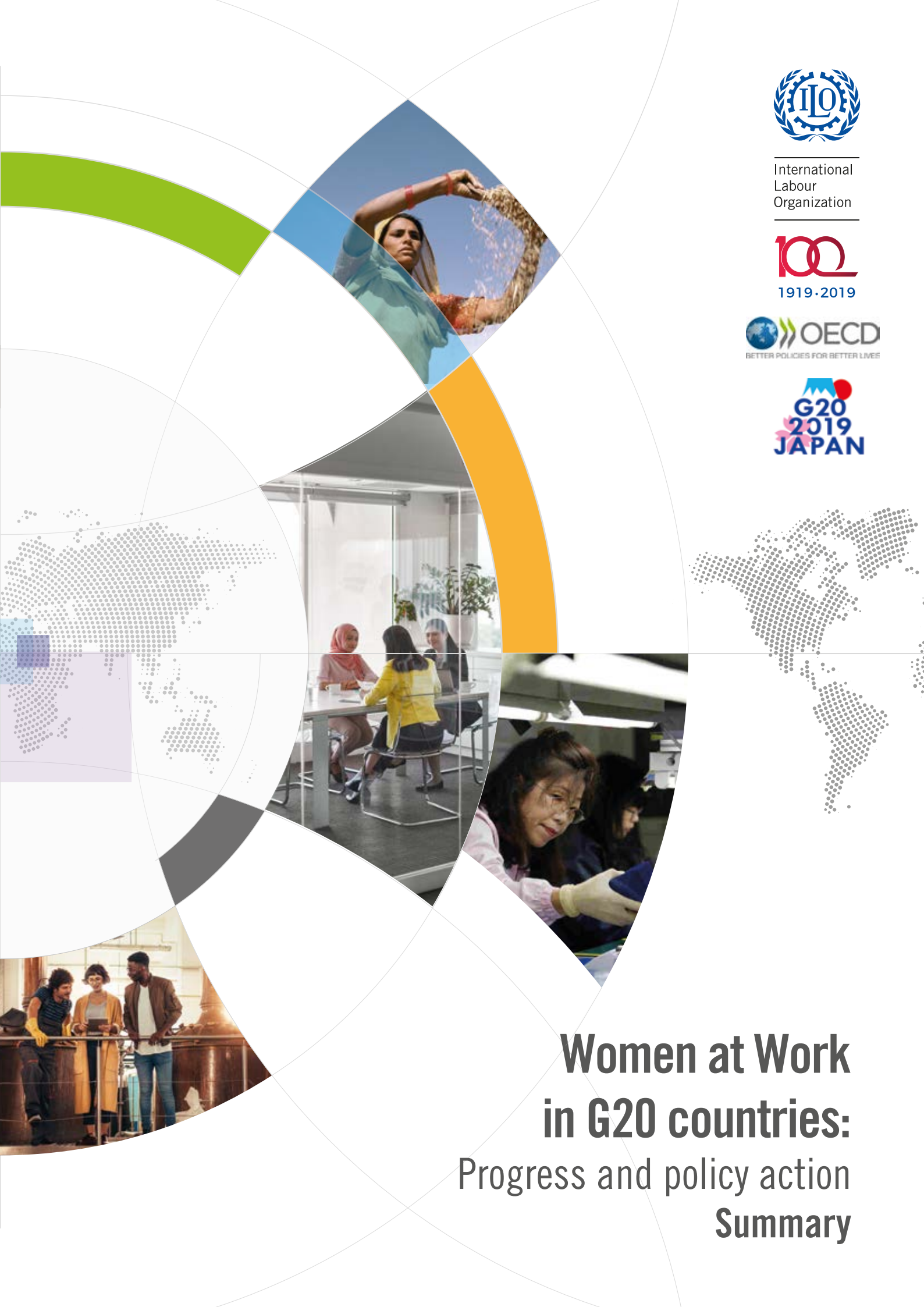




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Women at Work in G20 countries: Progress and policy action Summary



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Summary

of the paper prepared for the G20 Employment Working Group
under Japan's Presidency

