORK



- Set targets and develop transitional positive-action measures and strategies to achieve gender parity at all levels in world-of-work organizations and in enterprises, including social partner organizations and in high-level meetings. Put in place transparent monitoring and accountability mechanisms and incentives; and link them to institutional and individual performance measures that can ensure progress on all levels.
- Design and implement workplace programmes for career counselling, leadership capacity building, networking, mentoring and sponsoring for women, including young women. Review systems and practices in place and ensure unbiased and transparent measures on promoting equal pay; on equal opportunity in recruitment, promotion and retention; and on support for workers to manage their work and family responsibilities, including maternity, paternity and parental leave, flexible working times and affordable childcare.
- Support the emergence of women leaders in government, employers’ organizations, trade unions, cooperatives and other relevant associations through comprehensive capacity-building measures and by fostering commitment and male and female champions among decision-makers at all levels.
- Continue to conduct research and collect data on women in leadership at all levels and on what works to close these gaps in the world of work and its institutions. Disseminate the results and utilize the findings on how gender diversity is good for businesses, economies and societies. Promote gender diversity as a priority investment for sustainable development and a better future of work for all.
- Promote collective organizing, social dialogue and collective bargaining, with a view to ensure women’s full representation, voice and leadership at all levels.
- Nurture future women leaders by updating educational institutions’ curriculum to reflect positive gender role models for young women and men, setting targets and goals at the institutional level, developing gender-awareness training and coaching as well as performance indicators for teachers and trainers in educational and vocational training institutions towards achieving gender equality targets.
- Review workplace policies, such as for recruitment, pay, training, career progression and sexual harassment, with a view to identifying and undoing unconscious biases in processes that may be discriminatory towards women, including women with disabilities.
- Establish baselines, targets and time-bound measures across the region to track progress towards gender equality in the world of work; link them to the application of ILO Conventions on gender equality, CEDAW and the SDGs.





RECOMMENDATIONS TO RECOGNIZE AND REDISTRIBUTE CARE WORK



GOVERNMENT



EMPLOYERS



WORKERS

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS



- Invest in social infrastructure that provides universal paid maternity benefits and health care, including maternity protection, paternity and other parental leave, through national social protection floors¹ to all workers; and implement laws, policies and incentives that contribute to redistributing and sharing care work and supporting workers with family responsibilities to manage their care and work responsibilities.
- Scale up support to the ratification and implementation of ILO Conventions and Recommendations on maternity protection and family-friendly workplace policies (Conventions No. 183 and No. 156).

- Ensure accessible, professional and affordable, public care services for workers with children and other family members, while at the same time ensuring decent working conditions of care workers.
- Implement campaigns that contribute to fostering positive norms and attitudes towards men and women engaging in care responsibilities and valuing care work.



- Develop family-friendly workplace policies and practices to enable women and men to manage their work and family responsibilities (such as providing flexible working hours and parental leave); and incentivize managers and workers to create supportive workplaces and environments through performance indicators.



- Encourage and support maternity protection and family-friendly and flexible workplace policies through collective bargaining agreements; and ensure the inclusion of trained women in collective bargaining teams.



- Collect, monitor and analyse data to assess the engagement of women and men in care work; and develop and implement policies or measures for more men to take up paid and unpaid care work.



RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENSURE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND TREATMENT OF WOMEN



- Address discriminatory gender stereotypes in the curricula of educational institutions and vocational training; and integrate core technology, digital literacy and entrepreneurial education for all students. And encourage both girls and boys to study and train in any field, irrespective of traditional occupational segregation by gender.
- Collect, track and report sex-disaggregated and gender-specific data by sector, job level (junior, mid and senior levels) and pay scale so that gaps and progress can be measured and occupational segregation can be overturned by world-of-work institutions, enterprises, organizations and educational institutions.
- Develop and implement strategies, including targets, to secure girls' and women's access to education, technical and vocational training, networking, mentoring, sponsoring and gender-responsive skills and entrepreneurship, especially for

future jobs, STEM-related fields and green jobs. Redress barriers, such as limited awareness, restrictions on mobility, care responsibilities, scholarships and limited infrastructure (toilet and hostel facilities for both women and men, transport, etc.)



- Develop active labour market policies that provide capacity-building, career guidance, mentoring, upgrading of skills (including basic technology and digital literacy) and job integration support that targets young women and women who face multiple obstacles in the labour market or are at risk of becoming redundant.
- Work with banks, investors and venture capitalists to encourage capital investments that contribute to decent work, gender equality and a just transition to a greener economy, including women-led businesses and businesses using technology for social good; and ensure equitable outcomes for women and men.



- Work with the private sector to ensure that qualified women can compete and be considered, based on merit, for jobs and opportunities in fields with growth potential and in leadership roles in design, artificial intelligence and robotics. Promote procurement policies that provide incentives and support to women-led businesses to compete for supply-chain opportunities.



- Eliminate discriminatory recruitment practices, pay gaps, and unfair bias against women by improving legislative frameworks and strengthening enforcement, and rectifying unfair practices across the public and private sectors, using technologies where relevant to render information transparent and visible.

¹ Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202).



RECOMMENDATIONS TO STRENGTHEN ACCOUNTABILITY FOR PROGRESS ON GENDER EQUALITY IN THE WORLD OF WORK



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WORKERS



ILO

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS



- Collect, analyse, share and use sex disaggregated and gender-specific data for evidence-based policy and monitoring of gender equality in the world of work.
- Carry out research on what works in advancing positive attitudes and accountability towards gender equality and reward or recognize good practices.



- Explore further the use of new technologies as tools to strengthen information sharing and accountability.



- Develop joint ministerial and tripartite national action plans that prioritize, fund and monitor the implementation of gender-equality measures, using gender auditing and gender budgeting led by the finance ministry (or its equivalent); and consider establishing “scorecards” that rate implementation against commitments.

- Develop, allocate fund and implement a national strategy and/or plans of action to promote gender equality in the world of work, and monitor them regularly for progress through a tripartite plus mechanism that includes women's machinery and other relevant development partners, and hold duty bearers accountable for effective implementation.



- Enhance the capacity of world-of-work institutions, including ministries of labour, workers' and employers' organizations and other relevant development partners, to reform discriminatory laws and regulations; and promote ratification, application and regular monitoring of progress with data to advance effective application of the ILO gender equality Conventions (Conventions No. 111, No. 100, No. 183 and No. 156) and CEDAW. Report annually on progress and planning for closing the remaining gaps (including through SDG 5 and SDG 8); and highlight good practices both nationally and regionally.

- Obtain commitment from all line ministries, tripartite partners (employers, workers and government agencies) and women's machinery when formulating any policy or programme for sustainable changes to advance gender equality in the world of work. Consult employers' and workers' organizations, relevant civil society organizations, parliamentarians, academics, United Nations entities, policy think tanks and, most importantly, women.



- Support organization of women workers and women entrepreneurs to enhance their representation and voice to advocate for their issues and demand accountability.

ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COP23	23rd Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
ESCAP	United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
GDP	gross domestic product
ILO	International Labour Organization
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprises
STEM	Science, technology, engineering and mathematics

Unless specified, all \$ currencies are US dollars.



CONTENTS

FOREWORD	III
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	IV
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	V
ABBREVIATIONS	XIV

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 ILO CENTENARY INITIATIVES	2
1.2 PROMOTING BETTER OUTCOMES FOR WOMEN AND THE FUTURE OF WORK IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC	3

SECTION 2

WOMEN IN THE WORLD OF WORK TODAY	5
2.1 GROUNDS FOR PURSUING GENDER EQUALITY	6
2.2 PERSISTENT INEQUALITIES IN THE LABOUR MARKET	11
2.3 MAJOR OBSTACLES TO EQUALITY IN LABOUR MARKETS IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION	19
2.3.1 DISCRIMINATION	20
2.3.2 UNPAID CARE WORK	26
2.3.3 GENDER PAY GAP	30
2.3.4 GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT WORK	32
2.4 SELECTED DRIVERS OF FUTURE LABOUR MARKET TRANSFORMATION IN THE REGION	34
2.4.1 DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS	34
2.4.2 TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGES AND AUTOMATION	37
2.4.3 STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATIONS AND SECTORAL CHANGES	41
2.4.4 CLIMATE CHANGE AND GREEN JOBS	43

SECTION 3

3.1	TRANSFORM ADVERSE GENDER NORMS AND ATTITUDES	49
3.2	AMPLIFY WOMEN'S VOICE, REPRESENTATION AND LEADERSHIP	52
3.3	RECOGNIZE AND REDISTRIBUTE UNPAID CARE WORK	55
3.4	ENSURE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND TREATMENT OF WOMEN IN FUTURE JOBS AND SECTORS	58
3.5	REINFORCE ACCOUNTABILITY FOR PROGRESS ON GENDER EQUALITY IN THE WORLD OF WORK	61
	CONCLUSION	65

ANNEXES

	OPPORTUNITIES AND PRACTICAL MEASURES FOR WOMEN IN THE FUTURE OF WORK IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC	67
1.	MINIMUM WAGE	68
2.	GREEN JOBS	70
3.	PAID CARE WORK	72
4.	TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE	74
5.	WORK IN THE FIELD OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICS	78
6.	WOMEN IN BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT	80
7.	WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT	82
	REFERENCES	86

FIGURES

FIGURE 1. Trends in female labour force participation in Asia and the Pacific, 1991–2019 (percentage)	13
FIGURE 2. Female and male labour force participation in Asia and the Pacific, 2018 (percentage)	14
FIGURE 3. Components of informal employment as a percentage of total employment in Asia and the Pacific: Informal sector, the formal sector and household sector, 2016 (percentage)	16
FIGURE 4. Trends in female vulnerable employment in Asia and the Pacific, 1991–2019 (percentage)	16
FIGURE 5. Inequality in access to full-time employment and its decomposition in selected countries, grouped by the most important circumstance, latest year	17
FIGURE 6. Preference for women to work at a paid job, stay at home or both in Asia and the Pacific, 2017	26
FIGURE 7. Time spent daily in unpaid care work, paid work and total work, by sex, region and income group in 64 countries, latest year	27
FIGURE 8. Female and male workers in information and communications jobs, 2016	78
FIGURE 9. Intervention areas and associated strategies that have worked for WED	83

TABLES

TABLE 1. Projected future population, by age group, Asia and Oceania (percentage)	35
TABLE 2. Asia and Pacific demographic classifications, 2015 and 2030	36
TABLE 3. Percentage of women's employment in Asia and the Pacific, by sector, 2016–19	41
TABLE 4. Ratifications of ILO Conventions on equality in Asia and the Pacific	85

BOXES

BOX 1. The business case for gender equality	9
BOX 2. Women's and men's representation at the International Labour Conference	12
BOX 3. Targeting unconscious biases to strengthen women's leadership	22
BOX 4. Bans on domestic workers' migration in ASEAN: Time for alternative means of protection?	22
BOX 5. An enabling environment for women's increased participation in leadership positions: The case of Samoa	23
BOX 6. From an 11-year-old garment factory worker to a globally respected union leader	24

BOX 7. The cost of not caring about care	29
BOX 8. Equal pay by 2030	31
BOX 9. TRIANGLE in ASEAN	33
BOX 10. The Better Work strategy to enhance gender equality in the garment industry	38

FRESH INSIGHTS

Does Gender Diversity Improve Firm Performance?	10
Labouring Under False Assumptions: Exploring the Rifts Between International Standards and Cultural Values in Vietnam's Labour Code Reform	18
Australia's Working Futures: Are we ready?	20
Workforce Diversity and Reservation Policy in Nepal: A Strategic Approach to Strengthening Women's Voice and Visibility in the Formal Employment Sector	25
Decent Work for Community Health Workers in South Asia: A Path to Gender Equality and Sustainable Development	31
The Importance of Perceptions in Promoting Women's Entrepreneurship in Thailand	43

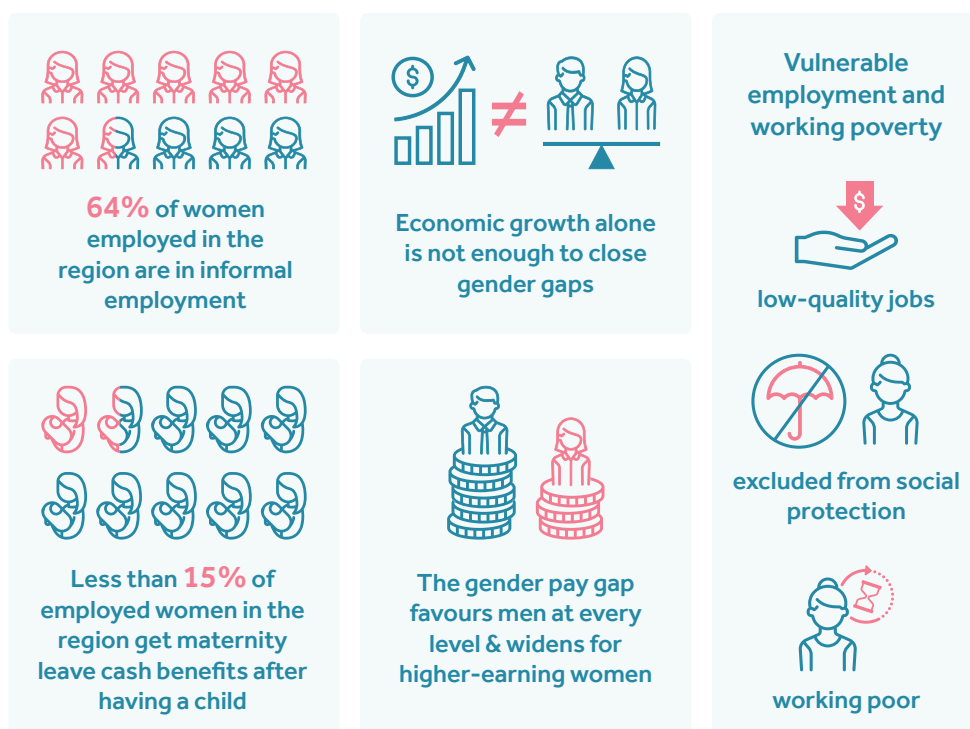
STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

SECTION 1	provides a brief background that led to the production of this report, with information on women in the Asia-Pacific region, the ILO Centenary Initiatives and the Australian-funded ILO project on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific.
SECTION 2	outlines the intrinsic and instrumental arguments for gender equality. It provides an overview of the current labour market situation of women in the region, drawing from recent reports by the ILO and others. Importantly, this part of the report also examines some of the most serious obstacles to progress for women in Asian and Pacific labour markets and then looks at selected drivers of future labour market transformation , such as demographic trends, technological changes, structural and sectoral transformations, climate change and the move towards greener economies. The analysis looks at what these megatrends could mean for women at work and gender equality.
SECTION 3	presents selected game changers in the region that are imperative for supporting and creating an inclusive and fair world of work for women and men. Recommendations in this chapter offer opportunities to have the broadest impact on all labour market indicators.
ANNEXES	turn to selected areas that have great potential to remove systemic and structural obstacles that hold women back and will assist to overcome gender inequalities in the world of work while promoting more and better jobs. It presents practical measures that governments, employers' and workers' organizations as well as other relevant stakeholders can implement to achieve positive transformation for women.



SECTION 1:

INTRODUCTION



Women in Asia and the Pacific have been important drivers of progress and economic transformation over recent decades. They have been at the heart of development shifts, from higher educational achievement, reduced child mortality, industrialization through export-led manufacturing and increased household income to robust economic growth and significant decrease in poverty. Women's work – inside and outside the home, paid or unpaid – has helped transform their communities and their economies.

Yet, when compared with men, women still encounter multiple obstacles to their equal access, participation and progress in the labour market and do not often enjoy fair returns to their contribution. While individual and household expectations of women's roles remain a limiting factor in holding women back, institutions and policies are also complicit in preventing women from enjoying equal rights and treatments. Often based on traditional gender perspectives that assume men to be the primary income earner and women to be the main caretaker in a household, the institutions and policies do not give sufficient consideration to the specific needs of women in the world of work. This results in systems and practices that are unfair to women. Institutions that govern the world of work have an invaluable role to contribute towards removing systemic barriers.

The region's labour markets feature high levels of informality, strong sectoral and occupational segregation and large gender wage gaps. The gender wage gaps along with limited access to social protection and productive resources exacerbate inequalities.

“

Closing gender gaps must remain a priority if we want to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls by 2030.

*ILO Director-General
Guy Ryder, International
Women's Day, 2018*



The extent of women's care responsibilities remains a serious constraint to accessing education and training for skills development, which then reduces their opportunities for decent work and to participate fully in democratic life.

Women are growing in numbers as managers, entrepreneurs and leaders. However, the pace is too slow, and the status quo will not deliver the positive returns that more women can bring to the future of work. The future of work is still to be shaped – by men and women – across the region.

There is a growing call for accelerated progress, accountability and transparency towards gender equality. Movements and initiatives around the region and the globe are calling for action to increase women's labour force participation, remove discrimination and eliminate violence and harassment, to close the gender pay gaps and to include women in all levels of leadership. Campaigns such as #MeToo, #TimesUp and Ring the Bell are an expression that women – and a growing number of men – want to see change for a more equitable future of work.



The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the International Labour Organization's (ILO) centenary initiatives dovetail in generating impetus to close the remaining gender gaps in the labour markets and make all institutions accountable for real change. The ILO vision encompasses an equitable future of inclusive growth and decent work for all women and men, where, in the language of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, "no one is left behind".¹

1.1 ILO CENTENARY INITIATIVES

As the ILO moves towards its centenary anniversary in 2019, a series of seven ILO Centenary Initiatives were launched to take stock of what has worked and in preparation for the challenges ahead in promoting decent work and social justice in the future world of work:²

Future of Work Initiative
End to Poverty Initiative
Women at Work Initiative
Green Initiative
Standards Initiative
Enterprises Initiative
Governance Initiative

² See <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2016/leaving-no-one-behind> [accessed 28 June 2018].

³ See the ILO Centenary Initiatives [accessed 18 May 2018].

The Centenary Initiatives recognize the important potential of decent work to transform the lives of women and men and contribute to inclusive growth. Clearly, the status quo is not sufficient to tackle pervasive unemployment, underemployment, inequalities and injustices in the world of work. Looking to the megatrends of demographics, climate change, globalization and technological advances through a gendered lens and fully utilizing the opportunities that are possible can help ensure the promise of a future of work that leads to inclusive growth and decent work for all.

Within the Future of Work Initiative, the ILO has set up a global commission tasked to provide the analytical basis for delivering on social justice for the next century. As the ILO moves into a new era and looks to the next 100 years, it is a critical moment to reflect on why various commitments to gender equality have not delivered the desired results and to push for gender equality. During the 2019 International Labour Conference, the Future of Work Global Commission will deliver an independent report on how to achieve decent and sustainable work for all.

1.2 PROMOTING BETTER OUTCOMES FOR WOMEN AND THE FUTURE OF WORK IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

As a contribution to the Future of Work Initiative as well as the Women at Work Initiative, the Government of Australia's Department of Jobs and Small Business supported the ILO to highlight the roles of women and men in shaping the future of work for women in Asia and the Pacific. Under this initiative, the ILO commissioned new research on women and the future of work in the region and organized a Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific.

Eight papers were developed by researchers from across the region through a competitive call for proposals to provide insights on selected gender issues, such as gender diversity in organizations, occupational segregation and women in care work.³

The regional conference (31 January to 1 February 2018 in Bangkok) gathered leaders from government, workers' and employers' organizations as well as other development partners to share experiences and practical solutions for creating more gender-equitable workplaces.⁴ Seventeen tripartite country delegations took part, including three from the Pacific islands. The participants discussed challenges and shared aspirations in terms of the future they want for women in the world of work in Asia and the Pacific in relation to the skilling of girls and women, strengthening women's voice, representation and leadership, the power of partnership for advancing gender equality, the importance of the care economy, promoting the work and family balance, developing women as business owners and entrepreneurs and closing the gender pay gap. The regional conference discussions contributed to the development of this report.

This report presents a range of issues that could not all be covered at the regional conference to highlight what could evoke the most transformative changes in the Asia and the Pacific region for diverse groups of women. The report looks at the situation of women in broad scale and analyses their progress and challenges in terms of gender equality in the world of work. The report also draws attention to opportunities, practical measures and policy recommendations accelerating the gains that are needed. Perspectives of women and men who attended the conference pepper the margins of this report to complement the analysis.

Of course, women are not a homogeneous group and experience different realities based on individual characteristics in terms of ethnicity, caste, economic class, sexual orientation, disability, age, indigenous status, among others. This report acknowledges that it is not able to analyse all these diverse situations in depth.

4 Research reports are available at http://www.ilo.org/asia/publications/WCMS_616186/lang--en/index.htm [accessed 18 May 2018].

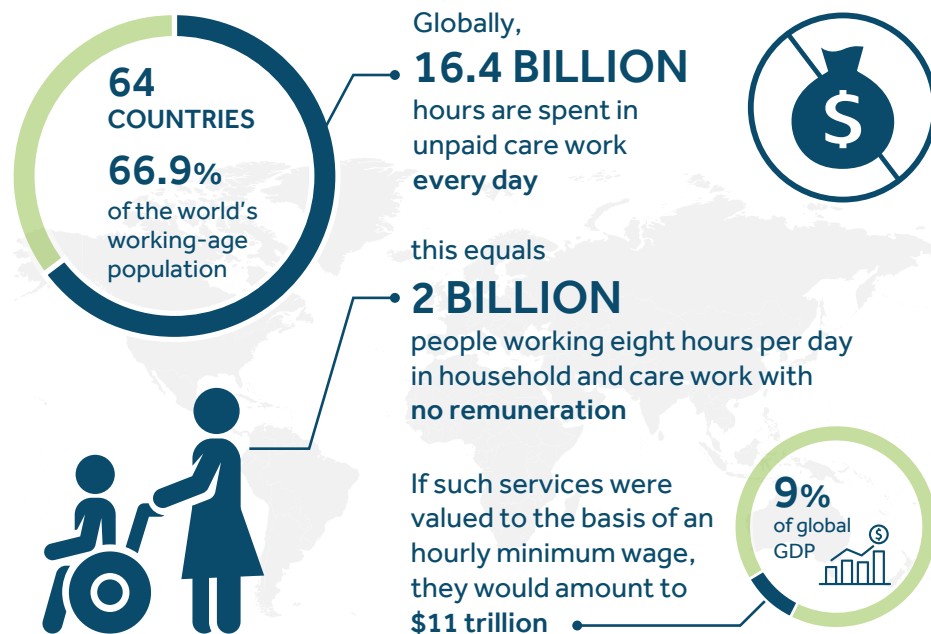
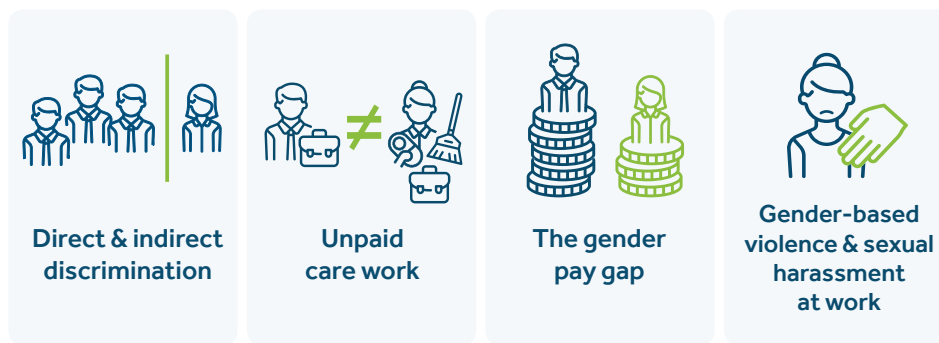
5 Details of the conference can be found at http://www.ilo.org/asia/events/WCMS_577522/lang--en/index.htm [accessed 18 May 2018].



SECTION 2:

WOMEN IN THE WORLD OF WORK TODAY

MAJOR OBSTACLES TO WOMEN'S EQUALITY IN LABOUR MARKETS IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION



THE LARGEST MAJORITY OF UNPAID CARE WORK



“

We cannot ignore women's equality issues anymore – it's an issue of human rights.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

2.1 GROUNDS FOR PURSUING GENDER EQUALITY

EQUALITY AS AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT OF HUMAN DIGNITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Arguments for gender equality typically coalesce around two pillars: the rights-based arguments, in which international human rights standards obligate States to uphold and promote equality as a matter of fundamental human rights and justice, and the economic arguments, which focus on economic efficiency, innovation and other advantages that derive from equality in economies and at the enterprise level.

Gender equality has an intrinsic value on its own. The empowerment and autonomy of women and girls and the improvement of their social, educational, economic and political status are each an important end.

Promoting equality and non-discrimination has been a fundamental value of the ILO since its creation in 1919. The ILO Constitution provides the need for workplace equality, and it remains an integral part of the ILO Decent Work Agenda: to promote decent and productive work for women and men in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity.

While the range of international labour standards promotes equality within its scope, there are four ILO gender equality Conventions: the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156) and Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183). Conventions No. 100 and No. 111 are among the eight Core Conventions of the 1998 ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, which recognizes that economic growth alone is not enough to ensure equity and social progress and to eradicate poverty.⁵

⁶ A number of Conventions and Recommendations are also particularly important for realizing gender equality, such as social protection floors (Recommendation No. 202), part-time work (Convention No. 185) and working time (Conventions No. 30 and No. 47) and supporting the transition from the informal to the formal economy (Recommendation No. 204). There are also instruments that aim to make decent work a reality for all workers, such as migrant workers (Convention No. 143), workers with disabilities (Convention No. 159), indigenous and tribal peoples (Convention No. 169), home workers (Convention No. 177), workers in cooperatives (Recommendation No. 193), workers living with HIV (Recommendation No. 200), domestic workers (Convention No. 189) and nursing personnel (Convention No. 149).

**RATIFICATIONS OF
CONVENTIONS ON
GENDER, EQUALITY
AND NON-
DISCRIMINATION
OUT OF 36 MEMBER
STATES IN ASIA AND
THE PACIFIC**



Recognizing the importance of ending violence and harassment in the world of work, the ILO, at its 2018 International Labour Conference, initiated tripartite discussions geared towards the development of instruments dedicated to eliminating violence and harassment in the world of work. These consultations will culminate in a decision by tripartite constituents on the instruments during the 2019 International Labour Conference.

