

The World's Women 2010: Press Release #1

UNITED NATIONS RELEASES COMPREHENSIVE STATISTICS ON WORLD'S WOMEN

Report Highlights Progress on Women's Schooling, Health and Economic Participation, But Also the Gender Gap in Public Life

(New York, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division, 20 October 2010) — The United Nations today released *The World's Women 2010: Trends and Statistics*, a one-of-a-kind compilation of the latest data documenting progress for women worldwide in eight key areas: population and families, health, education, work, power and decision-making, violence against women, environment and poverty.

In the book's introduction, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon states that *The World's Women 2010* "finds that progress in ensuring the equal status of women and men has been made in many areas, including school enrolment, health and economic participation. At the same time, it makes clear that much more needs to be done, in particular to close the gender gap in public life and to prevent the many forms of violence to which women are subjected."

"It is my hope that the present publication will be used to advance an enabling social and economic environment that will ensure equal treatment of all women and men and significantly improve the status of women in the world", wrote Sha Zukang, *UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs* in the book's preface. "It should also serve as a model for similar statistical profiles for countries, areas, regions and provinces, thus supporting the development of policies."

"This report is released today, on the occasion of the first ever World Statistics Day, as it demonstrates how official statistics provide policy-makers with useful and impartial data. Fifteen years after the Beijing Conference on Women, these statistics continue to help them in their efforts to advance gender equality worldwide," stated Paul Cheung, Director of the United Nations Statistics Division which produces this report every five years since 1991.

Findings in *World's Women 2010* include:

POPULATION AND FAMILIES

- There are approximately 57 million more men than women in the world. In 2010, some regions have an obvious "shortage" of men while others of women. In general, Europe is home to many more women than men. (Page 2) In contrast, some of the most populous countries have a "shortage" of women. China has a ratio of 108 men per 100 women, India 107, Pakistan 106 and Bangladesh 102. (Page 3)



- Although the share of women aged 60 and above exceeds 50 per cent in all the regions, in Eastern Europe it is much higher, at 63 per cent. In Southern Africa the proportion is also high at around 59 per cent. *(Page 11)*
- While the proportion of married girls aged 15 years or less is usually quite low, in Niger it is around 20 per cent. *(Page 16)*

HEALTH

- Women are more likely than men to die from cardiovascular diseases. Globally, these diseases were the leading cause of death in 2004, claiming approximately 32 per cent of female lives and 27 per cent of males. *(Page 24)*
- In spite of increases in the proportion of women receiving prenatal care, Sub-Saharan Africa alone recorded 270,000 maternal deaths in 2005, i.e. half of the world's maternal deaths. *(Pages 34-35)*
- In Panama and Mexico, respectively 36 and 34 per cent of women were considered obese. Qatar and United Arab Emirates had respectively 45 and 31 per cent of women considered obese. *(Page 30)*
- In the majority of countries, there was little difference in the proportion of underweight girls and boys, suggesting that there is no difference in nutritional status between the sexes. *(Page 41)*

EDUCATION

- At the global level, the rate of enrolled primary-school-aged girls increased from 79 to 86 per cent in the period from 1999 to 2007. But Middle and Western Africa had some of the world's lowest rates with less than 60 per cent of primary-school-age girls enrolled in school. *(Page 52-53)*
- At the turn of the millennium, an estimated 105 million girls and boys of primary school age around the world were not enrolled in school. This number had fallen to about 72 million by 2007, representing a decline of 31 per cent. Girls comprised 54 per cent of the children of primary school age out of school, down from 58 per cent in 1999. The share of out-of-school girls was the highest in the Arab States at 61 per cent. *(Page 54)*
- In tertiary enrolment, men's dominance in the share has been reversed globally and gender balance has shifted in favour of women, except in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern and Western Asia. *(Page 62)*
- The gender digital divide is widespread. In general, it is more pronounced among less developed countries with low Internet penetration, although it is also evident in several developed countries with high Internet penetration. *(Page 72)*

WORK

- Women aged 25 to 54 now have higher labour force participation rates in most regions as compared to those of 1990. *(Page 78)*
- Women's wages represent between 70 and 90 per cent of the wages of their male counterparts. *(Page 97)*
- "Vulnerable employment" – own-account work and contributing family work – is prevalent in Africa and Asia, especially among women. These workers suffer from job insecurity and lack safety nets. *(Page 87)*
- Women are still rarely employed in jobs with status, power and authority and in traditionally male blue-collar occupations. *(Page 90-91)*
- Maternity continues to be a source of employment discrimination. Even with maternity legislation, many pregnant women still lose their jobs, and complaints of maternity-related dismissals are common in the courts. *(Page 104)*

POWER AND DECISION-MAKING

- Heads of State or Government positions remain elusive for women. In 2009, only 14 women in the world held either position. *(Page 117)*
- In just 23 countries do women comprise a critical mass – over 30 per cent – in the lower or single house of their national parliament. *(Page 112)*
- Of the 500 largest corporations in the world, only 13 had a female CEO in 2009. *(Page 124)*

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

- Women are subjected to different forms of violence: physical, sexual, psychological and economic – both within and outside of their homes. *(Page 130)*
- Rates of women experiencing physical violence at least once in their lifetime vary from a low of 12 per cent to over 59 per cent, depending on where they live. *(Page 131)*
- Female genital mutilation shows a slight decline in Africa. *(Page 135-136)*

ENVIRONMENT

- Women in rural sub-Saharan Africa are usually in charge of water collection. A trip back and forth to the water source takes on average one hour and 22 minutes in rural areas in Somalia and one hour and 11 minutes in rural areas in Mauritania. *(Page 144)*
- The majority of households in sub-Saharan Africa and in Southern and South-Eastern Asia use solid fuels for cooking on open fires or traditional stoves with no chimney or hood, disproportionately affecting the health of women. *(Pages 147-150)*



POVERTY

- Households of lone mothers with young children are more likely to be poor than those of lone fathers with young children. *(Pages 161-163)*
- Existing laws limit women's access to land and other types of property in most countries in Africa and about half the countries in Asia. Elements of gender inequality with regard to inheritance rights were identified in 45 out of the 48 African countries reviewed and in 25 out of the 42 Asian ones. *(Page 169)*

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After embargo time, the report will be posted online on <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/Worldswomen/WW2010pub.htm> .

Hard copies of The World's Women 2010 report are available as a sales item from United Nations Publications (<https://unp.un.org/Browse.aspx?newtitle=1>).