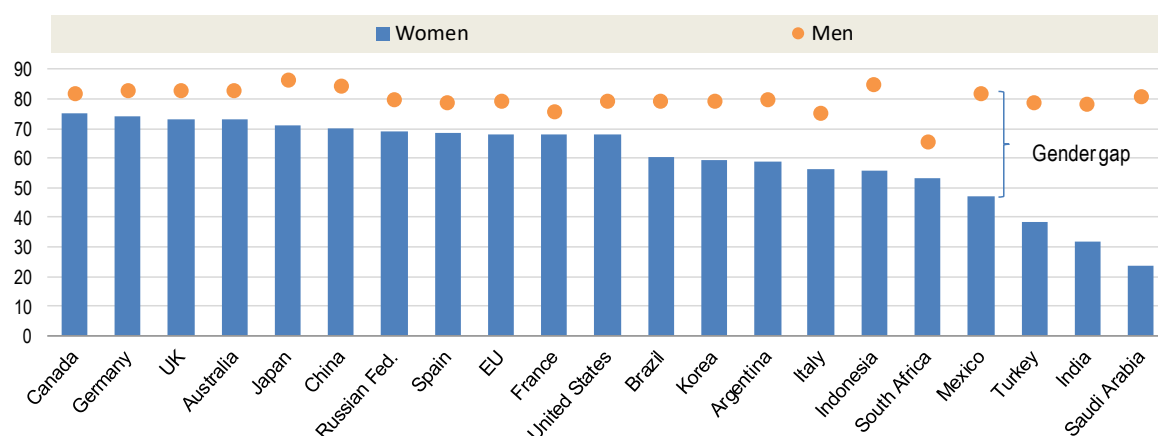


Further progress made towards meeting the G20 25x25 gender target but not all countries are on track

In 2018, further progress occurred in most G20 economies towards meeting the G20 gender target of reducing the gender gap in labour force participation by 25 percent by 2025. In all G20 economies for which recent data are available, there was an increase in the labour force participation rate of women aged 15-64 between 2012 and 2018. Nevertheless, there remain large country differences in the participation of women and, consequently, in the gender gap in participation (Figure 1). Since 2012, the gender gap has declined in almost all G20 economies for which recent data are available, with the exception of Russia. In around half of G20 members, the actual decline has been in line with, or better than, the decline needed each year to achieve the target (Figure 2). Particularly large reductions occurred in Japan, Argentina, Brazil and Korea. However, in some countries where the gender gap is particularly large, achieving the target remains challenging, notably in Mexico and Saudi Arabia.

Figure 1. Labour force participation rate by gender, 2018

Share of the population aged 15-64 participating in the labour force (%)

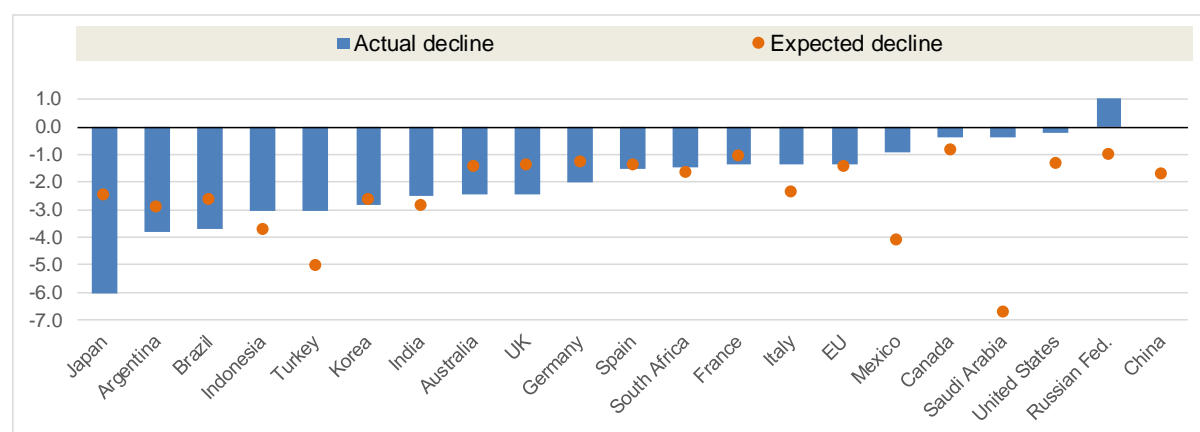


Note: The data refer to: 2010 for China, 2015 for India and 2017 for Russia; and the population aged 15 and over for India and 16-64 for the United States.

Source: OECD calculations based on national labour force surveys and, for China, census data.

Figure 2. Actual versus expected decline in the gender gap in participation, 2012-2018

Percentage points



Note: The actual decline refers to the observed change in the gender gap between 2012 and 2018 (2017 for Russia and 2015 for India). The expected decline refers to the *pro rata* decline required by 2018 (2017 for Russia and 2015 for India) to reach the target of a 25% decline in the gap by 2025. For China, no recent data are available to calculate the actual decline in the gender gap and the data for 2012 have been projected to calculate the expected decline in the gender gap. The data refer to the population aged 15 and over for India and 16-64 for the United States.