The SDGs, adopted by the global community of nations in 2015 with the commitment to end poverty, fight inequality, tackle climate change and ensure that no one is left behind, also recognize the importance of gender equality. SDG 5 speaks directly to it and to empowering all women and girls. But all the other 16 goals embed gender equality among their many targets, including SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth.

The SDGs are also impetus to take on long-standing social issues that impact gender equality in the labour market, such as unpaid care work, the gender pay gap, gender-based violence, discrimination, inequalities and exclusions that adversely affect the opportunities of women in Asia and the Pacific.

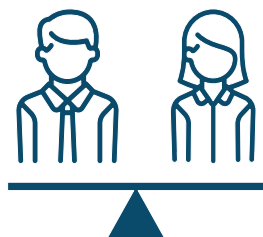
With the future labour market landscape looking ever more complex due to the multitude of technological and other developments and the challenges they usher in, international labour standards and their implementation through national legal frameworks are becoming even more indispensable for ensuring the rights of women and men in the world of work, especially workers who are most vulnerable. History has demonstrated that economic growth alone does not redress inequalities or bring benefits and prosperity to all; it is therefore essential to constantly remind ourselves that gender equality is a right in itself, a right that has yet to be met.

“

Women are the driving force of economic growth [and] have been contributing to the economy. They are one of the largest untapped talents.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

SMART ECONOMICS APPROACH



Gender equality is the means to achieve a range of other goals, such as eliminating poverty, creating economic progress, stimulating business growth and coping with climate change.



Increasing women's labour force participation significantly increases GDP



Closing gender gaps contributes to business growth, productivity and inclusive growth



Gains in gender equality support the achievement of 2030 Agenda and the SDGs

GENDER EQUALITY AS A DRIVER OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

It is now well established and widely recognized that gender equality has critical value in social and economic development, eradicating poverty and achieving inclusive growth. Progress on gender equality has been linked to higher levels of peace, prosperity and social justice. Gender equality also supports the democratization of institutions and societies because women, alongside men, can assume a greater role in all aspects of the economy and society. It has become common sense in the development community that investing in women is not only the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to do.

A wealth of evidence has accumulated across countries and regions on the returns to the greater society and the economy when investments are made in girls and women. Various studies demonstrate that increased education and income for women considerably reduce family size and child hunger, improve children's education and welfare and leave other positive impacts on communities. In China, for instance, an increase in adult female income by 10 per cent of the average household income raised the survival rate for girls by 1 per cent and increased the years of schooling for girls and boys (World Bank, 2012). A study of women elected to local government in India found that female leadership positively affected the provision of services for women and men (Vlassoff, 2013).

Research on the instrumental benefits of gender equality on businesses' bottom line found it can boost productivity, particularly through the full utilization of human talents and capabilities of women and men. It enhances innovation, strengthens accountability and delivers returns on investment. In recognition of the importance of gender equality as well as its positive effects on business performances and productivity, the private sector has launched measures to promote gender diversity.

The “smart economics” approach has been reinforced by the discourse on the gender dividend.

(i) Achieving gender equality increases GDP

Based on previous trends of labour force participation, many studies show that increasing women’s labour force participation would significantly increase gross domestic product (GDP). A Goldman Sachs report, for instance, suggests that GDP in Japan could increase by nearly 13 per cent if its female labour force participation rate matched the male rate.⁶ The Asian Institute for Policy Studies estimated that the Republic of Korea would experience a 6 per cent increase in its GDP growth rate if the country expanded its female employment rate (ILO, 2015a).

In *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends for Women 2017*, the ILO reported that increasing women’s labour force participation rate by 25 per cent could add as much as \$3.2 trillion to the Asian-Pacific GDP. And applying the Group of Twenty forum’s “25 by 25” target (to increase women’s labour force participation by 25 per cent by 2025) would increase the global labour force by 204 million workers and, in turn, increase global GDP by 3.9 per cent. This also has the potential to add \$5.8 trillion to the global economy and increase tax revenue by \$1.5 trillion (ILO, 2017a).

(ii) Closing gender gaps contributes to productivity and business growth

Increased women’s participation in business enables enterprises to tap into a larger pool of talent and innovation and raise productivity and profitability (box 1).

BOX 1

The business case for gender equality

The ILO *Women in Business and Management* report presents evidence on the benefits to businesses and economies when the talent pool of women is sufficiently tapped. This includes being in tune with consumer markets increasingly driven by women, benefiting from innovation and creativity that gender diversity brings, improving corporate governance and, as a result, enhancing business outcomes.

Robust evidence is also emerging from the ILO-International Finance Corporation’s Better Work Programme on the impacts of promoting gender equality on productivity and profitability. Independent researchers from Tufts University found that the Better Work Programme’s supervisory skills training to be an effective strategy for improving working conditions and empowering women in the factories covered by the intervention. Their analysis of 17,000 survey responses from workers and managers in factories in Haiti, Indonesia, Jordan, Nicaragua and Viet Nam showed that production lines overseen by skills-trained female line supervisors increased productivity by 22 per cent when compared with lines overseen by supervisors who had not received such training. The report concluded that these gains in working conditions do not come at the expense of business performance. The research established a direct link between better working conditions and higher-profit-earning businesses. Across all factories tracked in Viet Nam after four years of participation with the Better Work Programme, for example, average profitability had increased by 25 per cent.

There is ample evidence that companies with more women on their corporate board perform better financially than others with fewer women. Large-scale research by Catalyst Inc., Credit Suisse and Thomson Reuters all found that companies with women on their boards outperformed those without women across sales, return on equity and investment, corporate governance and company image (ILO, 2017a). A 2016 study (Noland, Moran and Kotschwar, 2016) of nearly 22,000 publicly traded companies in 91 countries found that having women in the highest corporate offices correlated with increased profitability. As that study revealed, an increase in the share of women in top management positions, from none to 30 per cent, was associated with a 15 per cent rise in profitability.

Similarly, studies by McKinsey & Company have consistently shown the positive impacts that inclusion and diversity policies have on business performance. For example, companies in the top quartile for gender diversity in executive

7 See <http://www.goldmansachs.com/our-thinking/outlook/womenomics4-folder/womenomics4-time-to-walk-the-talk.pdf> [accessed 18 May 2018].

teams were 21 per cent more likely to have above-average profitability than companies in the fourth quartile (McKinsey & Company, 2018). Recent research in India (see the following fresh insights box) reinforces this finding, with particular relevance to the retail sector.

FRESH INSIGHTS

Does Gender Diversity Improve Firm Performance?

Paper by Ruchika Joshi

India's declining female labour force participation has been the focus of much speculation and research in recent years. There is broad consensus that this trend is not only bad for women's empowerment but also leads to significant productivity losses for the economy. Although the Government introduced policies to foster gender diversity in the workplace to draw more women into the labour force, many of them have fallen short in practice, owing in part to their limited take-up by the private sector. Businesses today lack consistent empirical evidence on the nature of the relationship between company-level gender diversity and performance outcomes.

Against this backdrop, Ruchika Joshi examined whether gender diversity affects business performance in the Indian context. Based on her analysis of the World Bank 2014 Enterprise Survey data, complemented with an extensive literature review, the author makes an economic case for businesses to promote workplace gender diversity. The findings show that while there is no considerable effect of gender diversity on business performance overall, disaggregation by sector reveals a positive impact of gender diversity on performance of businesses in the retail sector.

Drawing from these results, the author argues against narrow definitions of both "business performance" as well as "gender diversity".

Gender diversity is not a numbers game alone. Instead, it must be evaluated based on the opportunities women get and the challenges they must navigate, across all ranks and at every stage of their professional advancement. How gender diversity impacts firm outcomes depends considerably on the context within which this relationship is examined. Therefore, the right question to ask is not just whether gender diversity improves performance, but also whether businesses are fostering an inclusionary climate to leverage the benefits of diversity towards better performance.

To achieve greater parity in the workplace, the author further recommends creating a supportive labour market for women, in collaboration with the private sector; fostering an inclusionary climate in the workplace throughout women's career trajectories; promoting policies that ensure work-family balance; and strengthening the evidence base on the gender diversity-performance link across all ranks in an organization.

This paper was presented during the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok, 2018), which was supported by the Government of Australia. For more details, see http://www.ilo.org/asia/publications/WCMS_616213/lang--en/index.htm [accessed 18 May 2018].

Flexible work has been identified as a critical enabler to retaining women with caring responsibilities in the workforce. Research shows that women are more likely to request and be granted flexible work than men, particularly women with children, to accommodate their caring responsibilities.⁷ However, there is increasing attention regarding the involvement fathers have in raising children and the role that workplace flexibility plays.⁸ Increasingly, men are requesting the ability to work flexible, often to play more active roles as care givers.⁹

7 Helping men get work-life balance can help everyone, Published July 28, 2015, Centre for Workplace Leadership.

8 Dads care too! Participation in paid employment and experiences of workplace flexibility for Australian fathers caring for children and young adults with disabilities in Community Work & Family, 2015, Annemarie Wright, Angela Crettenden & Natalie Skinner, Routledge.

9 The Power of Flexibility: A Key Enabler to Boost Gender Parity and Employee Engagement, Bain and Co, 2016

2.2 PERSISTENT INEQUALITIES IN THE LABOUR MARKET

In recent decades, the Asia and the Pacific region has experienced robust economic growth and poverty reduction, particularly in China and Eastern Asia. This trajectory has built upon impressive gains in education and other human development dimensions, which have been accompanied by falling fertility rates (Dasgupta and Verick, 2016). Women are far more educated than ever before and have seen increases in their income and independence over the past decades. There have been some positive long-term trends in Eastern Asia, such as the increased share of women in wage and salaried work, which rose by a third, from 45 per cent in 1997 to 66 per cent in 2017, while the share of women as contributing family workers decreased dramatically (from 41 per cent to 13 per cent). Similarly in South-Eastern Asia and the Pacific, the share of women in wage and salaried work increased, from 33 per cent in 1997 to 46 per cent in 2017, while contributing family work decreased, from 40 per cent to 22 per cent.¹⁰

Despite the vibrant economic performance, social norms and attitudes relating to women's roles and responsibilities and the perceptions about the weak value of women's work remain pervasive. Persistent inequalities mar the region's path to inclusive and sustainable development. Research by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP, 2018) suggests that inequalities in the region are increasing. Despite rapid economic growth, the region's combined income inequality, measured by the Gini coefficient, increased by 5 per cent over the past 20 years. This goes contrary to the situation in almost all other regions.

The degree of gender gaps and inequalities varies, depending on national and local contexts, social norms and attitudes, policy and institutional frameworks. Yet, many of the challenges are similar across countries. Women face challenges related to employment access, choice of work, working conditions, employment security, wage parity, discrimination and balancing work and family responsibilities.

Even at the International Labour Conference where key world of work issues including gender equality are discussed, women's participation remains lower than men's, and gender parity is yet to be achieved almost 100 years since the ILO inception (box 2).

“

Women are leaders everywhere you look. Women contribute as leaders, owners and business managers.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

“

We as women would like men's involvement in managing family affairs.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

BOX 2

Women's and men's representation at the International Labour Conference

Data is collected on men and women's participation in the International Labour Conferences (ILC) and all regional meetings. Since 2016, the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific has been rendering the data on female to male participation in high-level meetings in order to highlight this gender gap and raise awareness among ILO Constituents. Sharing the data has been an important part in shining light on the pervasiveness of the issue.

In that analysis, the Asia-Pacific region scored lower than almost all regions regarding women's participation in the ILO International Labour Conference. In 2017, men made up 69 per cent of the region's country delegations while women constituted only 31 per cent. By the 2018 conference, women's participation had stagnated. The diagrams below highlight the gap between workers' and employers' organization delegations and government delegations. More needs to be done to make progress towards the overall goal of achieving gender parity (ILO's goal is between 45-55 per cent of either women or men) in these high-level meetings and data collection is one key aspect to highlight the change needed (for more, see section 3.2).

Going forward, the ILO will prepare and attach an infographic on female-to-male participation to each invitation letter for its high-level meetings (International Labour Conference and regional meetings) across all regions. At its March 2018 meeting, the ILO Governing Body urged all its constituents to aspire to gender parity and agreed to report on members who achieved more than 30 per cent female representation (GB.332/LILS/2, March 2018).

Tripartite participation, by sex at the 2018 International Labour Conference

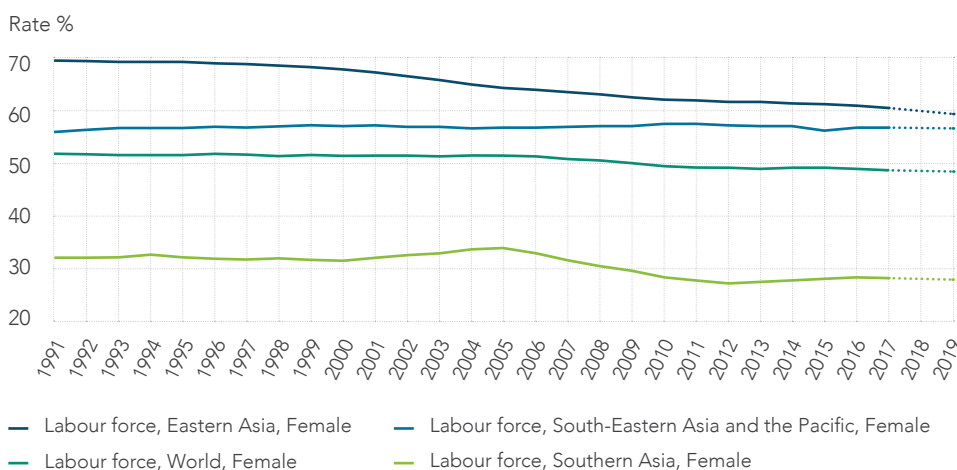


Data source: ILO, forthcoming c.

LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION

While the labour force participation rate of women is relatively high in some countries (except those in Southern Asia), it is still below that of men. And it has either stagnated or declined in recent times (figure 1). In Eastern Asia, the gap between men and women is 15.6 per cent in 2018 and is expected to widen through 2021. In South-Eastern Asia and the Pacific, the gap is still high, at 22.8 per cent, although it is on a downward trend. In Southern Asia, the gap is at 51.4 per cent and is expected to widen over the immediate future (ILO, 2018a). The low rates in Southern Asia could be due to various factors, including under-reporting of women's work and increased attendance of young women in education. But it also suggests deep-rooted obstacles to women's empowerment and sizeable opportunity costs in not utilizing the full talents and skills of the labour force.

FIGURE 1. Trends in female labour force participation in Asia and the Pacific, 1991–2019 (percentage)



Source: ILO, Trends Econometric Models, ilo.org/wesodata [accessed 24 June 2018].

While the labour force participation rate of women is relatively high in some countries (except those in Southern Asia), it is still below that of men. And it has either stagnated or declined in recent times (figure 1). In Eastern Asia, the gap between men and women is 15.6 per cent in 2018 and is expected to widen through 2021 (figure 2). In South-Eastern Asia and the Pacific, the gap is still high, at 22.8 per cent, although it is on a downward trend. In Southern Asia, the gap is at 51.4 per cent and is expected to widen over the immediate future (ILO, 2018a). The low rates in Southern Asia could be due to various factors, including under-reporting of women's work and increased attendance of young women in education. But it also suggests deep-rooted obstacles to women's empowerment and sizeable opportunity costs in not utilizing the full talents and skills of the labour force.

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Due to our isolated work conditions, we are denied access to information and opportunities.

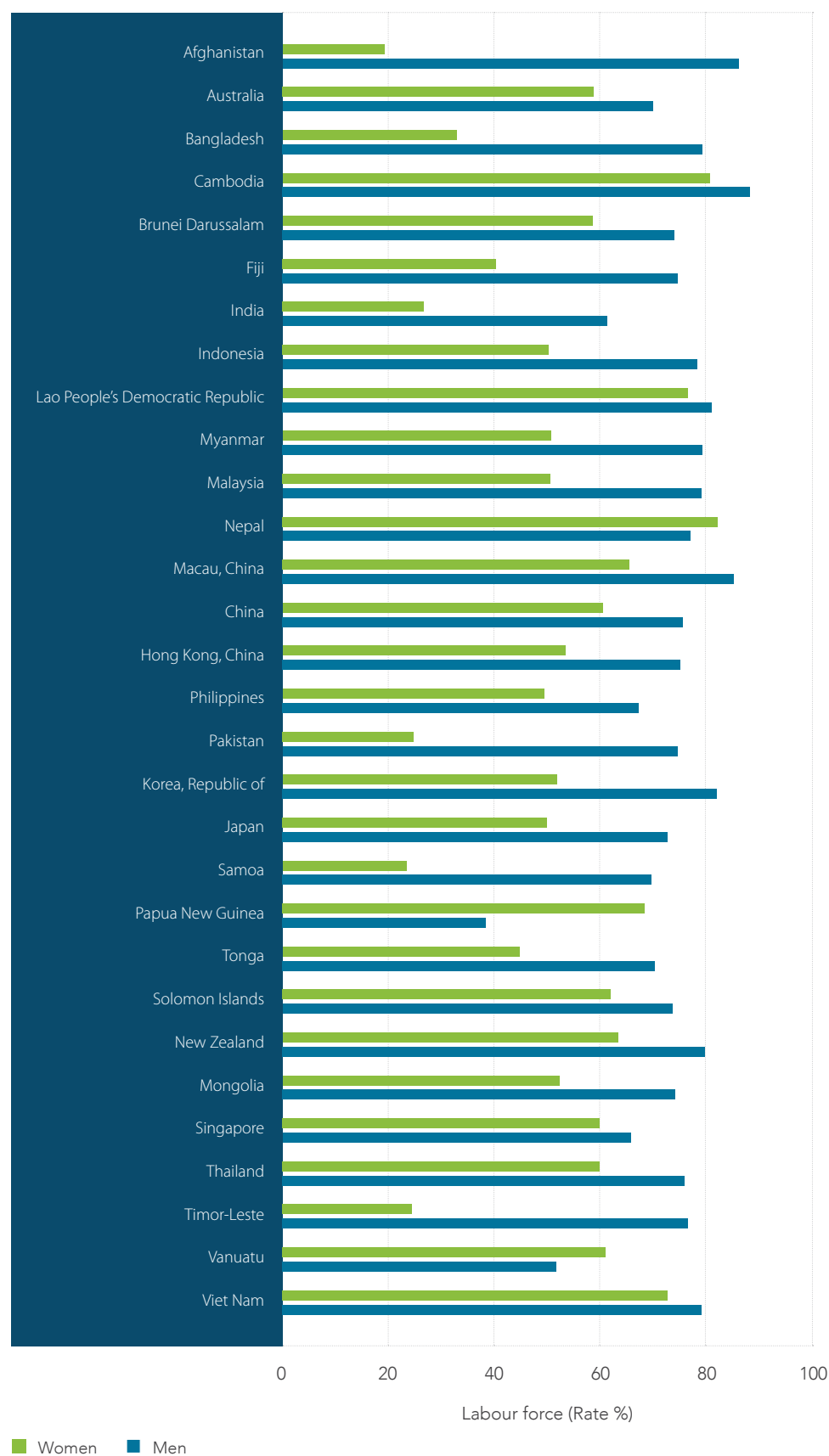
Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

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In South Asia, there is a 51 per cent gender gap in labour force participation for women. In East Asia, women's participation is stagnating and even reversing.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

FIGURE 2. Female and male labour force participation in Asia and the Pacific, 2018 (percentage)



Source: ILO, Trends Econometric Models, ilo.org/wesodata [accessed 24 June 2018].

The unemployment rates for women in the region in 2018 are relatively low, at 4.2 per cent in Eastern Asia, 3.3 per cent in South-Eastern Asia and the Pacific and 5.2 per cent in Southern Asia.¹¹ Unemployment rates, however, are weak indicators of the labour market situation of women in low- and middle-income countries. Relatively low unemployment rates may be a result of the continued demand for labour-intensive manufacturing, in which women are concentrated, and an indication that, in poor communities, many people cannot afford to be unemployed and take any type of work available.

QUALITY OF WORK FOR WOMEN

The quality of work is a strong indicator of women's actual labour market position and whether it could be considered decent work.¹² Women are often engaged in informal work, which generally falls outside of labour and social protections. While a sizeable proportion of men are also present in the informal economy, women tend to concentrate in the poorest levels of informal employment. Most of them have low, irregular or no cash returns, are subject to a high level of job insecurity and do not have access to a safety net in periods of low economic demand, household income-related shocks, as well as during an economic and financial downturn or natural disaster. In many countries in the region, the informal economy is gender segregated by employment status, with the employer category a male domain and the most vulnerable category of contributing (unpaid) family workers predominately female.

The most recent data suggest that 1.3 billion people are working informally in Asia and the Pacific, which accounts for 65 per cent of the informally employed population globally. More than 64 per cent of women who are employed in the region are in informal employment. It is particularly prevalent in rural areas in the region (85.2 per cent of employment), while in urban areas it comprises 47.4 per cent of employment (ILO, 2018b). As figure 2 indicates, while men in Eastern Asia and the Pacific are more likely to be in informal employment than women, Southern Asia has a larger proportion of women than men when including agriculture (at 90.7 per cent for women and 86.8 per cent for men).

Levels of informality are particularly high in Southern Asia, with Nepal having a rate of 94.3 per cent, while in South-Eastern Asia the highest rates are found in the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Cambodia, at 93.6 per cent and 93.1 per cent, respectively. Smaller proportions are found in Eastern Asia, with Japan at around 20 per cent (ILO, 2018b).

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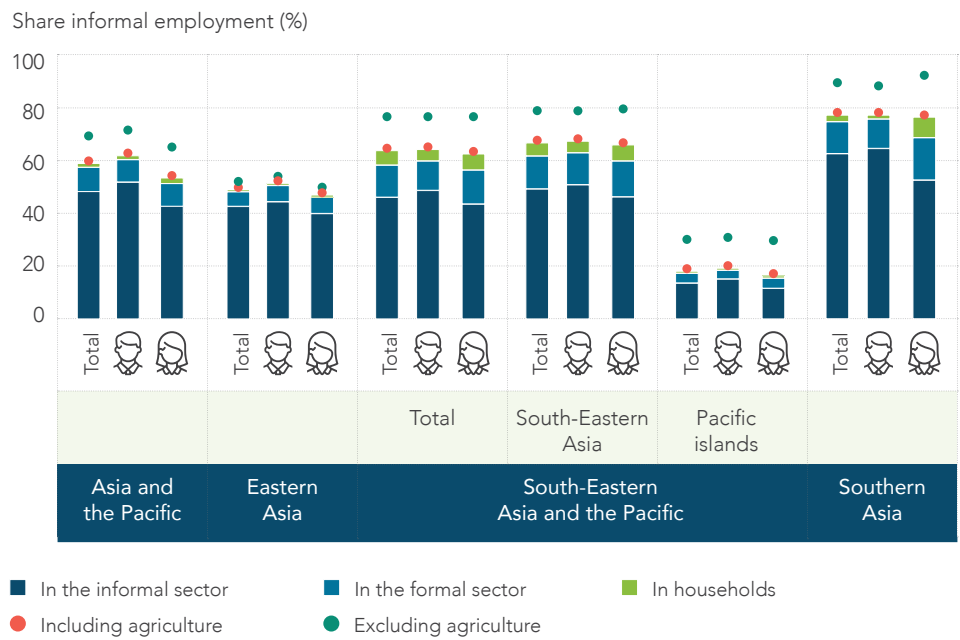
Across the region, women are not gaining sufficient access to higher skills, higher pay and quality and emerging jobs.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

11 See the ILO World Employment and Social Outlook Data Finder [accessed 24 June 2018].

12 The term “decent work” sums up the aspirations of people in their working lives. It involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace, social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration and freedom for people to express their concerns, to organize and to participate in the decisions that affect their lives. And it delivers equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men.

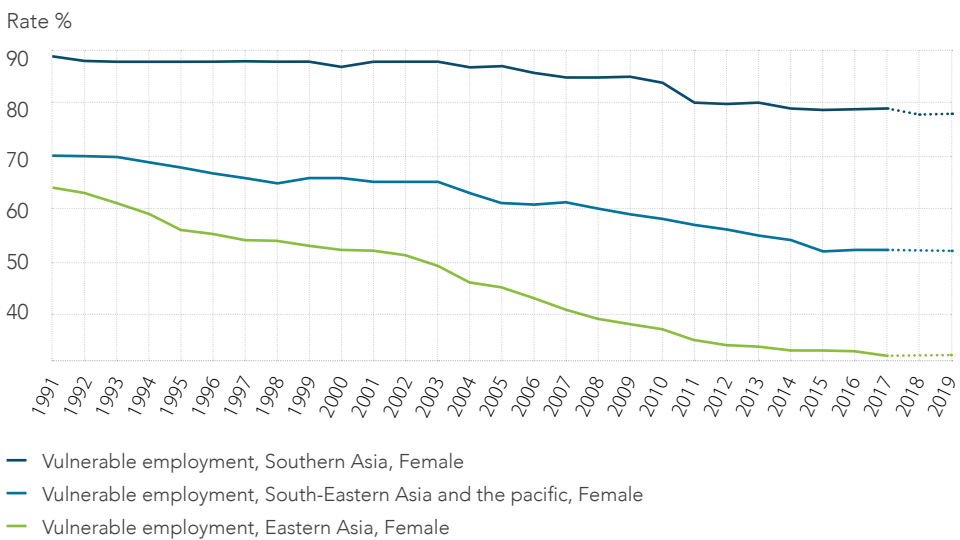
FIGURE 3. Components of informal employment as a percentage of total employment in Asia and the Pacific: Informal sector, the formal sector and household sector, 2016 (percentage)



Source: ILO, 2018b, p. 35.

