

# TRANSFORMING ECONOMIES, REALIZING RIGHTS

*Progress of the World's Women: Transforming economies, realizing rights* documents the ways in which current economic and social policies are failing women in rich and poor countries alike, and asks, what would the economy look like if it truly worked for women?

The report brings together human rights and economic policymaking, and provides the key elements for a far reaching new policy agenda that can transform economies and make women's rights a reality.

## FACT SHEET – SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

### 1/ TRANSFORMING WORK FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS

*With the right mix of economic and social policies, governments can generate decent jobs for women and ensure that the unpaid care work that goes into sustaining all economies is recognized and supported.*

#### PERSISTENT GENDER GAPS IN LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION AND PAY

Between 1990 and 2013, women's labour force participation rate in sub-Saharan Africa increased from 59 to 64 per cent, resulting in a gender gap in labour force participation of 13 percentage points, the lowest of all regions.

The high rates of labour force participation are not always a sign of women's empowerment. In countries with minimal or no social protection coverage, many people cannot afford not to work. In sub-Saharan Africa, 41 per cent of women and 63 per cent of men aged 65 and over are in the labour force, indicating that many cannot afford to retire.

#### TOO OFTEN WOMEN ARE TRAPPED IN LOW PAID, POOR QUALITY WORK

In sub-Saharan Africa, more than 89 per cent of women's (and 83 per cent of men's) jobs are informal.

Agriculture remains the most important source of work, employing 59 per cent of women and 56 per cent of men. Virtually all agricultural employment is informal.

The gender pay gap is 30 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa (compared to 24 per cent, globally).

#### WOMEN'S DISPROPORTIONATE SHARE OF UNPAID CARE WORK LIMITS THEIR OPPORTUNITIES

Across sub-Saharan Africa: women report doing more unpaid care and domestic work than men: four times as much in Ethiopia, Madagascar and Mauritius; and three times more in Benin, Ghana, Rwanda, South Africa, and the United Republic of Tanzania.

The presence of children in the household in sub-Saharan Africa is associated with gender pay gaps, which are 31 per cent for women with children, compared to 4 per cent for women without children.

#### POLICIES TO TRANSFORM LABOUR MARKETS

Laws are an important basis for women's right to work and at work. By 2014, countries such as Angola, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Niger, Togo, United Republic of Tanzania, and Zimbabwe passed laws stipulating equal remuneration for work of equal value; non-discrimination based on gender in hiring; and banning sexual harassment in employment.

#### Recognizing, reducing and redistributing women's unpaid care and domestic work

Governments in low-income countries can take a range of measures including investments in basic social

services and infrastructure (see below); as well as family-friendly policies, such as the provision of childcare services and paid leave for women and men.

The ILO recommends that Governments should provide a minimum of 14 weeks paid maternity leave, paid for collectively (i.e. not just by employers). There are 22 countries in sub-Saharan Africa that meet or exceed this minimum. In 2013, the highest minimum length of paid maternity leave was in South Africa, with 17 weeks.

In 2013, 25 countries offered paternity leave, but often just a few days, and often unpaid. Burundi offers the most days for paternity leave, with a minimum length of 15 days.

### Narrowing gender pay gaps and addressing occupational segregation

Minimum wages have played an essential part in addressing low pay, reducing inequality and narrowing gender pay gaps.

Minimum wages can also help to raise the pay of informal workers. In one study, average earnings of informal workers increased in 8 out of 11 countries analyzed following the introduction of minimum wages—for example, by 15 per cent in Mali.

Targets and quotas are one way to break down occupational segregation and tackle stereotypes. A number of countries, such as South Sudan, have applied quotas or targets as an effective measure to boost women's employment in the public sector.

### Guaranteeing domestic worker's rights

As of 2010, there were 53 million domestic workers worldwide (more than 5 million of them in Africa), an increase of almost 20 million since 1995.

The ILO Domestic Workers Convention (No. 189) was adopted in 2011. The convention requires States to extend basic labour rights to domestic workers, such as overtime pay, annual paid leave, minimum wages and safe working conditions. To date, two countries in sub-Saharan Africa have ratified the convention: Mauritius and South Africa.

### Increasing the returns to women's informal employment in rural areas

Joint titling and reforming marital property regimes have been effective in helping women to secure land: the land registration process in Rwanda initiated in the mid-2000s gave legally married women equal ownership rights over household parcels of land. Married women were 17 percentage points more likely to be regarded as joint landowners after the reform than before.

Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal and the United Republic of Tanzania are among the countries that have introduced new programmes to subsidize seeds and fertilizers for small-scale farmers. In Malawi, access to subsidized fertilizer through the Farm Input Subsidy Programme (FISP) increases the probability of female-headed households cultivating higher-yielding crop varieties.

## 2/ MAKING SOCIAL POLICY WORK FOR WOMEN

*Well-designed social policies can enhance women's income security, and their ability to realize their potential and expand their life options. Social protection policies—including family and child allowances and old-age pensions—can be powerful tools to address women's poverty and reduce inequality. Social services, such as health care, child- and elder-care, and water and sanitation can have an even greater effect, as well as reducing the drudgery of unpaid care and domestic work.*

### WOMEN'S GREATER VULNERABILITY TO POVERTY IN CHANGING SOCIETIES

Women are particularly vulnerable to economic insecurity and financial dependence. Household surveys show that, women aged 20-59 years are more likely than men to live in a poor household, in 31 out of 37 sub-Saharan African countries with data.