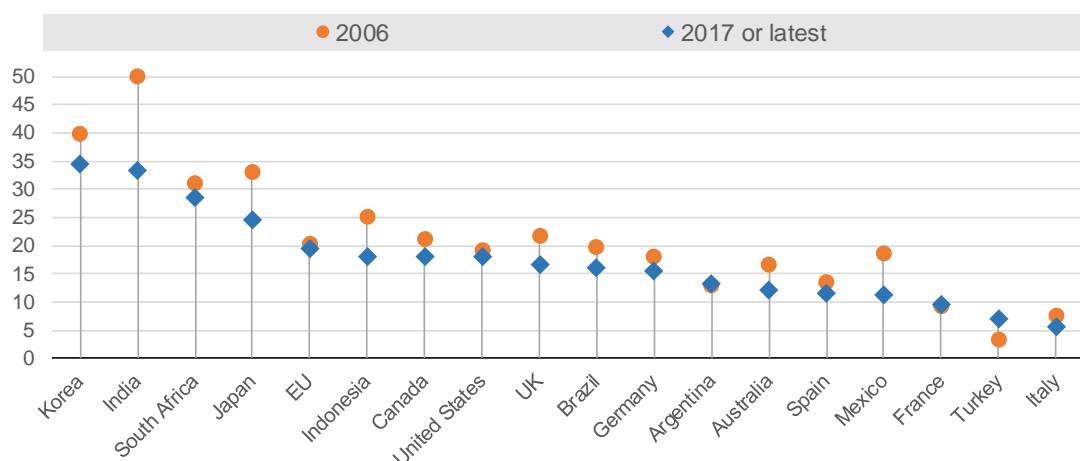
Source: OECD calculations based on national labour force surveys and, for China, census data.

A more mixed picture emerges for closing gender gaps in other labour market outcomes

The gender pay gap remains substantial in most G20 economies, with only very modest progress in closing this gap (Figure 3). This is reflected in persistently large gender gaps in the incidence of low-paid work, access to managerial jobs and the incidence of part-time work. Greater opportunities for women to obtain better quality jobs would allow for a better work-life balance and hence improve their well-being. Moreover, this would enhance their incentives to participate in the labour market and reduce the underutilisation of their skills.

Figure 3. Gender pay gaps remain substantial, 2006 and 2018

For full-time median earnings, difference between male and female earnings divided by male earnings (%)



Note: The data refer to gross (monthly or weekly) earnings of full-time wage and salary workers. The data for 2017 refer to: 2012 for India; 2014 for the EU, France, Spain and Turkey; 2015 for Brazil and South Africa; and 2016 for Italy and Germany. The data for 2006 refer to 2008 for South Africa.

Source: OECD Earnings Distribution Database, OECD estimates based on national labour force surveys for Argentina, Brazil, India and Indonesia, and the NIDS panel survey for South Africa.

A range of policy action is being taken to foster greater gender equality in the labour market

Last year's Employment Plans submitted by G20 members pointed to increased attention towards measures aimed at supporting women through work transitions, in particular returning to work after maternity. This year, G20 countries are converging in promoting better family leave policies and work-life balance.

Reinvigorated efforts are also noticeable in the context of tackling gender-based discrimination, including pregnancy and maternity status, and violence and harassment in the world of work.

Increasing digitalisation, shifts towards greening economies, and the growing demand for care services are some of the factors that are likely to drive employment growth in the future. However, despite a number of initiative to address gender segregation by occupation, it remains a feature common of all G20 countries. Women are over-represented in the care sectors, while men are found in larger numbers in the STEM fields.

But further policy action is required

Considerable policy action has occurred in G20 countries to boost women's participation in the labour market and reduce gender gaps in the quality of the jobs. Nevertheless, policy makers may wish to consider further action in the following areas:

- ***Strengthening long-term care and care leave provision.*** Women continue to take on a disproportionate burden of long-term care and this may become an increasingly important limitation on their participation in paid work. Therefore, long-term care provision needs to be strengthened as well as access to care leave for both women and men.
- ***Ensuring access to non-standard forms of employment do not weaken employment rights.*** Fostering self-employment and other more flexible forms of employment such as platform work can provide useful labour market opportunities for women and a better work-live balance but should not come at the cost of weaker protection against discrimination or other employment and social protection rights. The risk of using non-standard forms of employment to circumvent anti-discrimination requirements and maternity (and paternity) protection legislation should be further explored.
- ***Promoting entrepreneurship for women.*** Although entrepreneurship development remains a common intervention area among all G20 countries, more efforts should be devoted to ensure that such opportunities embrace all women, including older women. It will also be important to ensure that there are adequate employment and social protections in place for these jobs.
- ***Tackling gender segregation by occupation.*** Further efforts should be made to foster a more mixed labour force, so as to provide equal opportunities for women and men to take advantage of the employment opportunities in the expanding digital, green and caring sectors. Additional efforts are needed to address the persisting gender pay gap and enable more women to reach leadership positions.
- ***Improving the evidence base on gender gaps in the labour market.*** In all countries, further improvements in the availability of timely and comparable data are required to monitor closely how gender gaps in the labour market are evolving and the effectiveness of policy interventions.