Linked to informality is the high level of vulnerable employment¹³ among women. Although the overall female vulnerable employment trends in the region are downward (figure 4), the rates are high, especially in Southern Asia, at 79 per cent in 2017. In South-Eastern Asia and the Pacific islands, the rate has stagnated, at around 52 per cent in 2016–17, and dropped slightly in Eastern Asia, to 32 per cent.¹⁴

FIGURE 4. Trends in female vulnerable employment in Asia and the Pacific, 1991–2019 (percentage)¹⁵



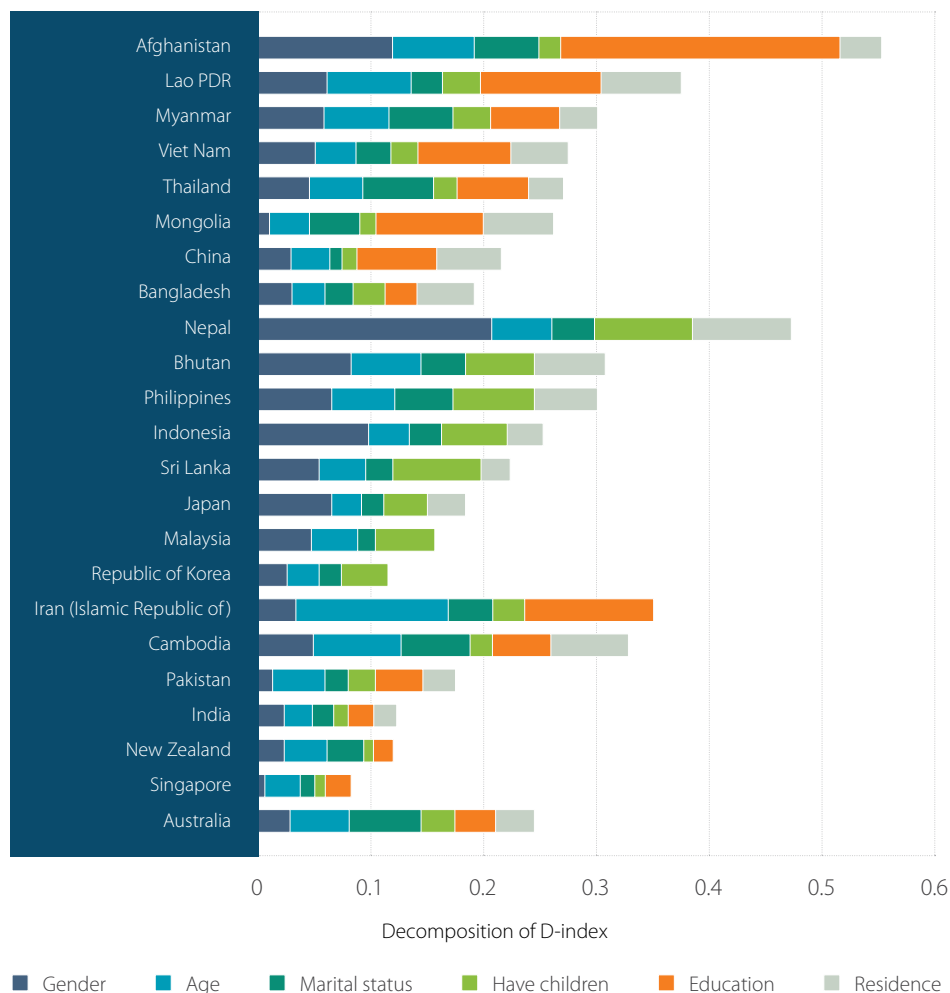
Source: ILO, Trends Econometric Models, ilo.org/wesodata [accessed 24 June 2018].

11 Vulnerable employment is based on contributing family workers (defined as a person who holds a self-employment job in a market-oriented establishment operated by a related person living in the same household) and own-account workers (defined as someone who holds a self-employment job).
 12 See the ILO World Employment and Social Outlook Data Finder [accessed 24 June 2018].
 13 See ILO: Trends Econometric Models [accessed 24 June 2018].

Another indicator of work quality relates to full-time or part-time work (part-time work can be voluntary or involuntary). Of course, part-time work can offer flexibility to some workers and be by choice. But it can also reflect constraints on women's access to full-time employment, such as managing work and their role as primary caregiver, or it can indicate limitations in available jobs due to occupational segregation. According to a recent ILO report (ILO, 2018c), unpaid care work is one of the main obstacles to women moving into better-quality jobs. It affects the number of hours spent by women in work for pay or profit, impacting their earnings.

Another recent report, from ESCAP (2018), reveals a marked difference between women and men in full-time work. The report proposes that given the high levels of informality in the region, access to full-time work can be used as a proxy for some conditions of decent work. As figure 5 illustrates, the bulk of access to full-time work has a gender-based nature to it. In Nepal, as the ESCAP report points out, women are almost 80 per cent less likely than men to be in full-time work, all else being equal. Indonesia, the Philippines and Afghanistan also have large gender disparities in full-time work. Long-term part-time work among women can be a substantial source of inequality, in particular when it does not come with social protection benefits or access to skills training or career advancement, for example.

FIGURE 5. Inequality in access to full-time employment and its decomposition in selected countries, grouped by the most important circumstance, latest year



Note: In this report, ESCAP measures inequality of opportunity using the Dissimilarity Index (D-Index), which allows a comparison of inequality levels among countries as well as a further decomposition of observed inequality in the circumstances that contribute to it.

Source: ESCAP, 2018. Calculations based on collaboration between ESCAP and ILO and using data from the Gallup World Poll.

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Women's many responsibilities are pulling them in different directions. Employers have a huge role to play in ensuring women are continuously challenged through lifelong learning, even if they are mothers and have care-taking responsibilities.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

Women may drop out of the workforce involuntarily to take up their caregiver roles, and this can impact negatively on their future livelihoods. The risk of falling into poverty in old age is greater for women than men because social security systems are usually based on continuous employment. Women are less likely to fulfil the minimum contributory requirements due to the breaks they must take to provide unpaid care in the household or because of a gender gap in the legal retirement age for women and men in some countries in the region. ESCAP projects that one in four people in the region will be aged 60 years or older by 2050.¹⁶ Due to this ageing-population demographic trend and the greater longevity of women, the risk of more women in poverty will remain high in the future if the status quo is maintained. Not only could this hinder the achievement of the SDGs, it may render even more older women dependent upon their families, both for their care and financial needs.

Like all countries in the region, Viet Nam is making effort to redress many of the persistent gender inequalities. The following fresh insights box traces the process of reforming provisions in the Vietnamese Labour Code that lead to discrimination.

FRESH INSIGHTS

Labouring Under False Assumptions: Exploring the Rifts Between International Standards and Cultural Values in Vietnam's Labour Code Reform

Paper by Mia Urbano, Jane Aeberhard-Hodges and Than Thi Thien Huong

While Viet Nam has made significant achievements in gender equality in its labour market, including a high participation rate for women, obstacles to more equitable outcomes remain. The widening gender wage gap, the high levels of informal work among women and a high risk of poverty in old age for women are principal concerns. This paper elaborates on the obstacles to women's equal participation in the world of work, including in the Labour Code and in societal perceptions of women's primary role as caregivers.

The Government of Viet Nam is revising its Labour Code. For that process, the Government of Australia and UN Women collaborated with the Vietnamese Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs to conduct a gender analysis of the legal framework. Their review revealed that some well-intentioned efforts to protect or reward women actually disadvantaged them in their career progression and lifetime earnings. Consultations on the analysis, however, revealed that there is not unanimity on these issues. For some women, the differentiations in law are regarded as affirmative rather than discriminatory and a recognition of the toll of their "triple burden" as workers, mothers and community contributors. The earlier retirement age for women is one case in point (men retire at age 60 while women retire age 55).

The gender assessment found several provisions within the Labour Code that reinforce the traditional caregiving role reserved for women and even prohibits women from specified work considered hazardous. References to the weaker capacity of women were also found. The paper stresses the urgency of the Labour Code reform and the removal of discriminatory measures to ensure a better future for women in Viet Nam.

This paper was presented during the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok, 2018), which was supported by the Government of Australia. For more details, see http://www.ilo.org/asia/publications/WCMS_616186/lang--en/index.htm

¹⁴ See ESCAP: *Addressing the challenges of population ageing in Asia and the Pacific: Implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing* [accessed 18 May 2018].

2.3 MAJOR OBSTACLES TO EQUALITY IN LABOUR MARKETS IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

The paradox of women having a vital role in the region's social and economic transformations over the past few decades yet remaining in a weak position in the labour market is attributed to several factors at the individual, institutional and macroeconomic levels.

At the individual level, girls and women in many parts of the region have lower educational attainment than boys and men due to their limited access to education. This results in the disadvantaged position of women in the labour market. Social norms and practices, such as early marriage and responsibilities to care for younger siblings or other family members, limit girls' and women's access to education and skills training. These obstacles become even greater when girls and women must spend additional time on survival needs, such as collecting water and firewood.

Girls in families in poverty are further disadvantaged because they typically have no choice but to give up their education, migrate for work to support their family or remain in occupations with little protection, little pay and poor working conditions. Women also have limited access and control over property and assets, which limits their opportunities to enhance their potential or advance their economic status, for example, by starting a business or getting a loan.

At the institutional level, discriminatory social norms and attitudes intersect across all stages of girls' and women's lives, restricting their access to rights and empowerment and constraining their life choices. Discrimination in social institutions, which include both formal laws and informal norms, perpetuate gender gaps in such areas as health, education and employment or limit women's decision-making power. Ultimately, it hinders progress towards social transformation that benefits both women and men.

At the macroeconomic level, laws, regulations and policies – often posited as gender neutral – typically have considerable gendered impacts because women are positioned in different parts of the economy than men, in both paid and unpaid work. For example, fiscal policies based on progressive, gender-responsive taxation systems that finance social spending can reduce adverse effects on people who are poor, especially on women, and prevent the excessive concentration of wealth and rising inequality. A policy mix that supports job-rich inclusive growth is likely to have a positive effect on the quantity and quality of women's employment. Conversely, budget cuts that reduce social spending result in the intensification of women's unpaid care responsibilities in the home. Similarly, monetary policies that only focus on inflation reduction at the expense of employment creation have negative consequences on women's paid work.

The following section discusses four major factors associated with the weak labour market outcomes for women around the globe: (i) discrimination; (ii) unpaid care work; (iii) the gender pay gap; and (iv) gender-based violence and harassment at work.

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The world can be a different place if women are allowed to take the lead; if women are decision-makers.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

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Discrimination took place in silence, forcing me to accept it.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

2.3.1 DISCRIMINATION

Women in the region face persistent and deeply rooted discrimination that prevents them from enjoying the same rights and opportunities as men and, in turn, affects their labour market outcomes. Discrimination may be direct, such as legislation that establishes different retirement ages for men and women or legal differences in property rights that are based on gender. Or it can be indirect: hidden in social norms and practices that undervalue women and girls in the household or the labour force. Discrimination may even begin before birth in the form of son preference, with girls in some countries in the region not even getting the chance to be born.

Girls in Asia and the Pacific tend to experience both direct and indirect discriminatory attitudes and practices throughout their life cycle and that accumulates over time. From the earliest stages, and when compared with boys, girls are most likely to receive less investment in their health and education. And as adults, they have fewer job opportunities, less career advancement, less access to resources, lower income and fewer or no employment or social protection benefits. In old age, they are more likely to have limited access to social protection and live in poverty.

The research presented in the following fresh insights box provides rich information on the aspiration of Australia's young women for a better working future even though some workplaces and public policies are still to catch up to make that a reality.

FRESH INSIGHTS

Australia's Working Futures: Are we ready?

Paper by Elizabeth Hill, Rae Cooper, Marian Baird,
Ariadne Vromen, Elspeth Probyn

Although successive Australian governments have recognized gender equality in the workplace as a priority to raise living standards and secure future prosperity, women still do not participate as equals in the labour market with men. Unequal outcomes include stark differences between women and men's participation rates, pay, hours of work, contribution to household responsibilities and the types of work and sectors that women are engaged in.

The research paper analyses data on the experiences, values and aspirations of young working women aged 16–40 as part of the Australian Women's Working Futures Project 2017. It reveals that young women value job security, predictable and regular hours, decent pay and the opportunity for respect, control and influence in the workplace. Access to the right skills and qualifications, support and mentoring and paid leave to care for family are all cited as important to women's future success at work. Young women are job-oriented and want to advance their careers. They plan for the future and intend to have children. But most women do not think they are treated the same as men at work, and only half of them think gender equality at work will improve in the future. The Australian Women's Working Futures Project 2017 shows many Australian workplaces are not providing young women with what they value or need to succeed in the workplace, and public policy settings are not ready to meet young women's aspirations for the future of work. Government and business must urgently redouble efforts to promote legislative and policy initiatives that will deliver Australian working women gender equality in the future of work.

Among the recommendations proposed in the paper are: implement recommendations from past government inquiries into gender equality; promote pay equity; recognize, reduce and redistribute care work; ensure decent working conditions in highly feminized sectors; focus policy attention on young women; and undertake more research on the technological impacts on the future of work for women and men.

This paper was presented during the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok, 2018), which was supported by the Government of Australia. For more details, see http://www.ilo.org/asia/publications/WCMS_616186/lang-en/index.htm [accessed 24 June 2018].

GENDER-BIASED NORMS AND ATTITUDES CONSTRAIN WOMEN'S VISIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Gender-biased norms and attitudes in the labour market continue to constrain women's visions and opportunities, leaving many of them to find jobs in sectors that are characterized by lack of legal protection, low pay and insecurity. Occupational segregation, both horizontal (across and within sectors) and vertical (limited chances for progression in a job) are endemic in the region. Age is another factor impeding women's opportunities. At both ends of the age spectrum, young women and older women are likely to experience employment discrimination. Women of childbearing age are not immune either, with some employers reluctant to hire them because they perceive a lack of attachment to the labour market or because they do not want to cover maternity responsibilities.

Despite the progress made in laws and policies to promote equality, little has changed at the levels of institutions and practices due to adverse social norms, attitudes and unconscious biases. In some countries, there is no law that formalizes the right to equality. In others, even where the right to equality is enshrined in law, inadequate human and financial resources and weak enforcement hamper their effectiveness. Labour inspectorates, labour courts and the judiciary are often poorly equipped to cope with the discriminatory environment. National machineries for promoting equality often do not have sufficient resources to organize training and awareness-raising to counter prejudice, gender stereotypes and norms based on the traditional gender division of labour. As forthcoming research from ILO discusses, tackling unconscious bias must be central to expanding women's leadership and voice (box 3).

Some explicit forms of discrimination have declined, such as gender-based preferential recruitment practices. Others remain and/or have taken on new forms. Many groups are particularly vulnerable to discrimination. Migrants, for instance, make up a large group of discriminated workers because they typically lack access to social protection, recourse to justice and rights under the law. Even where protective policies exist, lack of information and weak capacity to organize collectively means that many migrants do not enjoy their rights and benefits. Women are also subject to restrictive migration policies, which, although are intended for their "protection", result in their heightened vulnerability (box 4).

In much of Asia and the Pacific, domestic workers are not allowed to join trade unions as they are not classified as "workers" under national labour law. In many countries, however, domestic workers – nationals and migrants – organize in parallel to trade union movements through solidarity groups and associations, such as HomeNet in Thailand and UNITED in the Philippines. Members pay dues and the organization is instrumental in mediating worker-employer conflicts (ILO, 2018e).

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Most migrant domestic workers come to their job not because of their aspiration but their helplessness and the lack of choice caused by poverty and low job opportunities in their home town. Their decision to migrate is forced.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

BOX 3

Targeting unconscious biases to strengthen women's leadership

As evidence grows that companies with more women in senior positions perform better than those with no women or few women, businesses are seeking ways to increase women's leadership in the face of persistent gender gaps.

An important strategy in the range of measures available is the targeting of unconscious bias. Behavioural psychologists suggest everyone, even those who care deeply about diversity, are subject to unconscious biases. These are stereotypical perceptions about the roles and responsibilities of women and men, which present formidable challenges to increasing women's leadership.

Advocates of targeting unconscious bias offer a variety of ways to overcome the "attributional errors", including using neutral language, balanced images of men and women, flexible meeting times and ensuring that women are trained in formal meeting processes. Quotas, while often viewed as controversial, can have a lasting impact beyond their use as a temporary measure because people eventually become accustomed to representation by women.

As discussed at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific Women in Bangkok in 2018, context matters when targeting unconscious biases. Advocates suggest that understanding the specific gendered constraints and perceptions in any process to expand women's leadership and voice will be critical.

Source: ILO, forthcoming c.

BOX 4

Bans on domestic workers' migration in ASEAN: Time for alternative means of protection?

When women experience exploitation abroad, both countries of origin and countries of destination in the region tend to opt for restrictions on women's labour migration. Some governments lack sufficient resources to put in place rights-protective and empowering measures. Bans are imposed on men's migration with much less frequency than on women's migration, however, and if action is taken to counter the exploitation of male migrant workers, it is often in the form of an effort to negotiate for better conditions.

An ILO 2017 interview-based study of domestic worker bans along the Cambodia-Malaysia migration corridor and the Myanmar-Singapore corridor found that these restrictions result in several impacts that run counter to policy-makers' intentions. Putting in place alternative policies to migration restrictions can be difficult. Measures must both adequately protect migrant domestic workers and be within the means available to state resources. All ten Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which obligates them to repeal sex-specific bans and discriminatory restrictions on women's migration.

Countries of destination place further restrictions on women's – and specifically domestic workers' – labour migration, limiting their access to jobs based on their age, country of origin, spousal permission, pregnancy status, religion or education.

Impacts from bans on migration for domestic work within the ASEAN region include:

- Women migrated for domestic work despite the Cambodian and Myanmar bans, thus increasing their vulnerability to exploitation.
- Migration restrictions limited women to using irregular channels for exiting their country of origin. This left no "legal trail" for accountability in the country of origin recruitment system.
- Small, unregulated recruiters increased in Cambodia and Myanmar, as did deception in recruitment and contract substitution.
- Migration costs increased because informal payments had to be paid at exit ports and when domestic workers transited through a third-party country.
- Migrant domestic workers did not have access to protective elements afforded by regular migration, including pre-departure training, standard employment contracts, and access to complaints mechanisms or recourse to regulated recruitment agency or origin government assistance.
- Due to the combination of continued high employer demand for domestic workers and a country of origin ban on recruiting them, Cambodian migrant domestic workers in Malaysia reported that recruiters did not allow them to return home and employers forced them to sign contract extensions under penalty.

Source: ILO, 2018e.

Women experience considerable discrimination in the labour market, thus making it less likely that they can or will participate. In Fiji, for example, the gender gap eclipses 34 per cent in labour force participation. Legislative frameworks for gender equality in employment are often lacking, and only Fiji, Kiribati and Samoa have laws that stipulate equal pay for men and women (ILO and ADB, 2017). Samoa is also working to provide an enabling environment for women's increased participation in leadership positions in government (box 5).

BOX 5

An enabling environment for women's increased participation in leadership positions: The case of Samoa

Gender inequality is a pressing issue in the Pacific islands. A recent report by the ILO (2017) indicated that women experience substantial discrimination in Pacific labour markets. Women are more likely than men to be concentrated in vulnerable and low-paying jobs without any safety net. While Samoa has sizeable gender inequalities across the social, economic and political arenas, women's increased representation and leadership in the political sphere has shown promise for generating spill-over effects into the world of work.

Samoa has a population of approximately 187,000, with 49 per cent women. Historically, Samoa has ranked one of the lowest countries in the world in terms of women's participation in political leadership (The Centre for Samoan Studies, 2015). Recognizing women's limited representation, the Government of Samoa passed a constitutional amendment in 2013 that instituted a compulsory 10 per cent quota in Parliament – five reserved seats for women. With this initiative, Samoa became one of the few countries in the Asia-Pacific region to implement such a leadership quota.

If fewer than five women are elected for the five reserved seats, the highest-scoring of the unsuccessful women candidate will occupy the additional seat or seats. A record 24 women (of 164 candidates) stood for election in 2016 – a 300 per cent increase from the previous election. Four women were elected, which allowed the constitutional quota provision to add one additional seat and to increase the number of overall Parliamentarians from 49 to 50. After the 2016 election, Samoa's first female deputy prime minister was appointed.

In Samoa, women account for 53 per cent of the total workforce, 40 per cent of the judiciary judgeships, 33 per cent of government CEOs, including the governor of the central bank of Samoa and the engineers who lead the Samoa Water Authority and the Land Transport Authority. Samoa's National Provident Fund has a female IT manager and chief financial officer and has women in legal positions. In the national union, four of the six executive body members are women, including the president and chairperson. In the private sector, women are highly represented in the manufacturing sector (mostly employed in the Yazaki automotive wiring plant). And 40 per cent of women run small businesses. According to a report by UN Women, women in Samoa are dominating in academic and nursing professions while their participation as lawyers, medical doctors, engineers and accountants has been considerably increasing.

A number of initiatives by the Samoan Government have positively influenced women's position in the workforce. For example, gender equality is integral in national policy through the Family Court Act (2014), the Family Safety Act (2013) and the National Policy for Gender Equality (2016–2020). "Gender equality has been prioritized in Samoa's legal framework," applauds Tanya Toailoa Lagaala, General Secretary of the Samoa Worker's Congress. "The Government has continued to break down barriers to improve the status of women across the country. The Government has introduced three months of paid maternity leave for its public servants and flexible hours for working women. And breastfeeding spaces for women staff are highly encouraged. The Ministry of Women has an educational and awareness-raising programme on women's empowerment and leadership."

While the gender-responsive policies have advanced women's participation in leadership roles in the political arena, there is recognition of the need for a more integrated policy approach to attack the persistent gender gaps. Over time, women's increased representation and participation in leadership positions are expected to positively impact the country's economic and social development, especially on women's participation in the labour force and their share of public employment opportunities.

Although there is more to be done by expanding policies across the public and private sectors, Samoa's progress in women's participation and leadership demonstrates that advances can be made over a short time frame through inclusive and integrated policy measures that go after the persistent gender gaps.

Source: Interview with Tanya Toailoa Lagaala by Noorie Safa, 17 April 2018.

DIFFERENT GROUPS OF WOMEN FACE MULTIPLE OBSTACLES

Where gender discrimination intersects with other forms of disadvantage, the risks of poverty and exclusion are even higher. Women from rural areas perform significantly worse than those from urban areas. For instance, analysis by ESCAP (2018) revealed that in many countries in the region, five of every 100 women from poor, rural households complete secondary education, compared to one of every two women in richer urban households.

Similarly, other groups of women experience disadvantage, such as discrimination based on sexual orientation, political opinion, trade union membership (box 6) or disability, among other factors

BOX 6

From an 11-year-old garment factory worker to a globally respected union leader

In 1986 as an 11-year-old “helper”, Nazma Akter worked in a Dhaka garment factory with her mother. “At that time, laws and regulations on a safe working environment did not exist. Workers were treated as machines. We were just there to make the business a profit.” In 1987, Nazma joined a protest against working conditions in her factory. For this, she was beaten up by hired thugs and tear-gassed by the police.

“I decided to do something”

Seven years later, frustrated by the failure of the male-dominated unions, Nazma formed a union of her own, Sommito Garment Sramik Federation. The union is now affiliated with the IndustriALL global union and has a membership of more than 70,000 women garment workers. The union works with its members to ensure their rights in the workplace, in government policies and the wider society. This includes tackling discrimination that women in the Bangladesh garment sector continue to experience. Nazma has been a member of the Minimum Wage Board since 2006, representing her union to help lift the minimum wage.

In 2003, Nazma with other ex-garment workers established the Awaj Foundation to expand and strengthen workers’ rights. Since then, the foundation has provided legal assistance to more than 40,000 worker complaints on withheld benefits and payments; successfully mediated more than 30,000 complaints with factory management; helped workers receive compensation through labour court decisions; provided free health care to almost 25,000 workers; and provided training to hundreds of thousands of workers on leadership, health awareness, labour law, occupational safety and health and trade union activities. It also established 18 women’s cafes where garment workers can relax and access legal advice, basic health care services, and provides weekly training on information technology, literacy, tailoring, singing, and dancing.

Throughout her journey, Nazma has encountered relentless challenges and obstacles. “I was treated as a ‘bad girl’ by my employers, male workers and even my family, relatives and neighbours,” she says. “When I became known as a leader, I lost my job, had no money and found it hard to get work.” At times her safety was in jeopardy. “I was threatened by my boss, the police, the local muscle man. I had my phone calls taped and my movement was restricted. I have had cases filed against me. And I am under observation constantly by the authorities.” Despite the numerous obstacles, she has no regrets. “I am happy in the work I am doing and the achievements I have been part of.”

Emerging young women leaders a vital factor in reshaping the future

Nazma sees issues which need to be resolved, ranging from improving the position of the millions of informal workers in Bangladesh to organizing democratic unions; creating decent and safe jobs; ending sexual abuse and violence; improving the situation of migrant workers everywhere; and protecting the rights of domestic workers, who are often in dangerous situations. She advocates for government policy and action to concentrate on creating more opportunities for women, such as raising the minimum wage to increase income security. Governments can make a difference through more effective public institutions for the protection and promotion of human rights, including labour rights; delivering important services, such as vocational and technical skills training; strengthening good governance by improving transparency and attacking corruption; and following through on international labour standards and the right to decent work.

“In all these areas, we need to promote and support young women leaders and work with them to solve the problems they face where they are – in the factories and community,” says Nazma. “I have great hopes and expectations for the future.”

This case study is drawn with permission and thanks from a longer case study from the forthcoming *Pathways to Influence – The SDGs and Women’s Transformative Leadership in Asia and the Pacific*, a report published by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific on behalf of the United Nations Asia-Pacific Thematic Working Group for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women in Bangkok.

ESCAP estimates that there were 690 million women and men in the region in 2015 with at least one disability. Disability prevalence is likely to increase as populations age but also due to increased exposure to natural disasters, climate change impacts or armed conflicts. Women with disabilities are much less likely to be employed than men. In India, for example, the gender gap for employed persons with a disability is 30 per cent.¹⁷

The research in the following fresh insights box highlights Nepal's efforts to overcome deep-rooted disadvantage, through quotas in public service not only for women generally but for women and men from previously excluded caste and ethnic groups.

FRESH INSIGHTS

Workforce Diversity and Reservation Policy in Nepal: A Strategic Approach to Strengthening Women's Voice and Visibility in the Formal Employment Sector

Paper by Manohara Khadka and Ramesh Sunam

This paper analyses workforce diversity and inclusion policies of government and non-government agencies in Nepal. It explores the importance of such policies for enhancing women's visibility and voice in the formal employment sector, which contribute to inclusive and sustainable development and policy-making. It draws on the primary and secondary data of workforce diversity in government and development agencies, including international non-government groups. The authors argue that affirmative action policies adopted by the Government and other non-state actors for the recruitment of staff have enhanced the representation of women in the workforce. Given the deep-rooted gender discrimination and exclusionary social structures and institutions, the authors also argue that affirmative action policies for women's representation is essential not only for creating a diverse workforce and promoting gender equality but also for the best use of their knowledge, talent and perspectives to foster the nation's inclusive development.

The paper notes that women and marginalized social and ethnic groups are under-represented in the government, non-government and private sectors in Asia. By levelling an uneven playing field for them, workforce diversity and affirmative action policies intend to break down the persistent problems of gender discrimination and social and political exclusions in several countries. The authors thus advocate that all agencies, including civil society and private sector actors in the Asia region, should consider learning from Nepal's good policy practice for gender equality and social inclusion and develop similar policy measures adapted to their context.

This paper was a contribution to the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok, 2018), which was supported by the Government of Australia. For more details, see http://www.ilo.org/asia/publications/WCMS_616209/lang-en/index.htm

Asia and the Pacific is one of the world's most diverse regions. Sometimes the discrimination of women is compounded by exclusion based on race, ethnicity, religion, caste, class and indigenous status. All countries are affected by at least some of these distinctions, with high poverty rates and social exclusion among certain groups of the population as a result. In some cases, polarization of some groups of people has

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We have seen in one generation the face of the labour market change dramatically, from my parent's generation to mine. It is now the norm for any young woman in Samoa today to aspire to be a CEO or a leader of any government department and face few barriers to aspire to leadership within government or private sector. We can see the same change in the next generation for parliamentary representation.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

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We need antidiscrimination policies that include intersecting identities, including disability.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

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We need to make sure indigenous women have a seat at the table.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

17 See UNESCAP Disability at a Glance 2015: STRENGTHENING EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC [accessed 18 May 2018].

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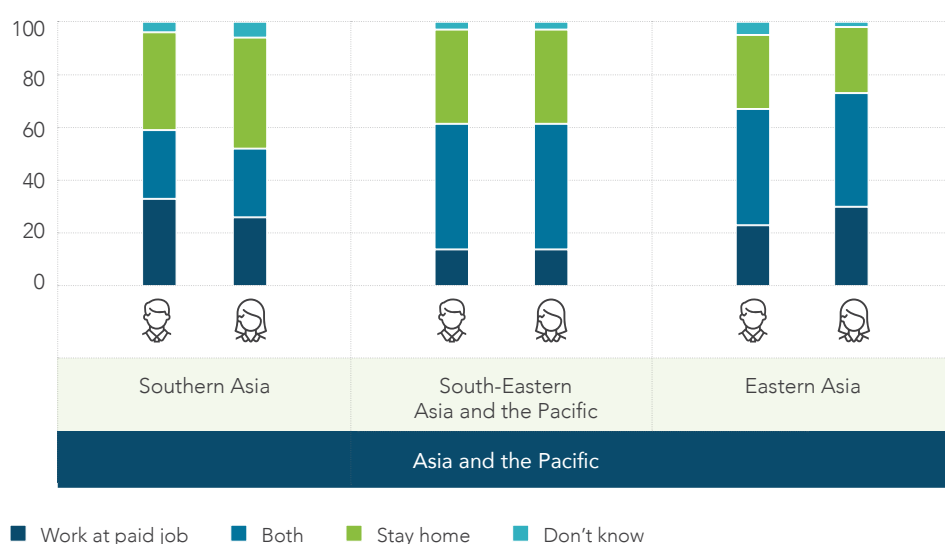
I am a father. I believe that increasing father's role in childcare is the most important factor for decent jobs for women.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

escalated to armed conflict. The region also has the largest proportion of stateless persons – millions of people are denied their most basic rights. Progress to achieve the eradication of statelessness by 2024 has been slow, at best. Women from these groups are likely to experience multiple forms of discrimination, not just based on their sex, and are among the most marginalized in a society.

Despite adverse social norms and beliefs in the different roles of women and men, there is far greater acceptance of women working throughout the world and in the region, according to the findings of an ILO-Gallup report (2017). For example, when asked, “Would you prefer that women in your family work at paid jobs or that they stay at home and take care of your family and the housework, or would you prefer they do both?”, the majority of respondents in all countries in Asia and the Pacific responded that they would prefer that women work at paid jobs or both, rather than stay at home (figure 6). This clearly indicates a gap between preference and reality in the labour market.

FIGURE 6. Preference for women to work at a paid job, stay at home or both in Asia and the Pacific, 2017



Note: Female respondents were asked: Would you prefer to work at a paid job or stay at home and take care of your family and the housework, or would you prefer to do both? Male respondents were asked: Would you prefer that women in your family work at paid jobs or that they stay at home and take care of your family and the housework, or would you prefer they do both?

Source: ILO and Gallup, 2017.

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As these care work jobs become more and more vital to our economies, we need to place a premium on them. We need to take up the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

2.3.2 UNPAID CARE WORK

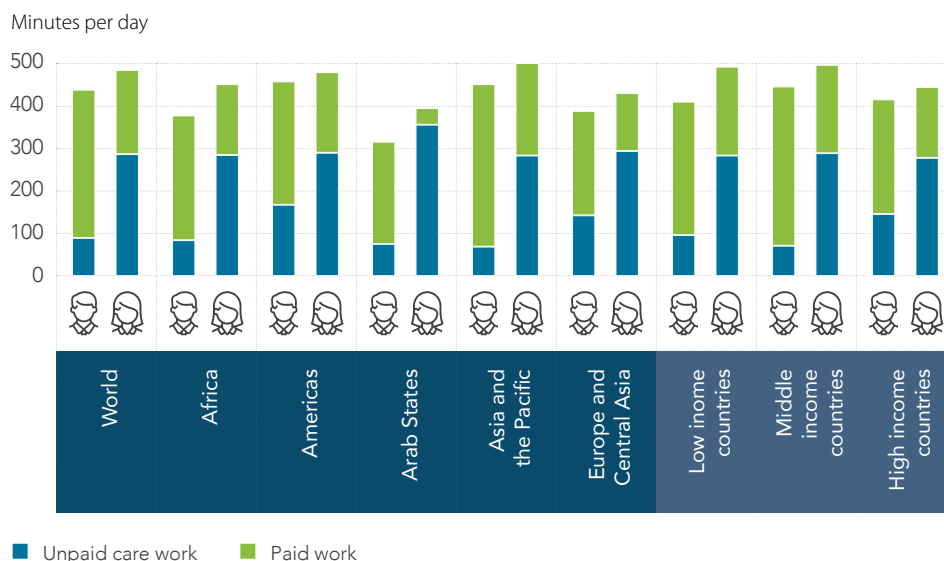
Even though the majority of women in the region may want to work in paid jobs, realizing their aspiration is affected by their unpaid care responsibilities, which are undervalued in society. Unpaid care work contributes extensively to both the well-being of families as well as to economic growth by ensuring a labour force that is fit and productive. It affects all aspects of the economy, including private businesses (large and small), the public sector and the non-government sector. It thus creates the foundation for economic sustainability in current models of growth (Cook and Razavi, 2012; Elson, 2010). Although unpaid care work is rarely given economic value, several gender-budgeting initiatives at the national and local levels have included efforts to estimate

its value. At the global level, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (2010) analysis suggests that if unpaid care work were given a monetary value, it would account for between 10 per cent and 39 per cent of GDP. Woetzel et al. (2012) estimated it at \$10 trillion per year – around 13 per cent of global GDP.¹⁸

According to an ILO report on unpaid care work and using estimates based on time-use survey data in 64 countries (representing 66.9 per cent of the world's population), 16.4 billion hours are spent in unpaid care work every day, corresponding to 2 billion people working eight hours per day with no remuneration. If such services were valued based on an hourly minimum wage, they would amount to 9 per cent of global GDP, which corresponds to \$11 trillion. Most unpaid care work consists of household work (87.4 per cent), followed by direct personal care (9.3 per cent) and volunteer work (3.3 per cent) (ILO, 2018c).

As shown in figure 7, there is a striking difference between the average minutes per day spent on unpaid care work between women and men in the Asia and the Pacific region, at 262 minutes and 64 minutes, respectively. Men in this region spend less time on unpaid care work than men in other regions of the world.

FIGURE 7. Time spent daily in unpaid care work, paid work and total work, by sex, region and income group in 64 countries, latest year



Source: ILO, 2018c.

Care responsibilities are one of the largest constraints to decent work for women in the formal economy in Asia and the Pacific. It affects not only their accessing basic education as girls and skills opportunities and high-quality jobs as they mature, but also hinders their ability to work full time or seek promotion opportunities. It contributes to gender pay gaps and occupational and sectoral segregation. It also hampers women from engaging with organizations and participating in democratic life in the public sphere. For women and girls in remote and rural communities with limited infrastructure, it is also an important determinant of quality of life by curtailing leisure

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If you invest in care, it will generate over 21 million jobs and increase overall employment by 2.4–6.1 per cent, depending on the country.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

16 In addition to United Nations and ILO estimates, the Counting Women's Work Initiative has estimated the value of women's work at the global level. See www.ntaccounts.org [accessed 24 June 2018].

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Women are subject to multiple kinds of challenges - discrimination, violence, and feminization of poverty. Amid these challenges the troubles intensify when women are expected to be carers with unpaid workload, and at the same time also work outside for a salary to bring back to the family.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

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606 million women of working age declared in 2018 that they were not available or seeking a job due to unpaid care work, while only 41 million men were inactive for the same reason.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

time.

Across the region, women invest more time in unpaid care than men: five times as much in the Republic of Korea, four times more in Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic and almost three times more in China. In Southern Asia, women spend ten, seven and three times as much time in unpaid care work than men do in Pakistan, India and Bangladesh, respectively (ILO, 2016a).

In many low- and middle-income countries, time spent on unpaid care work by women and girls is exacerbated by inadequate access to basic services and infrastructure, such as sanitation, water and roads. In developed countries, women are more likely to switch to part-time work or exit the paid labour market once they have children, thus putting themselves at considerable economic risk and representing forgone dividends for the economy.

Despite the serious impacts that unpaid care work has on women's labour market outcomes, it is often overlooked by policy-makers and is usually regarded as an unlimited resource. During times of economic and health crises, environmental degradation and natural disasters, it is often used as a buffer, even though it imposes enormous strain on women to hold households together under these stresses.

Changing family structures (with fewer extended families and high levels of single-parent households), the increased engagement of women in paid work outside the household, urbanization and national and international migration have also contributed to changes in traditional and informal support mechanisms. In low-income countries, tension on women's time is intensified by escalating pressures from climate change-related events, deforestation and energy and food crises, which increase the hours spent in unpaid work.

According to a recent ILO report (2018c), 606 million women of working age declared in 2018 that they were not available or seeking a job due to unpaid care work, while only 41 million men were inactive for the same reason. These 647 million full-time unpaid carers represent the largest pool of participants lost to the labour market across the world, among whom mothers of young children are over-represented. Women as full-time unpaid carers represent 41.6 per cent of the 1.4 billion inactive women, compared with only 5.8 per cent of the 706 million inactive men.

Pregnancy and childbirth still present great health and economic risks for women. While most countries in the region have some sort of maternity protection under the labour law, there are still many gaps as well as problems with enforcement. Some countries specifically exclude self-employed workers, domestic workers, agricultural workers, those in non-standard and part-time employment and migrant workers from legal protections (ILO, 2014a).

The 2018 ILO report also highlighted that, without exception around the world, the amount of time dedicated by women to unpaid care work increases markedly with the presence of young children in a household. This results in what can be termed a "motherhood employment penalty", which was found globally and consistently across regions for women living with young children. In 2018, mothers of children aged 0–5 years account for the lowest employment rates (at 47.6 per cent), compared not only

to fathers (at 87.9 per cent) and non-fathers (at 78.2 per cent) but also to non-mothers (at 54.4 per cent). This pattern contrasts with a “fatherhood employment premium”, with fathers reporting the highest employment-to-population ratios in the world and across all the regions, compared not only with non-fathers but also with both non-mothers and mothers (ILO, 2018c).

The absence of an effective support system for mothers and fathers often means that women may choose to enter certain sectors and occupations, including in the informal economy, deemed to be more compatible with their care responsibilities. In Thailand, for example, home-based workers cited the ability to combine paid work, childcare and other family responsibilities as an important benefit of home-based work (Horn, Namsonboon and Tulaphan, 2013). A background paper for the United Nations High-Level Panel on Women’s Economic Empowerment further reiterates the evidence that women tend to increase their participation in self-employment after the birth of a child because it allows them flexibility in working hours and thus reduces the conflict between paid work and family responsibilities (de Haan, 2016).

New research (box 7) by the ILO also reveals the pernicious impacts of family care responsibilities on women’s jobs.

BOX 7

The cost of not caring about care

The ILO launched research to investigate the impact of family obligations and pregnancy on employment outcomes for women employed in garment factories in Cambodia. The results reveal some startling facts about the negative impacts of family obligations for women workers.

- On average, **job tenure** for women with infants was statistically lower than women without dependants. Indeed, more than 44 per cent of women with infants had job tenure of less than a year, while among single women or women with grown children, this share fell to 35.9 per cent. This finding might imply that factory managers discriminate on maternity, terminating the job assignments when a woman gets pregnant or when family obligations are high (having pre-school-aged children). For instance, the average length of contract was statistically lower for women with infants, especially for women younger than 30, and with a high level of education (48.6 per cent of women had a job tenure of less than one year, while that share dropped to 35.2 per cent for women with the same characteristics but without infants). Women older than 30 with dependents were also discriminated, reporting, on average, lower job tenure and shorter contracts than women without dependants.
- **Unfair treatment:** Three times more women with children than without reported unfair treatment related to their pregnancy or family obligation (12 per cent, compared with 4 per cent for women without dependants).
- **Promotion:** Maternity might be an obstacle to obtain a promotion as well. Among women with infants, highly educated women and women older than 30 faced unfair obstacles to promotion more often than women without infants. The same was reported by women younger than 30 and with dependants.
- **Abuses:** Women without dependants and single women (especially if younger than 30) reported more often experiencing both verbal and physical abuse than women with a family. On average, women without dependants had seen or experienced more insulting language from their supervisor or manager (45 per cent, compared with 33 per cent of women with dependants). And 39.5 per cent of single women said they were concerned by flirting or inappropriate joking, while for women who were married this share decreased to 34.3 per cent. Concerns about the lack of an appropriate system to report these behaviours were invariant across groups.

Source: ILO, forthcoming b.

As the region continues its ageing-population trajectory, unpaid care work burdens are likely to increase and impact future levels of stress on women and girls and affect their opportunities for accessing decent work. In the face of inadequate public and private care services, family members – mainly women and girls – remain the caregivers of their ageing relatives. In some countries, like China, the responsibility of the family to provide care to older persons is enforceable by law, often with penalty (a fine and imprisonment). In India, children now can be prosecuted if they fail to

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Men and women who do jobs may differ in terms of the tasks, responsibilities, efforts and the conditions under which the tasks are performed, even if these have equal value. So they should be paid equally.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific



provide care for their parents.

While there are increasing numbers of men engaged in the care of family members in the region, it is still predominately managed by women. Women are more likely to drop out of education or leave employment temporarily or permanently to provide long-term care to their older family members, often without access to social protection, training or any professional support.

Care work in general is undervalued because it involves tasks that women have traditionally performed without pay and because the skills required for care work are often considered to be innate to women. Paid care work is affected by this undervaluation, resulting in low pay, long hours and limited access to social protection. The vast majority of care workers, especially domestic workers, early childhood care workers, long-term care workers and nurses are poorly paid, which contributes significantly to the gender pay gaps. Care workers typically are poorly protected by the law and may be working informally. Many care workers are also migrant workers, which can contribute to their lack of collective strength and their greater vulnerability.

2.3.3 GENDER PAY GAP

One of the most persistent forms of discrimination in the labour market is the gender pay gap. Globally, the gender pay gap stands at 22.9 per cent. The gap between the sexes becomes even more pronounced when comparing professional and management positions, whereby men on average earn up to 45 per cent more than women (ILO, 2016a). There are also variations across different categories by location and type of employment. For example, in India, the gender gap moved between 22 per cent and 39 per cent, with the smallest gap found among regular urban employees and the largest gap among casual urban workers, followed by regular rural workers (at 38 per cent) (ILO, forthcoming). Based on current trends, the ILO estimates that it will take 70 years to bridge the global gender pay gap (Rubery and Koukiadaki, 2016).

Differences in education levels, qualifications, work experience, occupational category and hours worked account for the “explained” part of the gender gap. But differences in pay between women and men are also attributable to the discrimination, both direct and indirect, that occurs in workplaces.

Gender pay gaps exist within occupations, where men are paid more than women in the same job, and between occupations and sectors, where similar types of work and the skills needed are given less value in female-dominated jobs. Regional trends suggest that the gap in disposable incomes will likely increase, from 33.6 per cent in 2013 to 37.7 per cent by 2030, according to Euromonitor International (2014).

Gender pay gaps arise for a variety of reasons. Social norms and attitudes have great bearing, whether it is the undervaluing of women’s work, the extent of women’s unpaid care responsibilities (which often prevents them from accessing higher-paid jobs) or in the perception of women as only secondary income earners. Another factor is the concentration of women in a narrow range of sectors and employment, which are invariably lower paid than sectors in which men concentrate, or the predominance of women in informal and vulnerable work.

The following fresh insights box highlights research from Southern Asia on the struggle

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We as women would like men’s involvement in managing family affairs.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

for community health care workers who provide essential services to rural women to be recognized as workers with the same rights as other workers.

FRESH INSIGHTS

Decent Work for Community Health Workers in South Asia: A Path to Gender Equality and Sustainable Development

Paper by Susana Barria, Babe Aye, Jaspar Goss, Kate Lappin, Veronica Montufar and Michael Whaites

Drawing on primary research from India, Nepal and Pakistan on the status, conditions of work and pay of community health care workers, the case studies in this paper reveal a striking example of the undervaluing of women's work. Community health care workers have not been recognized as workers, despite their vital role in the national health system's outreach to remote and rural areas and restricted communities.

Until recently in all three countries, these women health workers were treated as volunteers providing much-needed health care for women. In Pakistan, after organizing support and advocacy by trade unions, these workers were recognized as public health care workers and regularized. In India and Nepal, however, their status as workers has not been recognized, and their honorarium remains meagre.

The paper makes the case for the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, recognizing these workers as workers who should be paid through public health care budgets and be given rights to minimum wages, maternity protection and social protection.

This paper was a contribution to the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok 2018), which was supported by the Government of Australia. For more details, see http://www.ilo.org/asia/publications/WCMS_616210/lang--en/index.htm

The pay gap is even more intractable where gender inequality intersects with other markers of disadvantage, such as ethnicity, indigenous status, caste and disability. In New Zealand, for example, women from Pacific island and indigenous Maori backgrounds have lower rates of pay than Pakeha (European origin) women (CEVEP, 2017).

Motherhood can also result in pay penalties when women take breaks from the labour market or leave it when they have children. In both situations, they may forgo advancement in their jobs as well as opportunities for higher pay and for sufficient social protection in their old age (Grimshaw and Rubery, 2015).

Gender pay gaps are one of the most striking markers of unfairness in the labour market. Yet there is nothing inevitable about them. Indeed, there is a range of measures and mechanisms for accountability available to diminish them, as promoted by the recently launched global campaign for equal pay (box 8).

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BOX 8

Equal pay by 2030

Equal pay for work of equal value is about fairness. Why should you earn less than someone doing the same kind of work?

While the current trajectory suggests that equal pay is decades away, there are concerted efforts to accelerate progress towards a fairer labour market. At the Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific (February 2018), the ILO, the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development and UN Women launched the Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC). EPIC will work with governments and social partners to meet commitments to achieving SDG target 8.5 on equal pay for work of equal value between women and men by 2030.

The campaign promotes tools and strategies to eliminate this most striking marker of unfairness in the labour market. This includes universal ratification and implementation of the ILO Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951, (No. 100), encouraging reporting by tripartite partners on progress towards pay equity, developing transparent and gender-sensitive job classification systems that give fair and realistic valuations of jobs done by women and men and promoting collective bargaining on the issue.

For more details, see www.ilo.org/global/topics/equality-and-discrimination/epic/lang--en/index.htm [accessed 24 June 2018].

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In Samoa, there is a zero-withdrawal policy in the courts for cases of domestic violence.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

2.3.4 GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT WORK

Despite improved legal frameworks and many enterprise-level initiatives aiming to prevent and redress violence and harassment, it remains prevalent and it affects girls and women disproportionately. Violence and harassment are a threat to the dignity, security, health and well-being of everyone. The spectrum of violence in the world of work encompasses physical as well as psychological and sexual violence. The impacts on survivors of violence should not be underestimated in terms of extreme physical and emotional stress and their ability to continue in paid work.

Violence impacts not only workers and employers but also families, businesses and national economies. KPMG (2016) estimated the impact value of domestic violence on the Australian economy, for example, at 22 billion Australian dollars (AUD) in 2015-16. That amount increased by AUD 4 billion when under-represented groups in the survey were factored in.



BOX 9

TRIANGLE in ASEAN

The TRIANGLE in ASEAN programme is a partnership between the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Department of Global Affairs Canada and the ILO. The programme delivers technical assistance and support to strengthen the protection of women and men migrant workers, harness their potential to contribute to development and ensure that the systems facilitating their mobility are gender-responsive and efficient. Ultimately, the programme looks to maximize the contribution of labour migration to stable and inclusive growth and development in the ASEAN region.

TRIANGLE in ASEAN implements a cross-cutting Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Strategy (WEGES), acknowledging that it is essential for discriminatory gendered norms and structural barriers to be removed for all migrant workers, regardless of gender, to enable equitable migration and decent work options. TRIANGLE in ASEAN implements WEGES with a "twin track" approach: the first track ensures gender mainstreaming in all activities, and the second track delivers activities that aim to increase women's empowerment and gender equality.

Gender mainstreaming, or track one, activities include working towards gender balance of participants in meetings and trainings and among recipients of support services. TRIANGLE in ASEAN requires that meeting participants are at least 40 per cent women, with the aim of realizing an equal gender ratio. Due to advocacy and close monitoring, the gender balance has improved considerably. The participation of women and men in regional, national and local meetings was nearly balanced in 2017, with the share of women exceeding men for the first time during the programme. The programme also ensures gender mainstreaming in its activities and support services, including through its Migrant Worker Resource Centres, which offer counselling, legal assistance, information, education and training on migration. Progress is evident in the gender balance of beneficiaries, with some centres providing services to more women than men.

Gender mainstreaming goes beyond achieving a gender balance in representation and services and requires ensuring that all activities, programming and policies are gender-responsive. With support, the Vietnam Association of Manpower Supply, completed a review and revision of its Code of Conduct to enable greater transparency and gender-responsiveness. The revised code promotes transparent recruitment, involvement of trade unions and women's representative organizations and enhancement of the rights of women migrant workers, especially migrant domestic workers.

In 2017, TRIANGLE in ASEAN conducted women's empowerment and gender equality trainings as part of its track two activities for all staff and implementing partners in six countries. Partners included representatives from government, trade unions, employers' organizations, recruitment agency associations and non-government and civil society organizations. At the conclusion of the trainings, participants committed to apply their new knowledge and skills, stating, "I will try to reduce gender inequality not only at work, but also at home," and "I will share these subjects and put them into practice, especially when developing policies." Other track two activities include women's business meetings, which TRIANGLE in ASEAN staff facilitate in Myanmar. These women-only spaces allow women to discuss migration practices and community responses; support migrant workers, their families and communities; and empower local women to be leaders on migration responses.

TRIANGLE in ASEAN also conducts research targeting important gender-based knowledge gaps, such as a 2016 study, *High Rise, Low Pay: Experiences of Migrant Women in the Thai Construction Sector and Protected or Put in Harm's Way? Bans and Restrictions on Women's Labour Migration in ASEAN Countries*. Building on this study's findings, TRIANGLE in ASEAN has been active in advocating for policy alternatives to the banning of women migrating to other countries for employment.

Additionally, some women are more vulnerable to violence, including women with disabilities, women living in poverty, women from caste and ethnic minorities and indigenous groups and women from lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersexual (LGBTI) groups.

Gender-based violence is also pervasive throughout the Pacific. For instance, an Asian Development Bank study (2016) revealed that two-thirds of women in Fiji, Kiribati and Solomon Islands had experienced intimate partner violence in their lifetime. In Tonga, 68 per cent of women had experienced violence by a non-partner.

Data from The Asia Foundation (2017b) reinforces that gender-based violence is the deadliest form of violence in the region, often surpassing the numbers of women and men killed in armed conflict.

2.4 SELECTED DRIVERS OF FUTURE LABOUR MARKET TRANSFORMATION IN THE REGION

There are four factors that are likely to influence the transformation of the future labour market: (i) demographic trends; (ii) technological changes; (iii) structural transformations and sectoral changes; and (iv) climate change and green jobs. Because these factors can affect women and men differently, they should be taken into consideration fully when working towards a future of work that is decent and equitable for women and men. Each factor is explained here to facilitate further discussions to ensure that women, along with men, benefit from opportunities arising from the labour market transformation.

2.4.1 DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

The Asia-Pacific region represents 60 per cent of the world's population. It is a diverse region, with seven of the world's ten most populous countries. It also contains some of the world's smallest island nations.¹⁹

In many countries, a combination of economic development and internal migration are driving the expansion of megacities and rapid urbanization. International migration is a prominent feature of population and development dynamics in most countries.²⁰ In South-Eastern Asia, labour migration has been an important source of growth and development, filling labour shortages, particularly in low-skilled work, and providing much-needed employment for workers in countries of origin. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs estimated that Asia and Oceania together had the largest number of international migrants in 2017, at 88 million.²¹ A 2012 Singapore national survey found that among persons aged 75 or older, 50 per cent were dependent on migrant care workers, including domestic workers, for their daily care (Ostbye et al., 2013). In Singapore, one in five households hires a domestic worker (Hui and Tai, 2015), and the demand for domestic workers throughout ASEAN is predicted to rise further in the coming years as a result of an ageing workforce, lower fertility and an increase of women in the workforce (ILO, 2016d; Tan and Gibson, 2013).²²

19 <https://www.unescap.org/> [accessed 24 June 2018].

20 The generation of remittances, including by women migrants, is a considerable source of income and growth in many countries, accounting for 25 per cent of GDP for Nepal, followed by the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Viet Nam (at 4.5–7 per cent of GDP), according to the International Monetary Fund.

21 See <https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/gender> [accessed 24 June 2018].

22 See ILO: *Towards achieving decent work for domestic workers in ASEAN: 10th ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour (AFML) – Thematic background paper* [accessed 5 July 2018].

AGEING POPULATIONS AND MALE BABY PREFERENCE WILL HAVE LONG-LASTING IMPACTS TO THE REGION AND THE WORKFORCE

In some parts of the region, the prevalence of sex selection before birth has resulted in a serious gender imbalance within the population. The long-term impacts of this are starting to emerge: with fewer women available for marriage, the trafficking of women for marriage is increasing. The future labour markets in these countries will also have a scarcity of women workers.

By 2050, more than 46 per cent of the population in Asia will be aged 60 or older (table 1). In Oceania, the rate will be more than 47 per cent. Although data by sex are unavailable, it is likely that a large share of the older population will be female.

TABLE 1. Projected future population, by age group, Asia and Oceania (percentage)

AGE	2030 (OCEANIA)	2050 (OCEANIA)	2030 (ASIA)	2050 (ASIA)
0–14	22.1	20.0	21.1	18.0
15–59	57.7	56.7	61.8	57.8
60+	20.2	23.3	17.1	24.2
65+	15.4	18.2	11.8	17.8
80+	4.2	6.2	2.1	4.7

Source: Adapted from DESA Population Division, www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/theme/trends/index.shtml [accessed 18 May 2018].

In recent decades, many parts of Asia, including Eastern Asia, reaped a demographic dividend (where the working-age population exceeded the dependent population), which enabled strong economic growth. This dividend, however, is coming to an end for many countries. Indeed, the speed of ageing in parts of Asia is of grave concern for the future of work.

The population growth rate is already negative in Japan and is projected to fall to zero for Asia by 2050. The share of population aged 65 or older will increase rapidly and reach close to two and half times the current level by 2050, with Eastern Asia likely to see its old-age dependency ratio triple (IMF, 2017).

These overall trends in ageing hide some diversity (table 2). The International Monetary Fund suggested three broad groups of countries: (i) post-dividend (demographic) countries, where the working-age population is shrinking; (ii) late-dividend countries, where the working-age population is declining as a share of the total population but still growing in absolute numbers; and (iii) early dividend countries, where the share of working-age population will rise, both as total population and in absolute terms in the next 15 years. These early dividend countries include India, Indonesia and the Philippines and will see their working-age populations increase substantially in the coming decades. Fertility rates are projected to remain above the replacement rate of 2.1 children per woman for India and Indonesia until 2030 (IMF, 2017).

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When you look at demography, the care economy is probably one of fastest-growing sectors and subsectors of the economy in our region as well as in the world.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific



“

Incentives for women to participate in innovative activities and science and tech become vital.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

TABLE 2. Asia and Pacific demographic classifications, 2015 and 2030

COUNTRY OR TERRITORY	DEMOGRAPHIC CLASSIFICATIONS	
	2015	2030
Australia	Late dividend	Late dividend
China	Post dividend	Post dividend
Hong Kong, China	Post dividend	Post dividend
India	Early dividend	Early dividend
Indonesia	Post dividend	Late dividend
Japan	Post dividend	Post dividend
Republic of Korea	Late dividend	Post dividend
Malaysia	Late dividend	Late dividend
New Zealand	Late dividend	Late dividend
Philippines	Early dividend	Early dividend
Singapore	Late dividend	Post dividend
Thailand	Post dividend	Post dividend
Viet Nam	Late dividend	Late dividend

Note: “Post dividend” is defined as a total fertility rate that 30 years earlier was less than 2.1 and a shrinking working-age population share over the subsequent 15 years or a shrinking absolute working-age population. “Late dividend” is defined as the total fertility rate from 30 years earlier and a shrinking working-age population share over the subsequent 15 years. “Early dividend” is defined as an increasing working-age population share over the subsequent 15 years.

Source: IMF, 2017.

Without change in labour market policies, the ageing population will have tremendous impact for most countries in the region. The International Monetary Fund (2017) noted that parts of the region are in danger of growing old before growing rich. Demographic trends could affect the loss of one-half to one percentage point from annual GDP growth over the next three decades in the post-dividend countries, such as Japan. China, Hong Kong (China), the Republic of Korea and Thailand may also experience a reduction in growth.

These demographic trends in the region add urgency to the need for facilitating greater labour force participation by women and preparing to respond to care needs to offset the potential negative impacts. Immigration can soften some of the impacts associated with declining working-age populations, as is happening in Australia, Hong Kong (China), New Zealand and Singapore (IMF, 2017).

2.4.2 TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGES AND AUTOMATION

The impacts of future technological change can be both positive and negative for women and will profoundly shape future labour markets. Automation, for example, will displace some workers while it may also create jobs for women in industries previously dominated by men – where heavy manual work is replaced by machines. According to McKinsey & Company (2018), around 15 per cent of the global workforce, or about 400 million workers, could be displaced by automation between 2016 and 2030, while there will also be growth in demand for work and, consequently, jobs. Additional labour demand is estimated to range between 555 million and 890 million, with some of the largest gains to happen in emerging economies, such as India.

Women in manufacturing and in low-skilled jobs face a higher risk to displacement and redundancy. Research by Ernst and Young (2018) suggests that in the Philippines and Viet Nam, for example, women are twice as likely to occupy jobs at high risk of automation as men. In Indonesia and Thailand, women are 1.5 times more likely. In Cambodia where garment production dominates manufacturing, close to half a million sewing machine operators are at high risk of automation (ILO, 2016b).

The garment sector throughout the region has been an important source of livelihood for women, both in the formal and informal economies, although it has not been free from such abuses as sexual harassment, gender pay gaps, low pay and indecent working conditions. Garment sector jobs have also contributed to enhance women's economic and social positions in some areas where social norms have historically restricted women's engagement in the public sphere. To minimize negative impacts of job loss on women, it is important to support women in preparing for and adopting changes arising from technological advances and by investing in training, skills development and lifelong learning for women (box 10).



BOX 10

The Better Work strategy to enhance gender equality in the garment industry

Better Work – a flagship ILO programme jointly managed by the International Finance Corporation – has launched a comprehensive, five-year gender strategy to empower women, reduce sexual harassment and close the gender pay gap in the global garment industry.

The strategy aims to promote women's economic empowerment through targeted initiatives in apparel factories and by strengthening policies and practices at the national, regional and international levels.

"Through its research and on-the-ground experience, Better Work has shown that investing in women is not just the right thing to do, it's the smart thing to do," says Better Work Director Dan Rees. "We have seen that training female supervisors can increase factory productivity by up to 22 per cent. So this strategy is about collaborating with partners to scale up what we know works."

Although women represent around 80 per cent of the workforce in the garment sector worldwide, they are concentrated in the lowest-paying, lowest-skilled occupations. Gender-based discrimination during recruitment processes and sexual harassment in the workplace remain widespread. Social norms and the predominance of working mothers also contribute to a sizeable gender pay gap, with female factory workers earning up to 21 per cent less per hour than their male counterparts.

Better Work's gender strategy aims to unite partners from the public and private sectors to eradicate these issues in four ways: by working to reduce discrimination and sexual harassment; promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights, maternity protection and work-family balance; increasing representation of women in worker and employer committees and organizations; and helping women develop career opportunities.

The objectives of Better Work's Gender Agenda fall under four pillars



Discrimination

- Reduce sexual harassment
- Eliminate contract discrimination
- Close the gender pay gap



Paid Work and Care

- Improve sexual and reproductive health
- Enhance maternity protection
- Support workable solutions for breastfeeding and childcare



Voice and Representation

- Address women's underrepresentation in factory, union and employer bodies
- Empower women to raise their voice in collective bargaining



Leadership and Skills Development

- Improve career opportunities for female factory workers
- Nurture women's leadership in government, union and employer organizations

Better Work brings together all levels of the garment industry to improve working conditions and boost the competitiveness of apparel businesses. Active in eight countries and reaching more than two million workers, the programme creates lasting change through assessments, training, advocacy and research.

An independent study of Better Work by Tufts University found that the programme had decreased the gender pay gap by up to 17 per cent, reduced sexual harassment concerns by up to 18 per cent and increased women's access to prenatal care by as much as 26 per cent. The study also demonstrated that a workplace free of harassment leads to higher profitability and that quality jobs for women have knock-on development impacts, including better health for workers and their family members and improved education for workers' children.

There is a growing number of distributed ledger technology or blockchain solutions for development in the region. While it is still early days, the time is now to make sure that such innovative technologies are used for social good and that gender considerations are made early during the design phase.

Indeed, the effects of technology to reduce gender inequality will not happen automatically. It largely will depend on the design of the technology and the capabilities of women from under-represented groups to access and use technologies and solutions that respond to their needs. The gender gap in access to the digital world in the region is a sobering 16.9 per cent and, according to the International Telecommunications Union (2016), shows no sign of decreasing. According to ILO and Gallup research (2017), only 17 per cent of women respondents in Southern Asia had access to the Internet.

The International Telecommunications Union analysis linked digital gender gaps to other gender inequalities and discrimination, including gender divides in education, the labour market, political participation, ownership of resources and decision-making, which in turn are affected by sociocultural norms, values and attitudes.

In recent years, the digital age has ushered new forms of work procurement through online, app-based platforms. Often referred to as the “gig economy”, it provides work opportunities such as, taxi service, home care, domestic work and running errands to legal and other professional service. Job growth through platforms is expanding rapidly, often at a pace in which labour laws have not been able to keep up. Traditional employment relationships are unclear, which may result in workers being unaware of basic labour rights and entitlements.

The flexibility of online procured work is also often promoted as a way to open new jobs for women in male-dominated fields and is perceived as work that helps women manage their household responsibilities. Emerging research, however, suggests this may be optimistic. Analysis by Barzilay and Ben-David, (2017) and Webster (2016) in the United States, for instance, revealed significant pay gaps between male and female online workers and pointed to the intensification of work for both women and men. Moreover, flexibility to manage unpaid care responsibilities may be an illusion in the context of a 24-hour virtual working day. The researchers also noted that the lack of protection of labour rights under the law could be leading to new forms of informalization in the digital labour force. The reality, of course, is far more complex. Aside from the problem of ambiguous employment relationships, the sheer numbers of online task workers competing against each other can lower the bidding rates and generate exploitive work practices.

Also of concern is an emerging gender pay gap, despite the supposed neutrality of online platforms. One study in the United States analysed 4,600 online taskers’ requested rates, occupations and work hours. Disaggregating the data from the platform by sex, a dramatic gender gap in pay of 37 per cent emerged. The gaps in requested hourly rates persisted even after controlling for feedback score, experience, occupational category, hours of work and educational attainment. The largest pay gap was found by taskers offering legal services (Barzilay and Ben-David, 2017).



FACTS AND FIGURES FROM THE REGION

The Asia-Pacific region in 2014 accounted for 59.5 per cent of the global exports of garments, textiles and footwear. In Bangladesh, the sector accounted for 89.2 per cent of merchandise exports, and in Cambodia it was 77.4 per cent (ILO, 2016b).

India has high rates of informal and home-based work in the garment sector, particularly among women. The number of Indian women contributing to the global apparel sector is high (ICRW, 2017).

Gender pay gaps in the garment sector reached as high as 64.5 per cent in Pakistan to a lower 17–25 per cent in Thailand, the Philippines and Viet Nam (ILO, 2016b).

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STEM-educated and trained workers are the big source of strategic innovative and creative thinking, which will be requirements of the twenty-first century workforce.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

According to research by Ernst and Young (2018), technologies such as robotic process automation, robots and artificial intelligence will also impact the financial sector, where women hold a larger share of employment as technicians or in roles providing clerical, sales or administrative support. This can be seen being played out in the Philippines for example, where women make up 59 per cent of business processing outsourcing and 9 per cent of them are at risk of automation, according to ILO research (Chang, Rynhardt and Huynh, 2016).

Telework, digital platform work, offshore data processing and administrative services are other areas that offer job growth, but the conditions of work, pay and opportunities for advancement may be of concern. Without creating opportunities for retraining, automation and advances in machines and robotics may also pose a threat for the millions of women who work in formal jobs in manufacturing (such as work in the garment sector). New techniques in agriculture, especially when they involve commercialization, can be beneficial, but they often shift economic control, employment and profit from women to men. Women may thus be facing growing job and income insecurity in this sector due to mechanization.

The impacts of technological change are also eroding the comparative advantage that many industries have used in employing women as cheap physical labour. Women tend to be disproportionately at risk to quantitative and qualitative impacts of technological change because of their concentration in a smaller number of low-skilled, labour-intensive jobs (Chang, Rynhardt and Huynh, 2016).

As production for export moves up the technological and skills ladders, women will account for a large proportion of displaced workers. Without targeted efforts directed at women, there is a danger of skill polarization between highly skilled specialized workers (often men) and semi-skilled flexible or casual workers (often women).

A glance at some countries reveals that the impacts of technological change are already being felt. In China, for example, the use of robots and artificial intelligence to raise national productivity is affecting jobs involving repetitive tasks, particularly in Guangdong Province, where women outnumber men on labour-intensive export-oriented production lines. Large-scale job displacements are partially offset, however, by labour shortages (Employment Law Alliance, 2017). In the health care sector in China, machines that provide health-management services threaten to displace many women workers.

The female share of workers in textiles, clothing and footwear exceeds 70 per cent in Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam, with those at the low skilled end being at the highest risk of displacement (Chang, Rynhardt and Huynh, 2016).

In India, where women are often concentrated in agriculture, the lack of technological innovation has kept agricultural productivity and incomes low in rural areas, resulting in many landless labourers and subsistence farmers. Many of them are women and thus unable to benefit from India's strong growth. It is also one of the factors behind the increasing inequality in the country.

These examples of technological changes point to the urgent need for enabling women to access and use technologies and engage with new and a wide range of skills-training

opportunities provided by both the public and private sectors. It also must include sectors where there are labour demands but where women are under-represented, such as in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields. It also underscores the need for social dialogue to establish procedures for introducing technology changes and social protection for people displaced by structural changes in a sector.

2.4.3 STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATIONS AND SECTORAL CHANGES

Urbanization and industrialization have transformed many parts of the region from agrarian society to a modern economy based on labour-intensive manufacturing. There is enormous diversity in the region in the levels and patterns of growth. While some countries have relied on low-wage export-led growth, others have largely been service oriented. Agriculture remains an important sector, though its shares of GDP and employment are gradually declining, indicating deep-seated structural changes in the economies of the region.

This structural transformation of labour markets especially impacts women because agriculture is largely feminized. Table 3 reflects that, in 2018, agriculture remained the predominant sector for women only in Southern Asia. The share of women in industry is likely to stagnate in the near future throughout the region, while the services sector will grow.

TABLE 3. Percentage of women's employment in Asia and the Pacific, by sector, 2016–19

LOCATION	SECTOR	2016 %	2017 %	2018 %	2019 %
Eastern Asia	Industry	21	21	20	20
South-Eastern Asia and the Pacific	Industry	16	16	16	16
Southern Asia	Industry	17	17	17	17
Eastern Asia	Services	59	60	61	63
South-Eastern Asia and the Pacific	Services	54	54	56	57
Southern Asia	Services	24	25	26	26
Eastern Asia	Agriculture	20	19	18	17
South-Eastern Asia and the Pacific	Agriculture	30	29	28	27
Southern Asia	Agriculture	59	58	58	57

Source :See ILO World Employment and Social Outlook Data Finder [accessed 24 June 2018].

These trends are particularly evident in Eastern Asia, which has experienced considerable changes (largely led by China), with a substantial reduction in the share of agriculture and increases in services and industry. Agricultural employment within the region plummeted between 1997 and 2017, from 46 per cent to 19 per cent for women and from 40 per cent to 15 per cent for men.²³

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A better future of work for the global south relies on structural transformation of the workforce, then we can change the work of communities.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

23 See ILO World Employment and Social Outlook Data Finder [accessed 24 June 2018].

While the share of employment in industry increased for men in Eastern Asia in 2017, from 28 per cent to 31 per cent, it decreased for women, from 31 per cent to 21 per cent. But the services sector share in Eastern Asia nearly tripled for women's employment, to 60 per cent. It increased by only 23 percentage points for men, to 55 per cent. The share of services also increased more substantially for women than for men during the past two decades in South-Eastern Asia and the Pacific. In Southern Asia, however, the increased share in the services sector employment was nearly the same between women and men.²⁴

Other factors will also determine which sectors and jobs grow. As previously emphasized, the demographic trend of ageing populations and declining labour forces will likely increase growth in migration, domestic work and health care services. According to the ILO's World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends, 2018 report, retail work will likely grow, although not necessarily in retail establishments (compared to own-account retail).

Global commitments, such as the Paris climate accord, are likely to spur growth in green jobs (see section 2.3.4 and 3.4). With continued advances and innovation, information technology jobs will increase, along with research and development, as countries advance towards more value-added production (often referred to as the "push for industry 4.0", or the fourth industrial revolution).

At the national level, the degree of internal investments, sectoral prioritization and the patterns of growth (whether labour intensive and inclusive or capital intensive) will impact employment patterns of women and whether and how they participate as economic actors. These factors must be developed with a gender lens to see the potential impacts and existing constraints on women's engagement in sectors.

Notwithstanding the effectiveness of skills, development policies and interventions for women, many entrepreneurship programmes focus on strengthening individual capacities without addressing the underlying gender-based obstacles to creating an environment for lasting empowerment. As a result, proportionally more women than men entrepreneurs are found in necessity-driven businesses in the informal economy and in sectors with low growth potential.

Some of the barriers women encounter in establishing growth-oriented prosperous enterprises are: limited access to finance; lack of access to business training and skills development in technical areas; weak literacy and numeracy; lack of access to land, property, technology and markets; cumbersome and costly business registration procedures; and gender discriminatory social norms.

In addition to being concentrated in market-saturated and female-dominated activities, women entrepreneurs in the region are often in the informal economy. They invariably also have weak bargaining power within supply chains and have little recourse to justice through grievance mechanisms if there are disputes. Social protection mechanisms are often absent, so there is little capacity to absorb shocks and risks. Nor is there adequate legal protection under the law for the enjoyment of their rights. As in the other areas of women's economic activities, the extent of women's household responsibilities also places severe limits on the time they can engage in remunerative work.

The following fresh insights research highlights the importance of women's perceptions and attitudes in factoring for success in entrepreneurship and the types of supportive measures that are required.

²⁴ See ILO World Employment and Social Outlook Data Finder [accessed 24 June 2018].

FRESH INSIGHTS

The Importance of Perceptions in Promoting Women's Entrepreneurship in Thailand

Paper by Ulrike Guelich

Women entrepreneurs are hindered by a number of factors, including such individual constraints as the low level of entrepreneurial skills perception. External factors also inhibit the growth of female-run enterprises: restricted access to finance, lack of market information and the prevalence of general administrative procedures and regulations. This paper explores the factors that influence female entrepreneurship rates in a comparison of Thailand with Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Viet Nam. The focus is on a limited number of cross-country variables on individual entrepreneurs' perceptions of their entrepreneurial skills and opportunities and the availability of business networks, especially for quality entrepreneurship. Such issues as cultural support and attitudes towards entrepreneurs, if entrepreneurship is perceived as a good career choice and prevalent media attention are investigated as equal contributors to women entrepreneurship rates.

The findings suggest that to overcome the deep-rooted structural constraints women face, policy-makers need to promote training and educational programmes that enable women to not only (i) improve their entrepreneurial skills but also the (ii) perceptions of their skills, (iii) to develop more appropriate networks and mentoring relationships and (iv) to re-assign domestic work.

This paper was a contribution to the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok, 2018), which was supported by the Government of Australia. For more details, see http://www.ilo.org/asia/publications/WCMS_616212/lang--en/index.htm [accessed 24 June 2018].

Imperative for both women and men is emphasis on strengthening their skills and employability, breaking gender stereotypes in occupations and making sure that labour force skills meet the evolving labour market demands. Facilitating women's greater access to jobs through public investments in care services for children, older persons and people who are sick should be a major concern for governments.

2.4.4 CLIMATE CHANGE AND GREEN JOBS

The impacts of climate change are already being felt in Asia and Pacific, where the region accounted for 43 per cent of all registered disaster events and 68 per cent of all fatalities globally in 2017 (ESCAP, 2018). There are growing concerns on the negative impacts of climate change on livelihoods. Many Pacific island nations are facing the dire consequences of rising sea levels and increasing weather events. Women are over-represented among vulnerable workers, and climate change threatens to widen the existing gender gaps in the world of work.

In many situations, women are bearing the brunt of impacts associated with increased natural disasters, such as droughts, floods and cyclones. It is mostly women who must not only hold families together in times of climate-related shocks and disasters (despite scarce resources), they must also cope with problems of pollution and toxic waste. Environmental challenges add to the complexity of tackling unresolved social challenges, such as weak health care and education systems and limited infrastructure in rural areas, and intensify the gender inequalities.

There is nearly universal global recognition that climate change must be dealt with. All countries in the region committed to the Paris climate accord and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Paris climate accord is a major step forward because it recognizes that women and gender equality have major roles in the greening of economies.

As underlined by the Gender Action Plan adopted at the 23rd Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP23), a just transition to sustainable development can only be achieved if women are actively involved in developing and implementing all aspects of climate change mitigation and adaptation.

All countries will need to embrace green strategies that contain a targeted suite of gender-responsive measures that can integrate environmental and social policies with the concept of decent work. The potential for job growth, improving job quality and progressing on gender equality will be enormous with the right policy mix and the effective management of the risks inherent in structural change.

The benefits from green transformation are determined by coordinated national policies and adequate levels of investment and incentives. Combined, these fundamentals can overcome the numerous challenges and dislocations that occur with structural change. The management of risks will be critical to ensure that women avoid marginalization. Shifts in employment patterns will occur as green transformations unfold – away from highly polluting, energy-inefficient activities to sectors that are cleaner and more efficient.

A serious challenge for women's participation in the green economy is acquiring the right skills. This is an unprecedented challenge because of the prevalence of low-skilled workers in the region. Many countries will experience an increasing surplus of low-level skills by 2020 (Bulaor and Matsumoto, forthcoming).

Skills shortages will also increase, particularly for jobs requiring highly skilled workers. Skills shortages already present a major hurdle for the just transition to environmental sustainability, particularly for certain sectors and occupations, such as wind, wave and tidal power; renewable energies for manufacturing, construction and installation; expansion of the environmental industries; and the green building and construction sector (ILO, 2017b). If women do not gain green skills and higher skills, quality jobs will remain beyond their reach.

This section has taken an overview of the persistent labour market inequalities faced by women in the region. It has identified a number of long standing obstacles to women's economic empowerment such as discrimination and unpaid work, and it has shone a spotlight into the future challenges presented by technological change and demographic trends among others. While these factors will shape future labour market outcomes, these challenges also present opportunities for concerted action to overcome entrenched disadvantage. The following section will highlight game changers where policy action can transform progress towards a more equitable future.



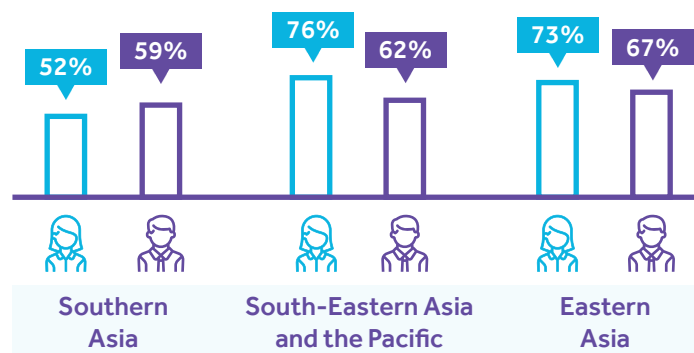


SECTION 3:

GAME CHANGERS: WOMEN AND THE FUTURE OF WORK IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Expectations of women and men in Asia and the Pacific from their future working lives:

Most women prefer to work at paid jobs, and most men agree.



WOMEN WANT A WORKING LIFE WITHOUT THESE TOP CHALLENGES:



Women are equally skilled & educated, yet women occupy only



32%
of leadership roles



23%
of the seats in parliaments

“

We need to break or remove gender stereotyping.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

As we look to the future, the region holds a great deal of promise towards delivering on gender equality and finally removing the inequalities holding back specific groups of women. Despite progress achieved and commitments made, women's prospects in the world of work are still far from being equal to men's outcomes. Persistent challenges and obstacles remain. Although change is possible, history has proven that without dedicated efforts, progress is slow and uneven. There are specific areas with potential to accelerate progress and deliver transformational change for the future of work and future labour market outcomes for women (and men) in the region.

Different from drivers, "game changers" are mutually reinforcing and have been selected for their broad sweeping reach. They were selected by taking stock of the region's opportunities and constraints as well as through the dialogues with stakeholders at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific. Each game changer presented here is followed by a set of recommendations for consideration.



3.1 TRANSFORM ADVERSE GENDER NORMS AND ATTITUDES



Throughout the region, social norms are important determining factors in whether girls are born, educated or enter the workforce, in what types of work they do in the home and in workplaces and whether they exercise leadership and voice. They underpin cultural practices that assign women to traditional roles as primary carers of children, spouses and ageing parents (and secondary breadwinners) and men as primary breadwinners (not caregivers). The ILO-Gallup report (2017) highlighted that most women across the region want to work in paid jobs and that most men support this ambition. In practice, however, the choices for many women are limited by the norms and attitudes they experience every day in the home, at school, in the workplace and in society. Despite progress and some change, social norms continue to limit the opportunities for girls and women. There is often acceptance that social norms and attitudes are slow to change, which can be a self-fulfilling prophecy. The time has come to take game-changing action that will open more positive attitudes towards women's role alongside men in the world of work (and in society).

Girls and young women encounter many constraints to their choices, starting at an early age. Girls and women from poor and isolated communities especially continue having their access to education and skills training limited because of their care responsibilities. Early marriage and pregnancy among girls also limits their ability to accrue education, skills and opportunities for paid work. They also have fewer choices than men when it comes to the jobs and sectors they can access. Their work is typically undervalued, and many work as contributing family workers, generally unpaid.

The incidence of violence and harassment against women in the world of work is a prevalent problem that usually goes unreported. Overwhelmingly, more girls and women are at risk of violence and harassment than boys and men, especially those facing multiple barriers due to disability, ethnicity, poverty, gender identity, etc. and especially when they attempt to contradict traditional gender roles. A high incidence of violence and harassment can negatively affect girls and women in accessing education. Also in some contexts, women may face a backlash or be discouraged when they speak up or step up to take on a traditionally male-dominated job or a role of responsibility.

In some countries in the region, such as Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam, efforts are ongoing to redress adverse gender stereotypes in curricula, in the media and in workplaces. Enterprises are also increasingly recognizing that gender-neutral policies and unconscious biases continue to shape recruitment, pay and promotion practices in the workplace, resulting in inequitable outcomes and losses in human resource potential, even where there are good intentions. Evidence of unconscious biases in policies and decision-making is gaining ground and has resulted in the development of practical strategies for overcoming stereotypes and unfair practices in the workplace as well as processes that limit the ability of unconscious bias to intervene.²⁵ Initiatives like "inclusion nudges" and behavioural science experiments



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When I work, I work hard, I work passionately. I am always thinking about my daughter's future. The problems are not others' problems, they are my problems. Whether it is about sexual harassment or childcare, we need to change attitudes.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

25 See ILO, forthcoming a for practical strategies.

in the workplace are contributing to policy implementation by limiting individuals' unconscious biases in decision-making. This is particularly of interest for advancing gender equality.

Community mobilization efforts can be found in remote locations in China, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Viet Nam and other countries that target adolescents of both sexes with discussion, coaching and other media to impart greater awareness of gender equality. These efforts apply multipronged approaches that reinforce each other and, in many cases, engage the participation and dialogue of traditional community and faith leaders. Evidence suggests that these initiatives have the greatest impact when combined with other measures, such as keeping girls in school for more years to prevent early marriage and early pregnancy.



For example, Pop Culture with a Purpose is a programme reaching half a million people in Bangladesh through televised docudramas, street theatre and public commercials to change views on the role of girls and women in society.

More and more men are stepping up to eliminate violence against women through initiatives like MenEngage, the White Ribbon Campaign and MenCare. These initiatives are operational in several countries across the region (and around the world) and are changing perceptions about fatherhood, masculinity, violence and caring responsibilities in the home through dialogues with young men.

Fostering more positive attitudes towards girls and women and achieving gender equality requires removing discrimination from laws, policies and institutional practices. But it is not sufficient to only remove the harmful elements – enforcement of the reforms must be carried out. Implementation frameworks should be designed to incentivize and ease the ability of businesses, employers' and workers' organizations, government and other stakeholders to do the right thing. Institutional structures can work to eliminate discrimination in all its forms by designing smart policies that help eliminate unconscious bias and opportunities to discriminate.

It should be an utmost priority to close gender gaps, change social norms to eliminate discrimination, promote zero tolerance of violence and harassment and engage more men alongside women as partners and beneficiaries of gender equality.



RECOMMENDATIONS TO TRANSFORM ADVERSE GENDER NORMS AND ATTITUDES



GOVERNMENT



EMPLOYERS



WORKERS

○○○ OTHER STAKEHOLDERS



- Undertake reforms in the legal and regulatory frameworks to remove any discriminatory laws or regulations that could impede progress for gender equality; monitor, report in a transparent manner and continue to ensure progress, including preventing and ending violence and harassment in the world of work.
- Collect more data and evidence on what works on changing adverse social norms and attitudes around women in the economy and society and for a better understanding of opportunities, trends and shifts in mindsets at the national and local levels, including measures to prevent and end violence and harassment in the world of work.
- Design and implement multipronged and time-bound strategies to shape positive social norms towards women in the world of work and to remove discrimination by, for example, promoting awareness-raising campaigns on gender roles at all levels, encouraging male champions and thought leaders to implement policies and use technologies that encourage people to “do the right thing” and providing space to discuss adverse norms in the workplace.
- Ensure that women are well represented in decision-making and policy-making processes at all levels of world-of-work institutions; and support the organizing of women through trade unions, enterprise associations, cooperatives, self-help groups and online communities so that they can advocate for their priorities, including in the informal economy.
- Engage people who have power and influence to demand results for gender equality (such as leaders among workers’ and employers’ organizations, the government and other development and business partners, thought leaders and social cause champions); provide them with guidance to leverage their influence as change-makers.
- Engage local leaders and male champions to foster positive attitudes among men to uphold women’s rights; and provide support within communities where norms may be restrictive for women and girls, including on eliminating violence and harassment.



3.2 AMPLIFY WOMEN'S VOICE, REPRESENTATION AND LEADERSHIP



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If we get women's leadership right, then a lot of our other problems will start to be resolved.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

Women in the Asia-Pacific region have contributed in no small part to the region's momentous economic progress over the past few decades—as workers, entrepreneurs, migrants and unpaid caregivers. Nevertheless, they are often overlooked when it comes to their promotion to higher levels of decision-making. Persistent gender inequalities limit their access to leadership in the public and private spheres. Women's serious under-representation in leadership in the world of work may be one of the contributing factors holding back progress towards gender equality.

Harnessing women's voice, representation and leadership impacts every area of life and the economy. It facilitates the changing of cultural attitudes and gender norms, and it leads to stronger decision-making because it includes the perspectives of both women and men. Having more women alongside men in decision-making spaces in the world of work will enable more women (and men) to enjoy their rights.

Companies and organizations can reap the benefits of more gender-balanced workforces. And having more gender-diverse teams and company boards has demonstrated better financial outcomes, including revenue and net profit, than those dominated by one gender (see section 3.6). It can increase organizational performance, accountability and the allocation of resources towards implementing gender-equality measures. Creating a supportive workplace environment is essential for forging women leaders – in recognition that in addition to working outside of the home, women are largely expected to continue to be the main carers in the family and household.

For progress to happen, top leadership commitment is key (ILO, 2015c). Leaders of companies and organizations shaping the world of work should “walk the talk” and demonstrate that this issue is a priority for others to follow. Government and employers' and workers' organizations also have a critical contribution in demonstrating and replicating good practices to ensure a more gender diverse voice, representation and leadership in their organizations.

Workers' organizations are taking action. The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) established a campaign called “Count Us In” in response to a research finding that although women make up 40 per cent of trade union members, they only occupy 15 per cent of decision-making positions in their organizations.²⁶ The Count Us In campaign has dedicated, time-bound targets; including 80 per cent of ITUC General Council members to have at least 30 per cent of women in their decision-making bodies by the next ITUC Congress in 2018.

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Leadership is an issue we have to discuss if we want gender equity globally.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

26 See https://www.ituc-csi.org/count-us-in-600?debut_documents_600=6 [accessed 20 June 2018].

Employers' organizations across the region have been promoting the benefits of more women in business and leadership (ILO, 2015c). A recent ILO survey of employers' organizations found these top priorities for supporting work-family balance and greater equity in leadership and management: (i) flexible working hours for staff; (ii) informal mentoring activities that include junior and senior staff; (iii) a sexual harassment policy and associated grievance procedures; (iv) training for all staff in gender equality / diversity in the workplace; and (v) external promotion of the employers' organization as the employer of choice for suitably qualified women (ILO, 2017e).

Governments have been setting targets and establishing incentives towards closing this gap. The Government of India, for instance, made it mandatory through its Companies Act for national stock exchange-listed enterprises to have at least one female director. Still, the average share of women on corporate boards across the region remains small, at 28 per cent (McKinsey Global Institute, 2018).

To measure progress over time, data is essential. Several indices aim to track progress across countries in this area, such as the Gender Inequality Index,²⁷ the Global Gender Gap Index of the World Economic Forum and the Women, Business and the Law Index. However, there is no consolidated measure explicitly for the world of work.

Closing this gender gap is part of a wider spectrum of needed actions to overcome the structural gender inequalities in the world of work at all levels. The important role that men have as leaders, champions and supporters of a more equitable future of work is obvious. Increasing the voice, representation and leadership of women, alongside men, will be instrumental in promoting positive change for the future of work.

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When you have more women who are holding seats, not just at the table but in leadership, there is no limit to what they can contribute and achieve collectively.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

27 See <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GII> [accessed 20 June 2018].



RECOMMENDATIONS TO AMPLIFY WOMEN'S VOICE, REPRESENTATION AND LEADERSHIP IN THE WORLD OF WORK



GOVERNMENT



EMPLOYERS



WORKERS

○○○ OTHER STAKEHOLDERS



- Set targets and develop transitional positive-action measures and strategies to achieve gender parity at all levels in world-of-work organizations and in enterprises, including social partner organizations and in high-level meetings. Put in place transparent monitoring and accountability mechanisms and incentives; and link them to institutional and individual performance measures that can ensure progress on all levels.
- Design and implement workplace programmes for career counselling, leadership capacity building, networking, mentoring and sponsoring for women, including young women. Review systems and practices in place and ensure unbiased and transparent measures on promoting equal pay; on equal opportunity in recruitment, promotion and retention; and on support for workers to manage their work and family responsibilities, including maternity, paternity and parental leave, flexible working times and affordable childcare.
- Support the emergence of women leaders in government, employers' organizations, trade unions, cooperatives and other relevant associations through comprehensive capacity-building measures and by fostering commitment and male and female champions among decision-makers at all levels.
- Continue to conduct research and collect data on women in leadership at all levels and on what works to close these gaps in the world of work and its institutions. Disseminate the results and utilize the findings on how gender diversity is good for businesses, economies and societies. Promote gender diversity as a priority investment for sustainable development and a better future of work for all.



- Review workplace policies, such as for recruitment, pay, training, career progression and sexual harassment, with a view to identifying and undoing unconscious biases in processes that may be discriminatory towards women, including women with disabilities.
- Promote collective organizing, social dialogue and collective bargaining, with a view to ensure women's full representation, voice and leadership at all levels.



- Nurture future women leaders by updating educational institutions' curriculum to reflect positive gender role models for young women and men, setting targets and goals at the institutional level, developing gender-awareness training and coaching as well as performance indicators for teachers and trainers in educational and vocational training institutions towards achieving gender equality targets.



- Establish baselines, targets and time-bound measures across the region to track progress towards gender equality in the world of work; link them to the application of ILO Conventions on gender equality, CEDAW and the SDGs.

3.3 RECOGNIZE AND REDISTRIBUTE UNPAID CARE WORK



Unpaid care and domestic responsibilities affect all women in all countries. Because of gender norms and attitudes, women and girls spend more time in care responsibilities than men (women spend 262 minutes on average per day on unpaid care work in Asia and the Pacific, whereas men spend an average of 64 minutes per day (ILO, 2018c)), thus constraining their life opportunities. Gaps in women's labour force participation are costing millions of dollars to economies globally – at an estimated \$11 trillion (ILO, 2018c). This game changer works to share the burden of unpaid care responsibilities in the home, promote positive attitudes towards care work and render the workplace more family-friendly, which could have transformative impacts on attitudes that will support women at work.

Supporting women's and men's balancing of employment and family responsibilities through leave policies, childcare and elderly care services and through family-friendly workplace arrangements can yield long-term returns on investments for employers by reducing turnover rates and absenteeism and by increasing workers' labour market participation, motivation and productivity.

Redistributing care responsibilities more fairly in society will contribute to a shared understanding of the importance of care work by women and men and a better valuing of care work (paid and unpaid). It will enable men to spend more time caring for children. And it can have positive effects on labour force participation of women by enabling them to take up economic opportunities if they so choose.

Efforts to address unpaid care work must engage men and facilitate the changing of perceptions of gender roles. However, engaging more men in care work does not happen automatically when it is left to individual choices and is met with adverse social norms. This, again, means slow progress towards gender equality in the world of work as women continue to shoulder the lion's share of care responsibilities, which leaves them limited time to invest in the labour market and other activities. In this context, redistributing unpaid care work by promoting equality for workers with family responsibilities will be a game changer that can advance gender equality in the world of work.

Pregnancy and maternity leave are two ways of supporting unpaid care. Women have an important role in society by giving birth to future generations. However, access to maternity protection that protects female workers from discrimination and enables them to nurture their child adequately while they are on maternity leave is still a luxury for many women and their families. The Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183) provides guidance and outlines minimal standards in the world of work.

This is particularly important for the region, where most workers are in informal employment with no or limited security. It is critical for all countries to extend social protection to all persons. This will ensure that women and girls from poor or disadvantaged communities are not further disadvantaged in fulfilling their basic needs for survival. Simultaneously, progress needs to be made to counter the gender



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Sustenance of women in the labour market depends largely on effective policies in the workplace to reconcile work-family balance. Any policy discourse must include the social dimensions. Paid maternity leave, preschool, flexi hours, working from home.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

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In less than three years, men's participation rate for parental leave has increased rapidly. In 2017, one out of eight [persons] taking parental leave were men. Even though the number is still low compared to Sweden and Norway, the Korean Government will continue to take steps to increase men's role in childcare and housekeeping.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

imbalances in terms of care responsibilities. Redistributing unpaid care work is essential for women and girls to access education and jobs, and it is a major game changer for the future.

The Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156) provides guidance and recommended measures to promote equality for workers with family responsibilities. Parental leave is one such measure that can be introduced to promote a fairer distribution of care responsibilities. Parental leave policies enable working parents of both sexes to combine work and family responsibilities by facilitating a return to employment after family-related career breaks. These policies also provide incentives that enable women to invest in their education and obtain work experience at an early stage. They can be pivotal in a more equitable division of unpaid care work in the home by encouraging men to take a greater role in care responsibilities.

Paternity leave provisions are also becoming more common in the region, even in such socially conservative countries as Japan and the Republic of Korea. While paternity leave has yet to be enjoyed fully by men in Japan due to pressures from companies and colleagues who are not fully supportive,²⁸ it is being used. And the provisions in the Republic of Korea have contributed in bringing positive attitudes towards fatherhood and taking paternity leave. To ensure that workers with family responsibilities are not discriminated in recruitment and in their job, it is important to avoid putting the burden on employers or workers. As with maternity leave, paternity provisions should be funded through risk-pooling social insurance and public funds.

In addition to ensuring maternity protection for all women workers and introducing parental leave and paternity leave, interventions should also be made to promote flexible work hours and improve the availability of affordable quality care facilities for children or older persons. Providing care services is critical to address unpaid care. Plus, it will generate new and decent jobs in the care economy, which is a growth economy for the future.

²⁸ In 2005 in the Republic of Korea, just 208 men took paternity leave. In 2016, the number reached 7,616, albeit, still a fraction of the number of births. In Japan, the take-up rate of paternity remains low. For more details, see <https://qz.com/1084591/despise-japans-generous-paternity-leave-only-2-3-of-men-take-it-because-they-think-their-peers-would-disapprove/> [accessed 18 May 2018].



RECOMMENDATIONS TO RECOGNIZE AND REDISTRIBUTE CARE WORK



GOVERNMENT



EMPLOYERS



WORKERS

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS



- Invest in social infrastructure that provides universal paid maternity benefits and health care, including maternity protection, paternity and other parental leave, through national social protection floors¹ to all workers; and implement laws, policies and incentives that contribute to redistributing and sharing care work and supporting workers with family responsibilities to manage their care and work responsibilities.
- Scale up support to the ratification and implementation of ILO Conventions and Recommendations on maternity protection and family-friendly workplace policies (Conventions No. 183 and No. 156).
- Ensure accessible, professional and affordable, public care services for workers with children and other family members, while at the same time ensuring decent working conditions of care workers.
- Implement campaigns that contribute to fostering positive norms and attitudes towards men and women engaging in care responsibilities and valuing care work.



- Develop family-friendly workplace policies and practices to enable women and men to manage their work and family responsibilities (such as providing flexible working hours and parental leave); and incentivize managers and workers to create supportive workplaces and environments through performance indicators.



- Encourage and support maternity protection and family-friendly and flexible workplace policies through collective bargaining agreements; and ensure the inclusion of trained women in collective bargaining teams.



- Collect, monitor and analyse data to assess the engagement of women and men in care work; and develop and implement policies or measures for more men to take up paid and unpaid care work.

29. Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202).



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When we reviewed our programme and noticed that it was only boys participating, we had to stop and re-strategize our programme to ensure participation by girls.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

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In order to leave no one behind, more activities and more active labour market policies that decrease welfare dependency are required. Work and employment opportunities should be linked with welfare dependence and the implementation of anti-discrimination policy, which includes intersecting identities. Existing policies need to be enforced and other specific systems need to extend opportunities for people who are living in a minority or come to get a job. These systems should be harmonized or in line with the labour market policy.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

3.4 ENSURE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND TREATMENT OF WOMEN IN FUTURE JOBS AND SECTORS



Jobs and the workplace will evolve in the future of work. New job categories will open up new opportunities to render discrimination obsolete. Despite women's increasing education attainment, boys and men continue to dominate vocational training schools, fields of study and workplaces that have been traditionally male-dominated, such as anything related to science, technology, engineering and green jobs. It will also maintain the status quo in terms of occupational segregation by sex and gender wage gaps.

A small proportion of women in the region have opened pathways and succeeded in male-dominated fields, despite all the challenges. They are certainly to be celebrated because they have altered the social norms by demonstrating that it is equally possible for girls and women to be successful in the world of work. However, their entry into these male-dominated fields has largely been limited to those who have been lucky to receive support from their family in pursuing their aspirations even if it meant breaking social norms. Women's increased presence, alongside men, in these future-of-work sectors will have positive impact on closing gender gaps in quality jobs, on occupational segregation and on inclusive growth and decent work for all.

There is some positive momentum in the male-dominant technology-driven sectors, where there are talent shortages as well as a recognition of an absence of women. This will translate into even more positive momentum for the future hiring of female candidates.

To expedite progress towards gender equality, we cannot rely only on the few women who have made it despite all odds to open more opportunities for girls and women. It is time to change our status quo by reviewing systems and practices and to change the way we do things to actively encourage the participation of girls and women, including those with disabilities and from marginalized communities, in skills development and training opportunities for the jobs of the future.

Gender stereotypes that unfairly shape women's and men's opportunities in the labour market need to be overturned early on – in school years. Vocational training and higher educational institutions and public or private training or entrepreneurship programmes that are engaged in nurturing the future labour force need to adopt strategies and practices that serve the needs of more women. Considering that women are already disproportionately represented among workers, it is critical that opportunities to improve or upgrade skills are made available to women at different stages of life. This is important for women workers who have been working but struggling to improve their livelihoods, such as domestic workers or home-based workers, or those who will face the risk of job loss due to automation, such as women in the garment sector. Without progressive interventions to ensure their access to skills and training opportunities, they will not reach new decent work opportunities that may be available in the green economy or in STEM-related fields. And it is likely that women will continue to be provided with less attractive job opportunities in low-skill and low-pay sectors. This means that inequalities will continue to prevail.

Partnerships between the public and private sector in gender-sensitive skills forecasting and mapping can help ensure that young women take advantage of the new technology and knowledge-driven jobs of future labour markets. Government and research institutions can take an important role in disseminating information to girls and women on future job opportunities by tailoring their communication strategies to reach them. Employers can also explore new ways to reach more prospective women as well as men candidates in recruitment by eliminating discriminatory practices.

Additionally, ensuring women's voice and representation in policy design and decision-making bodies will help to highlight opportunities and actions that will lift the existing barriers to women's full and productive employment in the future of work. Embracing measures that encourage and ensure girls' and women's participation in non-traditional sectors of vocational and skills training and employment opportunities will be a game changer for ensuring that women are equipped for the future of work.

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It is important to ensure educational and skills development opportunities for migrant domestic workers and their children so that domestic workers can work towards better job prospects while their children can also prepare better for their future.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific





RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENSURE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND TREATMENT OF WOMEN



GOVERNMENT



EMPLOYERS



WORKERS



OTHER STAKEHOLDERS



- Address discriminatory gender stereotypes in the curricula of educational institutions and vocational training; and integrate core technology, digital literacy and entrepreneurial education for all students. And encourage both girls and boys to study and train in any field, irrespective of traditional occupational segregation by gender.
- Collect, track and report sex-disaggregated and gender-specific data by sector, job level (junior, mid and senior levels) and pay scale so that gaps and progress can be measured and occupational segregation can be overturned by world-of-work institutions, enterprises, organizations and educational institutions.
- Develop and implement strategies, including targets, to secure girls' and women's access to education, technical and vocational training, networking, mentoring, sponsoring and gender-responsive skills and entrepreneurship, especially for future jobs, STEM-related fields and green jobs. Redress barriers, such as limited awareness, restrictions on mobility, care responsibilities, scholarships and limited infrastructure (toilet and hostel facilities for both women and men, transport, etc.)



- Develop active labour market policies that provide capacity-building, career guidance, mentoring, upgrading of skills (including basic technology and digital literacy) and job integration support that targets young women and women who face multiple obstacles in the labour market or are at risk of becoming redundant.



- Work with banks, investors and venture capitalists to encourage capital investments that contribute to decent work, gender equality and a just transition to a greener economy, including women-led businesses and businesses using technology for social good; and ensure equitable outcomes for women and men.



- Work with the private sector to ensure that qualified women can compete and be considered, based on merit, for jobs and opportunities in fields with growth potential and in leadership roles in design, artificial intelligence and robotics. Promote procurement policies that provide incentives and support to women-led businesses to compete for opportunities in supply chains.



- Eliminate discriminatory recruitment practices, pay gaps, and unfair bias against women by improving legislative frameworks and strengthening enforcement, and rectifying unfair practices across the public and private sectors, using technologies where relevant to render information transparent and visible.

3.5 REINFORCE ACCOUNTABILITY FOR PROGRESS ON GENDER EQUALITY IN THE WORLD OF WORK



Delivering on gender equality will contribute towards the achievement of national development plans and legal frameworks, international conventions and the SDG commitments. Despite the significant efforts and some good progress across the region on gender equality, much of it has not delivered to its intended potential. There is often a gap between rhetoric, implementation, cooperation and resourcing. Where progress has been slow or even reversed, there seems to be little accountability to gender equality.

These gaps between commitments and implementation are costing economies and businesses and impeding the achievement of sustainable development. As highlighted in previous sections, there are substantial trade-offs to not closing the gender gaps. Greater gender equality is linked to the competitiveness of economies. And businesses, their productivity, innovation and efficiency are deeply affected by the lack of an inclusive pool of workers to choose from or by turnover rates due to discrimination.

The region's growing inequalities is a stark reminder that for progress to be made towards strong, inclusive and sustainable economies – to ensure that no one is left behind – more needs to be done. The adoption of a specific SDG (on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls) is testimony to the global recognition for action on closing all remaining gender gaps.

Most women and men would agree that gender equality is important to the future of work. However, when it comes to taking action, prioritizing it, resourcing it and following through, the results seem to be hit and miss.

Enforcing accountability towards gender equality in the world of work is imperative because women require partnership and support to overcome structural, cultural and representational barriers. Along with other measures upon which governments are assessed for their effectiveness in the world of work, such as the reduction of unemployment, new jobs created and productivity of enterprises, accountability to gender equality should be added. It would also mean that the performance of decision-makers would be assessed against the needs and interests of men and women. As the largest generator of jobs, enterprises have an important role in creating favourable conditions at the workplace level. A critical measure for ensuring accountability to gender equality at the enterprise level is through transparency; for example, on information regarding opportunities for skills development, promotions and remuneration.

The increase of indices that rank countries on gender equality (for example, the UNDP Gender Equality Index, the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index, the World Bank's Women, Business and the Law Index) is testament to a need for more data and measures to track progress and advocate for change. Although data gaps and comparability of data remain an issue, indices attempt to provide benchmarks and to compare countries in several gender-equality areas at the highest levels.

The call for more accountability is growing. The Oxfam International report *Reward Work, Not Wealth* (2018) posits that 82 per cent of all the wealth created over the past year went to the top 1 per cent – and nothing to the bottom 50 per cent. Movements such as #MeToo and TIME'S UP against violence, sexual assault and harassment have surfaced in China, India, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea and Pakistan, with cases of harassment in the workplace being denounced. These movements are poignant manifestations of dissatisfaction, as are women and men taking to the streets to protest unfair treatment or taking action to strike.

The development and implementation of gender-responsive laws, policies, measures, targets, indicators of success and minimal standards to uphold gender equality at the national, local and workplace levels are a practical means to track and evaluate gender equality in the world of work. These fall within the remit of national stakeholders, and their accountability around these commitments is essential to see more progress for the future of work.

Developing indicators and statistics to collect significant information on where to best allocate resources to infrastructure that support women's education and skill development as well as remove barriers to participation, like unpaid care and household work, are the essential first steps to effective policy development and resource allocation.

Many countries across the region have administered time-use surveys. Doing so provides important information to guide decisions on where to strategically allocate resources to reduce the burden of unpaid work done mainly by women. It is essential that national statistical offices utilize this data to inform national and subnational decision-making. The ILO and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) recently reported on time-use surveys in the region and called for integrating such surveys within national statistical office data collection processes, based on guidance from the International Conference of Labour Statisticians' Resolution on Statistics of Work, Employment and Labour Underutilization (ILO and UNDP, 2018). What is equally important is that representatives from women's machineries and statistical offices develop joint national action plans on the collection, analysis and dissemination of data pertaining to the Ministerial Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment indicators and the regional core set of gender indicators,³⁰ with corresponding time frames and monitoring and evaluation for implementation.

Gender budgeting efforts in Asia demonstrate that the practice is sustainable but only if finance ministries "own" the process and obtain adequate support from all stakeholders, including civil society, parliamentarians, academics and women. For example, in India, the Ministry of Finance (with the support of policy think tanks), the Ministry of Women and Child Development, United Nations entities and civil society organizations promoting gender budgeting worked together to institutionalize gender budgeting at both the national and subnational levels. That gender budgeting also led to gender mainstreaming within the budget, with more traditionally gender-neutral sectors adopting the practice and reporting to the Ministry of Finance on their efforts to promote gender equality through fiscal policies. The prime involvement of the Ministry of Finance has provided a technical space to translate the conceptual and micro-level prescriptions to a simple and practical exercise within the budget process.

An International Monetary Fund paper (Chakraborty, 2016) emphasized that although gender budgeting has the potential to transform gender equality in the region, the results are still modest in most countries, except for India, the Philippines and the Republic of Korea, where the efforts have led to substantive fiscal policies. It was found that gender budgeting also helped women activists and civil society organizations advocate for better budgetary allocations for gender equality and equity concerns.

30 The Ministerial Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment was adopted at the Beijing+20 Regional Review Meeting in November 2014, and the regional core set of gender indicators was endorsed by the ESCAP Committee on Statistics in March 2015.

Partnership and collaboration across ministries and other bodies working on gender equality at the national level is imperative. Too often, coordination at the national level is weak. It should be further strengthened to achieve stronger results on gender equality. A positive example of cooperation at the national level is the Magna Carta of Women in the Philippines, which seeks to eliminate discrimination against women by recognizing, protecting, fulfilling and promoting the rights of Filipino women in all spheres of society and is signed by all government departments. While its implementation still requires work, the partnership and collaboration between the government departments is a strong sign of commitment to gender equality.

The ILO Bali Declaration Brief³¹ calls for accountability, with the ILO pledging to continue working with governments and social partners in the region to promote gender-responsive and inclusive programming and policy responses.

The Asia and the Pacific region has done much work to ratify ILO Conventions and standards relevant to gender equality. Most countries in the region have also ratified the CEDAW. These normative measures are clear steps to improved national frameworks. However, there is a mismatch between commitments and implementation. Countries that still need to ratify relevant ILO Conventions and standards should form tripartite committees to conduct research and collect data that indicate which laws and policies should be changed or introduced to ensure that the national legislative framework is in line with ILO Conventions and how relevant legislation could be strengthened. Tripartite stakeholders should then engage in joint advocacy campaigns, awareness-raising activities, network building and training of the general public. Countries that have already ratified relevant ILO Conventions and standards should develop monitoring and evaluation tools for tripartite stakeholders to annually measure the effectiveness of associated legislation. Tools could include data collection, case study analysis and interviews with workers' associations, employer representatives and women workers.

31 See http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/briefingnote/wcms_613497.pdf [accessed 18 May 2018].



RECOMMENDATIONS TO STRENGTHEN ACCOUNTABILITY FOR PROGRESS ON GENDER EQUALITY IN THE WORLD OF WORK



GOVERNMENT



EMPLOYERS



WORKERS



ILO



OTHER STAKEHOLDERS



- Collect, analyse, share and use sex disaggregated and gender-specific data for evidence-based policy and monitoring of gender equality in the world of work.
- Carry out research on what works in advancing positive attitudes and accountability towards gender equality and reward or recognize good practices.



- Explore further the use of new technologies as tools to strengthen information sharing and accountability.



- Develop joint ministerial and tripartite national action plans that prioritize, fund and monitor the implementation of gender-equality measures, using gender auditing and gender budgeting led by the finance ministry (or its equivalent); and consider establishing “scorecards” that rate implementation against commitments.
- Develop, allocate fund and implement a national strategy and/or plans of action to promote gender equality in the world of work, and monitor them regularly for progress through a tripartite plus mechanism that includes women’s machinery and other relevant development partners, and hold duty bearers accountable for effective implementation.



- Enhance the capacity of world-of-work institutions, including ministries of labour, workers’ and employers’ organizations and other relevant development partners, to reform discriminatory laws and regulations; and promote ratification, application and regular monitoring of progress with data to advance effective application of the ILO gender equality Conventions (Conventions No. 111, No. 100, No. 183 and No. 156) and CEDAW. Report annually on progress and planning for closing the remaining gaps (including through SDG 5 and SDG 8); and highlight good practices both nationally and regionally.
- Obtain commitment from all line ministries, tripartite partners (employers, workers and government agencies) and women’s machinery when formulating any policy or programme for sustainable changes to advance gender equality in the world of work. Consult employers’ and workers’ organizations, relevant civil society organizations, parliamentarians, academics, United Nations entities, policy think tanks and, most importantly, women.



- Support organization of women workers and women entrepreneurs to enhance their representation and voice to advocate for their issues and demand accountability.

CONCLUSION

Despite significant challenges, there are real opportunities to improve the lives of women in the future of work. Women in the region have already proven their role as change agents for inclusive, fairer and more egalitarian societies. As family members, workers, entrepreneurs, migrants, grassroots leaders and business and political leaders, they have been the driving force for the profound economic transformations in the Asia-Pacific region over the past few decades.

Paradoxically, women's labour market position remains weak in all countries, across all indicators. Discriminatory norms and institutional practices provide formidable obstacles to their economic empowerment and the full enjoyment of their rights. This disadvantage is compounded by other markers of discrimination, including those based on ethnicity, caste, age, indigenous status and disability. Women from rural areas are also among the persons most at risk of "being left behind" (in the language of the SDGs).

None of these complex issues – from ageing populations and declining labour forces to climate change, poverty and social exclusion – can be managed effectively without strengthening the economic empowerment of women. The region's competitiveness and future prosperity depend on it.

Gender equality matters profoundly, first as part of the universal case for basic human rights and second as the catalyst for achieving economic and social progress and sustainable development. By maintaining the status quo, it will be decades before gender gaps are closed (Rubery and Koukiadaki, 2016).

Large scale research continues to reinforce the business case for women's economic empowerment, enabling enterprises to tap into a larger pool of talent and innovation and raise productivity and profitability. The innovations, solutions and perspectives that gender diversity brings to organizations and businesses can sharpen their competitiveness in the faces of the challenges and the rapidly evolving demands of economies in the region.

There is overwhelming evidence too, that gender equality is essential for achieving wide-ranging social goals, such as poverty eradication and human development. Countries can no longer afford to lose out on the gender dividend of greater equality. Thus, closing gender gaps in the world of work should remain a top priority to achieve gender equality by 2030.

Forging a better future for all is within our reach. Norms and institutions can and do change with concerted effort. While progress has been slow to date, greater leadership and accountability at all levels of labour institutions, organizations and enterprises should encourage progress on gender equality in the world of work and uphold the aspirations of hundreds of millions of women and men in the countries of the region.

Delivering on gender equality is a shared responsibility, especially among people who can influence decisions to dedicate resources for the more effective implementation of equality-based legislation and policies. This is a strong call for action to collectively push for equality in the world of work.

More coordination, collaboration and targeted efforts, such as those proposed in this report, can contribute to closing the remaining gender gaps and opening future opportunities for women across the region.

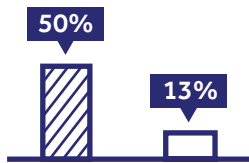


ANNEXES

OPPORTUNITIES AND PRACTICAL MEASURES FOR WOMEN IN THE FUTURE OF WORK IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC



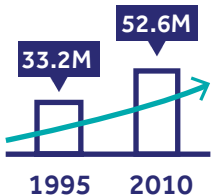
Over 80% of countries in the Asia-Pacific region have ratified the Equal Remuneration Convention (No. 100)



For Southeast Asia, the average share of working women who are self-employed is 50%, compared to 13% in the OECD region



Still, in Asia and the Pacific, the gender pay gap is between **10-30%**



The number of domestic workers in the region nearly doubled between 1995 and 2010



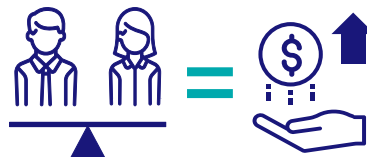
Only 10% of domestic workers in the region were covered by labour protection to the same extent as other workers



83% of domestic workers in the region are women



In many countries in Asia, girls outperform boys in STEM subjects. However, the share of female graduates in science programmes still stands between 59% in Malaysia & 11% in Cambodia



Companies with gender diversity in management teams have better financial returns & business outcomes than those with big gender gaps



FACTS AND FIGURES FROM THE REGION

Many countries, such as China, Japan, Republic of Korea, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Australia and Viet Nam, rely on expert panels and submissions from tripartite partners to establish national minimum wages. (ILO, undated).

All ASEAN country members have minimum wage rates, with Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines having the highest rates (ILO, 2017c).

Most countries in ASEAN set rates per internal regions. Hence, there is often a wide variation in the rates within a country, which can encourage investment in disadvantaged areas.

1. MINIMUM WAGE

Women in the region are often concentrated in low income work and sectors, and gender pay inequality is exacerbated by the lack of weak bargaining power by women.

WHY ARE MINIMUM WAGES IMPORTANT FOR WOMEN IN THE REGION?

Minimum wages are important for low-income women and men because they set a floor to prevent low standards and thus reduce working poverty. Because women are over-represented in the lower part of wage distribution and tend to have weak or no collective bargaining coverage, minimum wages are expected to make a positive contribution to reducing the gender pay gap. Minimum wages not only reduce gender pay gaps but also facilitate greater labour force participation by women from low-income households (Berg, 2015). Minimum wages also stimulate consumption and thus aggregate demand.

Setting minimum wages can be contentious since it requires balancing the needs of employers for flexibility and the needs of workers' organizations to ensure protection of rights. The opportunity cost of not having minimum wages is high though, leaving large segments of often women-dominated sectors poorly covered by decent wages and making the gender pay gap even more intractable. It is essential therefore that transparent tripartite dialogue mechanisms be set up to fix minimum wages. The provisions of the Minimum Wage Fixing Convention, 1970 (No. 131) and the related Recommendation, 1970 (No. 135) provide guidance on establishing minimum wages.

In some cases, minimum wage policies target specific groups of workers, such as domestic workers. By working on low-paying, feminised sectors, minimum wages can significantly improve the quality of work for large numbers of workers. The principle of equal pay for work of equal value should be enshrined in all minimum wage policies (ILO, 2013).

Evidence suggests that the complexity of a minimum wage system has an impact on compliance. Analysis by Cowgill and Huynh (2016), for instance, found that where wages vary according to sector and/or occupation, non-compliance was higher than in simpler systems, such as those in Cambodia and Viet Nam (ILO, 2017d).

IMPACT OF MINIMUM WAGES ON THE FUTURE OF WORK FOR WOMEN IN THE REGION

Research is increasingly showing the positive impacts of minimum wage setting. For example, evidence from Indonesia has found that minimum wages reduced the gender pay gap among production workers (Hallward-Dreiemeier, Rijkers and Waxman, 2015).

Without strong legislative efforts and tripartite dialogue on ensuring minimum wages in female-dominated sectors, there will be little progress towards equal pay in the immediate future. Conversely, ensuring a fair floor for wages can have a considerable impact on reducing gender pay gaps and increasing the incomes of women trapped in low-paid and poorly protected work.

As countries move to meet their commitments under the SDGs, minimum wage setting, particularly for workers in low-paid, female-dominated sectors, is likely to increase. It will be an important way to “progressively achieve and sustain income growth for the bottom 40 per cent of the population by 2030” as specified in target 10 of SDG 8.

Minimum wages have proven effective in reducing gender pay gaps and working poverty because women are over-represented in low wage work where collective bargaining is weak. Minimum wages are also a means to encourage the labour force participation of women and can stimulate consumption and aggregate demand.

PRACTICAL MEASURES FOR INTRODUCING AND ENFORCING MINIMUM WAGE



GOVERNMENT



EMPLOYERS



WORKERS

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- Ensure female-dominated sectors are included in minimum wage setting (such as domestic work and agriculture) and that adequate incentives and sanctions for non-compliance are available. Sector-based minimum wage rates should be based on the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.
- Ensure the representation of women workers when setting minimum wages through tripartite mechanisms.
- Ensure the availability of sex-disaggregated data at the national and enterprise levels to provide comprehensive information on wages for evidence-based policy-making.
- Build the capacity and awareness of women (and men) workers in the informal economy to advocate for their rights to access decent living wages.
- Ratify the Minimum Wage Fixing Convention, 1970 (No. 131) and the Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981 (No. 154).



FACTS AND FIGURES FROM THE REGION

China has committed to creating 13 million clean energy jobs by 2020 through a 4,361 billion yuan investment in renewable energy (ClimateGroup, 2017).

In India in 2017, 1.6 million workers were in the solar photovoltaic sector, although the data are not disaggregated by sex (IREA, 2017).

The Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing network estimates there are 20 million waste pickers globally, with a large proportion in Asia. Many are women and most are informal workers with poor working conditions and little income (see <http://www.wiego.org/informal-economy/occupational-groups/waste-pickers>).

2. GREEN JOBS

As climate change impacts are cutting deeper into the region, countries are stepping up to the challenge of transforming economies to low carbon, non-polluting sustainable development. It is essential that women are able to be key agents for change and are able to access the new jobs in green sectors.

WHY ARE GREEN JOBS IMPORTANT FOR WOMEN IN THE REGION?

The job growth potential in the greening of economies in the region is enormous. In China, for example, green investments have accelerated growth and employment creation, with new jobs now numbering in the millions. Renewable energy, such as hydropower, wind power and solar photovoltaic, are expected to grow exponentially in the next few decades as countries fulfil their commitments to the Paris climate accord and to the SDGs.

For women and the future of work, jobs that are green are central to sustainable development and resource productivity. They respond to the global challenges of environmental protection, economic development and social inclusion. Such jobs create decent employment opportunities, enhance resource efficiency and build a low-carbon sustainable society. A just transition for all means that targeted actions for women's equal participation in the green economy needs to be designed hand in hand with mitigation and adaptation measures. At the same time, large segments of the women's workforce will need to depend on environment-sensitive industries and sectors for creating environmental sustainability and decent work (ILO, 2018c).

Targeting gender equality as an integral part of climate action can help achieve both gender equality and effective mitigation and adaptation measures. In the rural economy, for instance in agriculture and forestry, women, including indigenous³² and tribal women, already have important roles as workers and entrepreneurs. A just transition in such sectors opens enormous avenues to strengthen the participation of women in decision-making across all levels, to secure sustainable livelihoods, improve working conditions and advance traditional and local knowledge necessary for strong climate responses (ILO, 2017b).

Millions of workers, many of them women, already engage in waste recycling. A challenge remains to improve their working conditions and facilitate their transition towards formalization because most work in this sector is weakly regulated, poorly paid and often hazardous.

Climate change impacts and the growth potential of green jobs are likely to generate significant labour market changes in the future. A green divide can occur, however, if women are not participating adequately in the opportunities that the transition to a low-carbon economy ushers in. As such it is essential that

32 Nearly 15 per cent of the world's poor are indigenous people, even though indigenous people constitute an estimated 5 per cent of the world's population. At the same time, up to 80 per cent of the more than 370 million indigenous people worldwide are spread across Asia and the Pacific, a region particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The World Bank estimates that, of the 100 million people across the world who could be pushed into poverty due to climate change, 13 million of them in Eastern Asia and the Pacific could fall into poverty by 2030. This implies that indigenous people could be worst affected. For more details see ILO, 2017d.

women do not miss out on new opportunities. Training in relevant skills and the provision of work opportunities will be needed for new jobs. For example, the Grameen Shakti Solar Home Systems in Bangladesh trains rural women as solar photovoltaic technicians and maintenance workers to set up their own energy enterprises.

IMPACT OF GREEN JOBS ON THE FUTURE OF WORK FOR WOMEN IN THE REGION

With the impacts of climate change being felt around the region, it becomes even more urgent to develop a green transformation of economies for a less precarious future. Women are key agents of change in this process and stand to gain tremendously in terms of new jobs – with the right policy mix.

Opportunities need to be expanded for women to engage in skills training for new jobs because there will not be an automatic transfer between “brown” jobs (polluting and energy inefficient) and green jobs. Gender-sensitive labour market forecasting will need to be strengthened so that women benefit from the expansion of jobs in green sectors.

Climate change impacts are already being faced in the region with rising sea levels and increased weather events. Climate change threatens to widen existing gender gaps in the world of work, but as countries step up to address the greening of economies, women stand to gain considerably with training in new jobs and skills to support a just transition to environmental sustainability.

PRACTICAL MEASURES FOR GREEN JOBS



GOVERNMENT



EMPLOYERS



WORKERS

OTHERS



- Conduct research to identify sectors expected to grow through investments in green jobs and other areas. Such research can feed into the development of businesses and national measures for retraining and upskilling of women.



- Develop active labour market policies and infrastructural development programmes that prioritize the creation of gender-responsive community assets and that target women for their increased participation.
- Highlight and document for dissemination the work of women as change agents in mitigating climate change impacts in the region.



- Target women from poor communities to engage with green entrepreneurial activities; and open opportunities for their access to public procurement.

- Use the gender-responsive COP23 framework and the SDGs as the basis for national planning strategies for a just transition to determine critical areas.



- Ensure the linkages and complementarity between green jobs, decent work and gender equality and improve working conditions in existing green sectors dominated by women, including the waste sector, and supporting their transition to formalization.



- Support the organization of women workers engaged in recycling and waste management, and build their capacity to advocate for their rights, participate in the decision-making processes and work on collective solutions. Sector-based minimum wage rates should be based on the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.



FACTS AND FIGURES FROM THE REGION

South-Eastern Asia and the Pacific host the largest share of migrant domestic workers in the world, at 24 per cent (ILO, 2015b).

Only 12 per cent of domestic workers are covered by minimum wage protection in the region (Dasgupta and Verick, 2016).

The Philippines is the only country in the region to have ratified the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) (see table 4 for ratifications of ILO conventions on equality in Asia and the Pacific).

“

When you look at demography, the care economy is probably one of fastest-growing sectors and subsectors of the economy in our region as well as in the world.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

3. PAID CARE WORK

Paid care work has always been undervalued and weakly protected by the law because it is work that is associated with the gender division of labour in the home.

WHY IS PAID CARE WORK IMPORTANT FOR WOMEN THE REGION?

The paid care sector is a significant source of job creation in the region. Demand is likely to grow further due to the needs of an ageing population. However, as in all regions, there are considerable gender inequalities in the sector and large numbers of women concentrated in paid care work sectors, including migrant workers.

IMPACT OF PAID CARE WORK ON THE FUTURE OF WORK FOR WOMEN IN THE REGION

The ILO report *Care Work and Care Jobs for the Future of Decent Work* features data on public expenditure for selected care policies. The data reveals that in countries that invest more in a combination of care policies to offset the care contingencies of the working-age population – in case of maternity, sickness and disability – the employment rates of women unpaid carers aged 18–54 years tend to be higher than those in countries investing comparatively less.

The same report also presents simulations of increased investments in paid care work, which has the potential to generate a total of 475 million jobs globally by 2030. This would be 117 million jobs in addition to what would result from the current status quo level of investments.

A similar study conducted by the International Trade Union Confederation (2017) found that increasing public investment in emerging economies in the care sector would generate substantial increases in employment and contribute to economic growth. The study found that if 2 per cent of GDP was invested in the health and care sector, it would generate increases in overall employment, ranging from 1.2 per cent to 3.2 per cent, which would mean that nearly 24 million new jobs would be created in China, 11 million in India and nearly 2.8 million in Indonesia.

The study noted that in addition to creating new jobs, public investment in social infrastructure, specifically in health and care work, has the potential to tackle some of the central economic and social problems confronting countries in emerging economies. These include the under-provision of affordable and high-quality health care overall, especially for low-income households and people living in remote regions; problems linked to demographic changes, including population ageing which is typically associated with growing health needs; urbanization and the erosion of extended families and family care leading to growing needs for more formal provision of child and elder care; and continuing gender inequality in paid and unpaid work. The report pointed out that public investment in social infrastructure also has the potential to reduce the burden of unpaid domestic work, if structured appropriately. It could therefore reduce many barriers to women's participation in the labour market and thus eventually

rebalance the gender employment gap. Such investment could assist countries in their efforts to achieve the SDGs, particularly those relating to ensuring healthy lives (SDG 3); achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls (SDG 5); management of water and sanitation (SDG 6); and decent work (SDG 8).

Informal employment varies from about a third of all employment in China to almost three quarters in Indonesia and more than four-fifths in India, countries characterized with high levels of self-employment and family help and where women are more often found in informal jobs than men. Formal provision of high-quality childcare and long-term care for older persons is virtually non-existent in those countries. Family members, especially female members, are expected to look after the needs of dependent relatives. ILO estimations (using 2013 data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) revealed that to reach levels of formal long-term care provision for elderly people found in higher-income countries, the number of formal workers required would be 2.7 million in India (up from close to nil) and 3.6 million in China (almost three times the current workforce). Thus, investment in care – childcare, elder care, health and education – is critical both for jobs and enabling services to raise women's participation in direct employment. Unlocking the potential offered by many millions of women joining the formal workforce builds stronger economies and wealthier households.

As the region continues its ageing trajectory, paid care work can generate new jobs for both women and men and, with the right policy mix, can ensure decent work that reflects the value that societies should place on it.

“

As these care jobs become more and more vital to our economies, we need to place a premium on them. We need to take up the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.

Participant at the ILO Regional Conference on Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific

PRACTICAL MEASURES FOR CARE WORK



GOVERNMENT



EMPLOYERS



WORKERS

OTHERS



- Assess and reform legislation so that care workers are recognized as workers and have the same rights in labour laws such as pay and working conditions, and access to social protection schemes.
- Ensure that sufficient education and skills development opportunities are provided to migrant domestic workers and their children, including in destination countries.
- Develop policies to create quality jobs in the care economy and encourage both women and men to take up these jobs.
- Promote decent work for care professionals, including domestic workers.

- Ratify and implement relevant instruments, such as the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) and the ILO core Conventions.



- Enact laws, policies and comprehensive poverty alleviation strategies to eliminate child domestic work.



- Support care workers to organize to strengthen their representation and voice, and advocate for the rights of domestic workers including the rights to organize in migration destination countries.

4. TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE

While the potential job displacement effects of technological changes have been discussed in section 2, technological changes also offer great potential to support the economic empowerment of women across many sectors.

For women to benefit from technological advances however, it is important to frame the process of job reduction and job creation in a way that shifts women from largely low-skilled work to higher-skilled work, with appropriate training and re-training measures for all women, including those with disabilities.

WHY IS TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE IMPORTANT FOR WOMEN IN THE REGION?

The impacts of technological innovations on paid and unpaid housework are numerous across many sectors.

Potential benefits of technology include alleviating household burdens. Labour-saving technologies in the home may free up more time for women to engage in paid work. Additionally, the empowerment effects of access to the online world are numerous, including enabling women to access a range of information, such as job opportunities, legal rights, market opportunities, reproductive health and other relevant issues that were previously inaccessible. There is considerable scope to bolster labour market entry by women, including women with disabilities and from rural areas through new technologies.

There is also potential to increase women's labour market entry by accessing new employment opportunities offered with flexible work environments made possible with digitalization. Telework, digital platform work, offshore data processing and administrative services offer a potential for job growth, but the conditions of work, pay and opportunities for advancement will need to be closely monitored.

CARE ECONOMY

In the care economy, technology offers potential to reduce the burden of care work and improve working conditions in paid care work. Technological advances

and infrastructure development can lessen the burdens of unpaid care work, including water collection and firewood gathering for women and girls in remote and rural communities. Household devices may free up greater time for engagement in income-related work and for leisure (FAO, 2016).

For paid care workers, such as domestic workers, mobile phones and social media platforms like WhatsApp Messenger, Facebook and Viber have become integral for support, particularly for migrant domestic workers. When migrant domestic workers are overseas, these social media platforms become an emotional lifeline to connect with other workers from countries of origin and overcome workplace isolation in private homes. If migrant workers find themselves in an irregular or abusive situation, they can reach out to their virtual communities, like a welfare net, especially if they are ineligible for health care, education and banking systems in destination countries. Other workers can provide food or fundraise for repatriation costs.³³

These social media platforms are being used by some organizers to mobilize and unionize workforces, expand awareness of their rights and highlight violations. Because migrant domestic worker unions are typically illegal in destination countries and meeting in person can be difficult and dangerous, these texting apps have become crucial.³⁴

GIG ECONOMY

One area of work that has seen impressive growth in the past decade is the gig economy. It can be a job creator and an option for people unable to find stable employment, particularly for unemployed graduates, many of whom are women. It provides a degree of autonomy for workers in controlling their schedules and deciding the price of their services. Demand and supply in the gig labour market may be territory-based, nationally based or global. Within the region and in line with the expanding services sector, it has the potential to considerably boost productivity, consumption and employment.

The gender impacts of the gig economy are in the early stage of analysis. But there is great potential to overcome occupational segregation. It can offer

31 See <http://idwfed.org/en> [accessed 18 May 2018].

32 See <http://idwfed.org/en> [accessed 18 May 2018].

work to women who have been unable to find jobs in male-dominated traditional sectors. And it offers a degree of gender-neutral anonymity (where gender is not a category in the online platform, although this is not always the case). Online work can also offer a degree of flexibility for women, which enables them to balance their household responsibilities and remunerative work, though it will be important going forward that the potential for flexibility in balancing family responsibilities does not turn into the advent of the 24-hour virtual working day, which makes arranging childcare and other responsibilities more complex (Barzilay and Ben-David, 2017; Webster, 2016).

Because the gig economy sometimes sits in an ambiguous employment relationship, and the numbers of online task workers competing against each other is huge, it will be important to align policy responses with the gig economy through tripartite consultation and codes of conduct with employers' organizations to ensure that exploitive work practices do not occur. It is also important to ensure that the emerging gender pay gap in the sector does not increase. Trade unions should engage with online contractors to help ensure that workers' basic rights are protected.

While the task of providing legal protection for work that takes place online and through mobile apps, and which may be global in operation, is difficult and complex, some countries have been stepping up to the challenge to transform this type of work and remove the ambiguities in the employment relationship. For example, tripartite partners in Singapore have developed guidelines on employment of contract employees, while the Government of Malaysia recently passed the Self-Employment Social Security Act (2017) which can be applied to online contractors. These types of responses can help assist in the protection of workers in the gig economy.

IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE ON THE FUTURE OF WORK FOR WOMEN IN THE REGION

Technological changes are fuelling job growth in a number of sectors, often in highly-skilled, knowledge based work. They therefore represent an important opportunity to shift women's concentration in vulnerable low-skilled work to higher value added work, as well as contribute to alleviating household work burdens.

Technology offers many benefits for women: from labour saving devices in the home which may free up time to engage in paid work, to the empowerment effects of online information on legal rights, job opportunities, market opportunities, health and reproductive health information that may have been previously inaccessible. There is scope, too, to bolster women's labour market entry by accessing new employment opportunities offered with flexible work environment made possible with digitalization.

Technology and social media also offers opportunities for previously isolated groups of workers such as domestic workers and migrant workers, to organize and access information.



FACTS AND FIGURES FROM THE REGION

An estimated 15 million workers in India are categorized as freelancers (though not all freelancers work in the gig economy) who represent about 40 per cent of the global freelancing business, although the data is not disaggregated by sex (*Business Today*, 2016).

A Ministry of Manpower survey in Singapore found an estimated 200,000 freelancers (not all in the gig economy) in 2017. The data were not disaggregated by sex (Seow, 2017).

In the Republic of Korea, the gig economy has grown significantly in recent years, encompassing taxi services, food delivery, home care, domestic work, car washing and other platforms (Employment Law Alliance, 2017).



PRACTICAL MEASURES FOR HARNESSING THE ENABLING POWER OF TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE



GOVERNMENT



EMPLOYERS



WORKERS

OTHERS



- Work with technology design teams to create solutions that are geared towards social good and addressing inequalities (including through “hackathons”).
- Invest in labour-saving technology, especially in the care economy.
- Ensure women’s access to training, skills development and lifelong learning in the technology sectors.
- Strengthen social dialogue to find durable public-private solutions to the future employment displacements in the female-dominated sectors threatened by technological innovations.
- Ensure dissemination of information about new technologies, such as blockchain, among women and disadvantaged communities, highlighting its potential empowerment effects.

CARE ECONOMY



GOVERNMENT



EMPLOYERS



WORKERS

OTHERS



- Support organizational efforts and awareness of rights by ensuring that the availability of affordable, high-speed Internet, mobile phones and the development of apps are linked to information on workers’ rights and recourse to justice.
- Use technological innovations and infrastructural development to alleviate unpaid care work burdens.
- Ensure that technologies that offset physical labour are used to open new job opportunities for women, including those with disabilities.
- Develop gender-sensitive research that analyses the employment impacts, the effects on occupational segregation, gender pay gaps and the division of labour in the home.



GIG ECONOMY



GOVERNMENT



EMPLOYERS



WORKERS

OTHERS



- Consider whether legislation/regulatory frameworks need to be reformed to cover the gig economy where the employment relationship falls outside of traditional employment relationships. Reform needs to be undertaken through tripartite processes.
- Ensure that rights to social protection are universal through a social protection floor, irrespective of the type of work that people engage in.



- Develop codes of conduct for online platforms, based on principles of equal pay for work of equal value, non-discrimination and transparent pay scales as well as entitlement to specific labour rights.



- Utilize new technologies to reach virtual workforces, raise awareness about and build mechanisms to promote and protect their rights, and organize workers.



FACTS AND FIGURES FROM THE REGION

Globally, only 30 per cent of researchers in science, technology and innovation are women. In the region, only the Philippines and Thailand have gender parity in these areas (UNESCO, 2017).

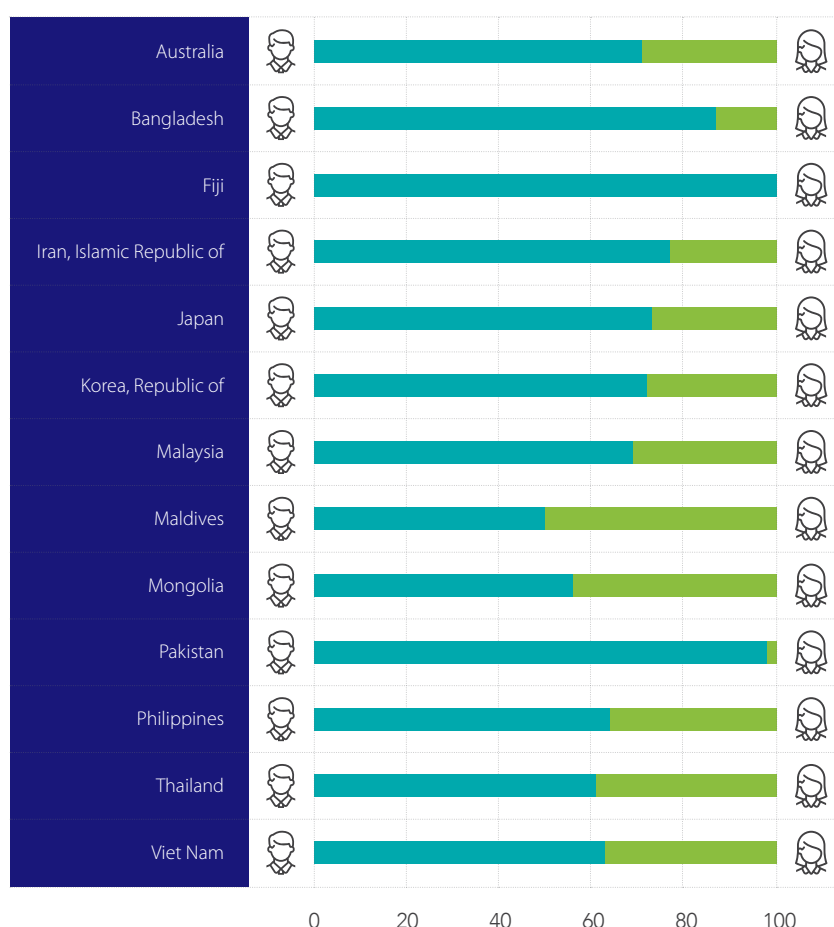
Only 6 per cent of software developers and mobile phone application developers globally are women (ITU, 2016).

In the Republic of Korea and despite a large proportion of women entering higher education (at 67.9 per cent), the numbers of women entering engineering remain low, at 15.4 per cent (UNESCO, 2015).

5. WORK IN THE FIELD OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICS

Occupational segregation in STEM fields remains pervasive throughout the region, with striking gender gaps between women and men in high-demand, highly-skilled, knowledge-based and technology-driven work (figure 8).

FIGURE 8. Female and male workers in information and communications jobs, 2016



Source: ILO, ILO Stat <http://www.ilo.org/ilostat> [accessed 20 June 2018].

WHY IS STEM IMPORTANT FOR WOMEN IN THE REGION?

Harnessing women's talents and innovations by enabling access to STEM-related fields will reap considerable dividends for women and enable the region to tackle many broader challenges, including climate change, health epidemics, persistent poverty and inequality while contributing to sustainable development and mitigating these threats. Solutions can be found not only in policy development but in technological innovations, of which STEM expertise is a major component.

IMPACT OF MORE WOMEN IN STEM ON THE FUTURE OF WORK IN THE REGION

The need to increase women's participation in these fields is an integral part of the solutions to regional challenges while also breaking down occupational segregation and broadening women's economic opportunities. Encouraging women and girls into STEM fields offers a future that will engage more women in high-skilled, better-paid work and contribute to tackling challenges of global competitiveness.

Gender differences in STEM fields do not start in the labour market but in the earliest levels of schooling. Thus, early and targeted intervention through education can greatly facilitate girls' and women's increased participation in STEM fields. Strategies include changes in curriculum to ensure STEM subjects are not catered towards boys, removing gender

stereotyping, strengthening gender-responsive career guidance, mentoring, new teaching methods and promoting female role models and teachers in STEM.

In the Philippines, one of the best-performing countries in Asia on gender equality, a holistic approach covers curricula reform and training of teachers in STEM subjects that reinforce breaking down gender stereotypes and gender roles.

Harnessing women's talents and skills in STEM fields will reap considerable benefits, enabling women to access demand-driven jobs in rapidly changing economies, breaking down occupational segregation and increasing the region's global competitiveness. It will also be an essential part of enabling the region to address the myriad of broader challenges and the imperatives of sustainable development.

PRACTICAL MEASURES TO ACHIEVE GENDER BALANCE IN STEM-RELATED FIELDS



GOVERNMENT



EMPLOYERS



WORKERS

OTHERS



- Facilitate the entry of young women into STEM-related fields through quotas, targets, scholarships and other incentives in skills training institutions.
- Encourage girls into STEM-related fields through reform of curricula, removal of stereotypes, improved gender-sensitive teaching, career guidance and the promotion of female role models.



- Support female school leavers and graduates in the job search process through engagement with the private sector, in such areas as apprenticeships, internships, job opportunities, mentoring and career support for young women to gain a foothold in STEM-related work.



- Create work-family balance to encourage women to remain in the labour market through a comprehensive range of family-friendly policies.
- Ensure there are lifelong learning and upskilling opportunities in the workplace.



- Ensure principles of equal pay for work of equal value are respected in STEM-related fields; and supported through policies and processes such as collective bargaining agreements.



FACTS AND FIGURES FROM THE REGION

In 11 of 24 countries surveyed in the region, women accounted for most of all tertiary graduates and students (ILO, 2015a).

An ILO global survey found that in around 55 per cent of the companies surveyed in the region, women represented 10 per cent or less of senior managers (ILO, 2015a).

Women represent little more than 5 per cent of CEOs of publicly listed companies. And based on available data, women account for more than 5 per cent of CEOs in only three countries in the region: China, New Zealand and Viet Nam (ILO, 2015a).

6. WOMEN IN BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT

Women are under-represented in leadership positions in the enterprises and economies of the region, leading to a significant opportunity cost for the region's competitiveness.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR WOMEN TO BE IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS IN THE REGION?

Women's potential as leaders, innovators, managers and CEOs is largely untapped in the region, with discriminatory attitudes and lack of family-friendly work-place policies holding many companies back from unleashing the full talents and skills of women in their management structures.

Even though more women than ever are starting businesses or entering into management positions, the dearth of female chief executive officers and corporate board members is particularly striking. According to research by Ernst and Young (2018), for example, Malaysia leads the developed markets among the ASEAN region in terms of upper management inclusiveness, with women comprising 12.5 per cent of board members in 2016, followed by Indonesia at 11.1 per cent and Singapore at 7.7 per cent.

The double burdens of balancing family responsibilities and work, traditional gender norms and employment discrimination continue to hold women back as leaders in the private and public spheres.

IMPACT OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP IN THE FUTURE OF WORK IN THE REGION

Many studies attest to the positive effects that women managers have on business outcomes. For example, empirical analysis on the relationship between the proportion of female directors and the performance of Singapore Stock Exchange companies between 2009 and 2012 found that increased gender diversity had a positive effect. This was measured by return on assets and return on equity, though not of market value. It also found a positive relationship between gender diversity and corporate governance quality (Dieleman, Meijun and Ibrahim, 2014).

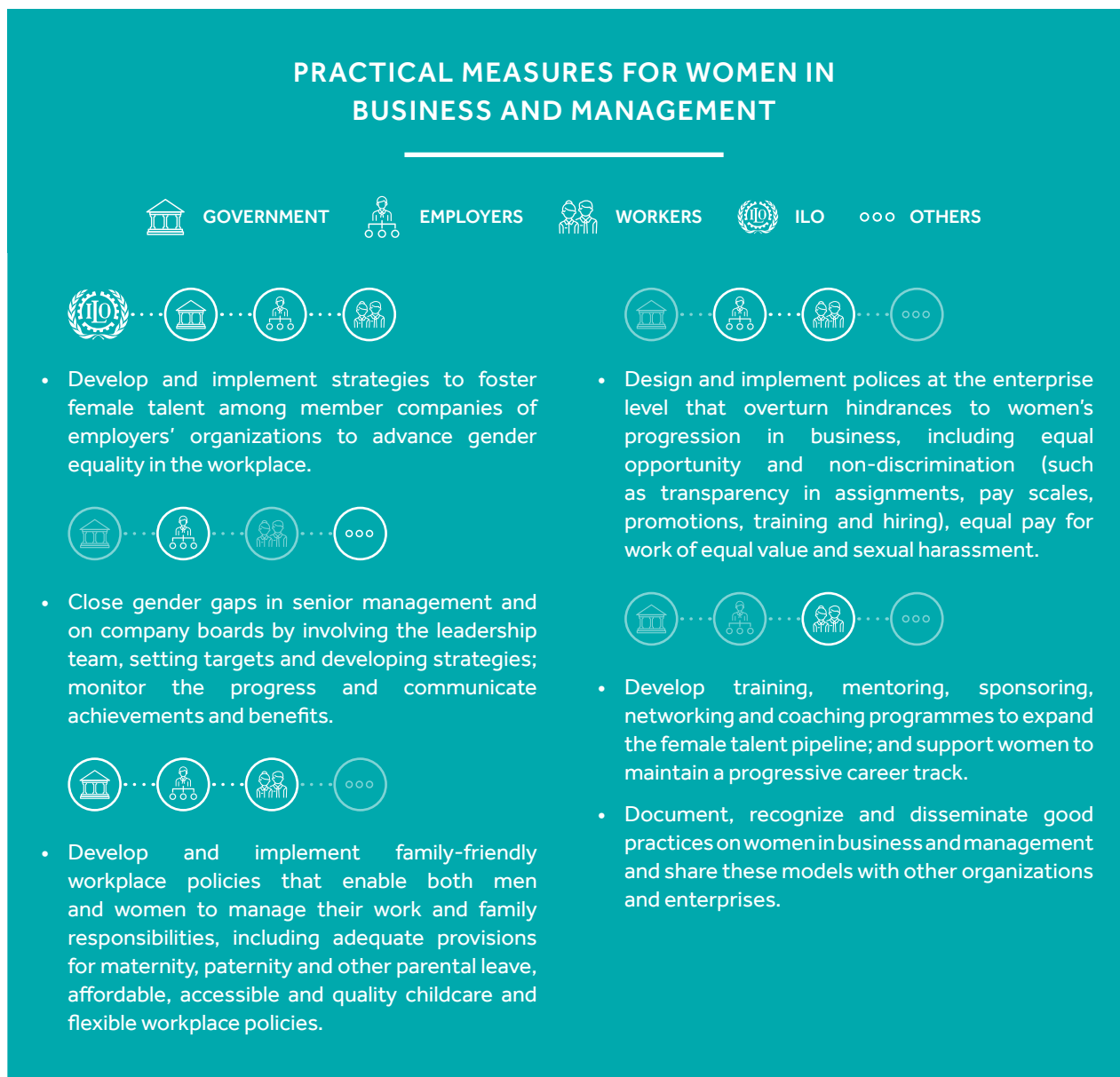
In the ILO survey of 1,300 companies in five regions in 2013, the top three barriers to women's leadership in companies were: (i) women have more family responsibilities than men; (ii) roles assigned by society to women and men; and (iii) masculine corporate culture (ILO, 2015c). Employers have latched onto several solutions to tackle the "glass ceiling" for women in business and in management, such as establishing policies and programmes on equal opportunity covering recruitment, retention and promotion; mentoring and sponsoring; skills training opportunities; executive training; and work-family balance measures (ILO, 2015c).

A study by Gallup in 2017 of 800 companies in the retail and hospitality sectors found that gender-diverse business units have better financial outcomes, including revenue and net profit, than businesses dominated by one gender.³⁵

Such evidence reinforces the idea that more women in business and management will increase the region's competitive edge, especially because human capital is a major asset for companies in economies that are increasingly based on knowledge and technology.

Some countries, such as Malaysia and Samoa, have set quotas for women's representation in decision-making positions in the private sector and government. Other countries, such as Pakistan and Singapore, have set targets for increases of women in management.

Women have great untapped potential as business leaders and senior managers that can fuel future prosperity for the region. Supportive workplaces and a catalysing regulatory environment can considerably improve women's career prospects.



33 See <http://news.gallup.com/businessjournal/166220/business-benefits-gender-diversity.aspx> [accessed 18 May 2018].

7. WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Women entrepreneurs are growing in numbers across Asia and the Pacific. Although women are operating businesses across multiple sectors and in international markets, the majority are found in local markets and in low-growth activities, often in the informal economy due to several constraints such as social norms and attitudes, legal and regulatory restrictions, gaps in access to financial services, constraints to market access and access to training and education to name a few.

There is growing recognition of the benefits of providing tailored approaches for women entrepreneurs, removing discriminatory processes and regulations and providing a more enabling policy environment for women's entrepreneurship development to prosper. The proportion of women entrepreneurs in the region who generate additional jobs is estimated at 24 per cent (ILO, 2015), highlighting an untapped potential to create new jobs for the future.

WHY IS WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT IMPORTANT FOR WOMEN IN THE REGION?

Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are the main source of job creation, particularly in the region's developing countries. Evidence shows that women tend to hire more gender balanced teams, leading to more jobs for women. Entrepreneurship can be a powerful source of women's economic independence and economic opportunity, as well as a way to work out of poverty. The promotion of women's entrepreneurship can contribute to closing gender gaps when women can participate in driving innovation and access opportunities with higher growth potential such as in green jobs and new technologies.

But in poor communities, women are often given insufficient support and access to the types of resources that can facilitate business growth and forge

a path out of poverty and informality. Experience from many countries has shown that with the right type of support tailored to their diverse economic needs and activities, women can be dynamic entrepreneurs and can graduate out of survivalist activities.

A key input to women's entrepreneurship success is access to financial services and products, such as savings options, emergency loans, remittance transfers, guarantees and insurance. These types of products help women manage risks, stabilize income and reduce vulnerability. Women tend to have much more limited access to financial services and fewer opportunities for savings and credit than men because of market failures in the financial sector. Women in low-income communities tend to lack collateral and have limited financial management skills and difficulty following account procedures. However, women who manage access are more resilient in the face of poverty. And where they are also involved in entrepreneurship and cooperatives, they are more likely to have profitability and growth.

Women form a large proportion of microfinance clients, not only because their access to formal finance from commercial banks is limited but also for a range of other reasons. For example, women are seen as change agents in families who spend a greater proportion of their time and income on family welfare and because they are often more reliable borrowers.³⁴ Microfinance groups have been used to empower women throughout the region by enabling them to engage in the public sphere, even where their mobility may be restricted by cultural norms. They also enable women to redress social issues that affect them, such as domestic violence, spousal alcohol abuse and child labour. To address the gaps in service provision to women-led SMEs, many countries are also proposing financial products dedicated to the 'missing middle'.

IMPACT OF WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT ON THE FUTURE OF WORK FOR THE REGION

If women have the same access to resources as men and structural constraints are removed, they are dynamic economic actors and change agents and

³⁴ D'Espallier, Guerin and Mersland (2009) used a global dataset covering 350 microfinance institutions in 70 countries. Their findings showed that more women clients were associated with lower portfolio-at-risk, lower write-offs and lower credit-loss provisions *ceteris paribus*. These findings confirm common beliefs that women are generally a better credit risk for microfinance.

more jobs would be created. In its endeavour to support private sector development and encourage women entrepreneurs, the Government of Indonesia, for example, abolished formal restrictions on independent asset ownership, credit access and assumption or disposal of property. Through its dedicated women's entrepreneurship development (WED) assessment methodology, the ILO has undertaken over 25 national WED policy assessments, examining the national context, providing a platform for better coordination policy-makers and service providers and developing evidence-based policy recommendations to promote and strengthen WED. A better future requires concerted efforts to harness women's entrepreneurial capacities.

While entrepreneurship can be a powerful source of women's economic independence and a way to work out of poverty, in poor communities, women are given insufficient support and access to the types of resources that can facilitate business growth and forge a path out of poverty and informality. Opening access to a range of productive resources including markets, technology, skills, land and other resources as well as ensuring an enabling regulatory environment are part of the policy mix to strengthen women's entrepreneurship.



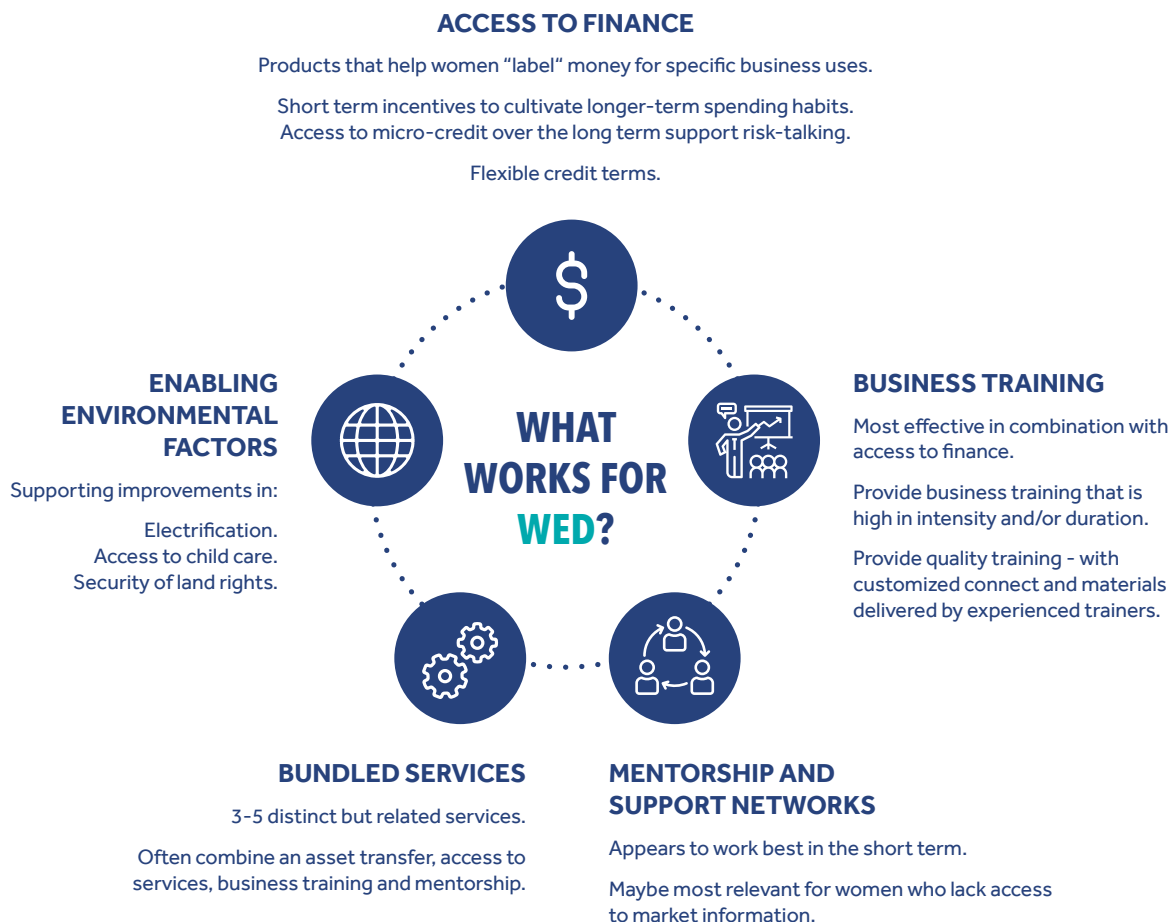
FACTS AND FIGURES FROM THE REGION

Within the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation countries, SMEs account for 97 per cent of all enterprises and half of all workforces (APEC, 2017).

Data on women's business ownership in the region is incomplete.

Mastercard's Benchmark of Women's business ownership (as a percentage of total business owners) gives Australia, New Zealand and Viet Nam high rankings, with more than 30 per cent each, while Indonesia, Japan and Malaysia range between 15 per cent and 17 per cent. India has a low ranking, at 11 per cent (Mastercard, 2018).

FIGURE 9. Intervention areas and associated strategies that have worked for WED



Source: ILO, 2018f.

PRACTICAL MEASURES FOR WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT



GOVERNMENT



EMPLOYERS



WORKERS

OTHERS



- Carry out research and assessments to inform the development of relevant policy and programmes on women's entrepreneurship.



- Promote women's entrepreneurship through consultations between policy-makers and women entrepreneurs, public-private dialogues, forums and trade fairs.
- Extend social protection, including maternity protection, to women business owners and self-employed women.



- Put in place policy measures to encourage formal financial institutions to increase the financial inclusion of women through dedicated measures; and establish regulatory environments for microfinance institutions to operate.
- Repeal any regulations and requirements such as signature by the head of household that place extra burdens on women to progress independently.
- Support transitions to formalization of women's enterprises through appropriate fiscal measures, training, market access, collective organizing, public procurement, credit and other incentives.



- Provide support, such as access to credit, technology transfer, market access, public procurement contracts and skills training, to women entrepreneurs in sectors with growth potential and that have traditionally been dominated by men, such as the green and STEM-related fields and jobs.



- Design and implement innovative schemes that support entrepreneurship development among women with no or limited assets required for accessing financial support.



- Provide comprehensive support to women entrepreneurs (such as networking, marketing support and collective solutions) that can help them access new markets and benefit from economies of scale.



- In consultation with women's entrepreneurs' associations, design and deliver gender-mainstreamed business development support services to women entrepreneurs based on the needs identified.

TABLE 4. Ratifications of ILO Conventions on equality in Asia and the Pacific

Ratification of Conventions on equality – Gender, equality and non-discrimination – Asia and the Pacific					
	Core Conventions on equality		Gender equality Conventions		
	Equal remuneration	Discrimination (employment occupation)	Workers with family responsibilities	Maternity protection	Domestic workers
	No. 100	No. 111	No. 156	No. 183	No. 189
Eastern Asia					
Japan	1967	...	1995	...	...
Korea, Rep. of	1997	1998	2001	...	...
China	1990	2006	...	...	...
Mongolia	1969	1969	...	...	...
South-Eastern Asia					
Brunei Darussalam	...	...	...	...	...
Singapore	2002	...	...	...	...
Cambodia	1999	1999	...	...	...
Indonesia	1958	1999	...	...	...
Lao PDR	2008	2008	...	...	...
Malaysia	1997	...	...	...	...
Myanmar	...	...	...	...	...
Philippines	1953	1960	...	...	2012
Thailand	1999	Ratified 2017, in force as of 13 Jun 2018	...	...	...
Timor-Leste	May 2016	May 2016	...	...	...
Viet Nam	1997	1997	...	...	...
Pacific islands					
Australia	1974	1973	1990	...	...
New Zealand	1983	1983	...	...	...
Cook Islands	...	...	...	...	...
Fiji	2002	2002	...	...	...
Kiribati	2009	2009	...	...	...
Marshall Islands	...	...	...	...	...
Palau	...	...	...	...	...
Papua New Guinea	2000	2000	...	...	...
Samoa	2008	2008	...	...	...
Solomon Islands	2012	2012	...	...	...
Tonga	...	...	...	...	...
Tuvalu	...	...	...	...	...
Vanuatu	2006	2006	...	...	...
Southern Asia					
Afghanistan	1969	1969	...	...	...
Bangladesh	1998	1972	...	...	...
India	1958	1960	...	...	...
Islamic Republic of Iran	1972	1964	...	...	...
Maldives	2013	2013
Nepal	1976	1974
Pakistan	2001	1961
Sri Lanka	1993	1998

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GAME CHANGERS: WOMEN AND THE FUTURE OF WORK IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

As the ILO moves towards its 100th anniversary in 2018, a series of ILO Centenary Initiatives have been launched to take stock of successes and prepare for the challenges ahead in promoting decent work and social justice in the future world of work. As the ILO looks to the next 100 years, it is a critical moment to reflect on why various commitments to gender equality have not delivered the desired results and to push for accountability toward gender equality.

Game changers: Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific examines the situation of women in the region and analyses progress and challenges in terms of gender equality in the world of work. As women continue to be the most under-utilised and potentially game-changing factor for a fair and prosperous economy, the report draws attention to obstacles to progress for women in labour markets in the region and outlines selected drivers of future labour market transformation.

Areas that have great potential to remove systemic and structural obstacles that hold women back and will assist to overcome gender inequalities and promote more and better jobs are presented. Practical measures and recommendations are suggested for governments, employers' and workers' organizations as well as other relevant stakeholders to take action towards building a future of work for women (and men) in the region that leaves no one behind. Countries in the Asia and the Pacific region, whether high or low income, can no longer afford to lose out on the social and economic benefits of gender equality.

*This report is a contribution to the ILO Future of Work and Women at Work Centenary Initiatives.

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