Shifts in demographic, family and household structures also have implications for income security and care provision: in sub-Saharan Africa, a high share of children lives with only one or neither of their parents. In South Africa, only 35 per cent of children were living with both parents in 2012, while 39 per cent were living with their mothers only, 23 per cent with neither parent and 3 per cent with their fathers only.

### WOMEN HAVE LESS ACCESS TO SOCIAL PROTECTION

Currently, 73 per cent of the world's population have only partial or no social protection. Women are over-represented in this group.

Women are less likely than men to receive a pension in old age, and where they do, their benefit levels are usually lower. In Burundi, 2 per cent or less of women above statutory pension age are in receipt of a pension compared to 7 per cent of men; in Cameroon, the figures are 6 per cent of women compared with 20 per cent of men.

A small percentage of working-age adults contributes to a pension scheme in the region and gender gaps are often wide: for example, less than 25 per cent of women compared with almost 90 per cent of men in Gabon, and 1 per cent of women compared with 8 per cent of men in Burundi make contributions.

Botswana, Lesotho and Mauritius have made significant progress towards closing gender gaps in pension coverage by expanding the reach of social pensions which do not require prior contributions and are particularly important for women.

## SOCIAL TRANSFERS ARE ESSENTIAL FOR REALIZING WOMEN'S RIGHTS

A recent review of pre- and post-transfer poverty rates in 27 high-income and 10 middle-income countries shows that, in South Africa, transfers bring poverty rates down by 37 per cent.

Conditional cash transfer programmes, aimed at families with children, contribute to poverty and inequality reduction. South Africa's Child Support Grant has been found to facilitate women's access to paid employment. In Malawi, a cash transfer programme for girls resulted in higher school attendance and declines in early marriage and teenage pregnancy.

The Productive Safety Net Programme in Ethiopia has become one of the largest social protection programmes in sub-Saharan Africa, providing food and cash transfers to over 7 million chronically food-insecure people, particularly in rural areas. South Africa's Expanded Public Works Programme provides work opportunities for poor and unemployed people. Women represent more than 60 per cent of participants in the programme.

### Accessible and affordable social services are just as important

Accessible, affordable, gender-responsive social services reduce poverty and inequality. Social services can have an even greater effect on poverty and inequality than that of social transfer systems, and can reduce the demands of unpaid care and domestic work on women.

### Access barriers to social services remain large

In 2012, governments in sub-Saharan Africa spent as little as \$159 (PPP) per capita (3 per cent of GDP) on average on the health of their citizens, compared to \$1,121 spent per capita worldwide.

In sub-Saharan Africa, out-of-pocket payments (OPPs), the most regressive form of health financing, as a percentage of total health expenditure was 28.1 per cent in 2012. Between 2007 and 2011, OPPs for

health care increased by 35 per cent in the United Republic of Tanzania.

Many rural women report problems accessing health care services because facilities are too far away – 69 per cent in Mozambique, 48 per cent in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and 45 per cent in Senegal. Women may also be reluctant to consult doctors of the opposite sex or be culturally discouraged from doing so. In Ethiopia and São Tomé and Príncipe, half or more of the women report difficulties in accessing health care cite concerns over the availability of a female health provider.

Sub-Saharan Africa has one of the highest proportions of people who rely on unsafe water sources. Urban access to improved water is higher than rural access and high-income groups have significantly better access than low-income groups. In Sierra Leone, for example, 87 per cent of urban households have access to drinking water compared to 35 per cent of rural households. Across the region, 73 per cent of households from the richest fifth of the population have access to improved sanitation compared to 15 per cent of households from the poorest fifth.

Water collection puts a major strain on women and girls. In sub-Saharan Africa, only 55 per cent of households are within 15 minutes of a water source. Women and girls are the primary water carriers for their families: women take on 62 per cent and girls 9 per cent of the burden of water collection in households without piped water.

### The triple dividend of scaling up social services

Scaling up social services to achieve women's rights will require the creation of new jobs. Globally, 10.3 million additional health workers are required to ensure the effective delivery of universal health care, the majority in Asia and Africa. UNESCO estimates that 27 million more teachers will be needed worldwide to achieve universal primary education by 2030.

Creating these jobs has the potential for a triple dividend: ensuring better public services, providing greater support for women's unpaid care work, as well as increasing the availability of decent employment for women.

### Health care

Community-based health insurance schemes in Rwanda, have reduced financial barriers for women, expanded the uptake of services, and contributed to the rapid decline on maternal mortality rates. The share of women who reported lack of money as the main barrier to accessing health care declined from 71 per cent in 2005 to 53 per cent in 2010. In the same period, skilled birth attendance increased from 39 per

cent to 69 per cent and women's use of modern contraceptive methods from 10 per cent to 25 per cent.

### Water and sanitation

Experiences from Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania suggest that placing women at the centre of water decisions leads to improved access, more cost-effective delivery and less corruption in water financing.

Women have also been essential to the success of community-led total sanitation (CLTS), a subsidy free approach that encourages people to build their own toilets/latrines with local resources.

There are cases of success in increasing access to water and sanitation through public services as well as private-public partnerships. In Senegal, the private company SdE (Sénégalaise des Eaux) expanded the number of connected households from 58 per cent to 87 per cent, with many of these being 'social' connections where connection fees are waived and 20 cubic meters of water is provided every two months at a subsidized rate

## 3/ TOWARDS AN ENABLING MACROECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

*Macroeconomic policies can and should support the realization of women's rights, by creating dynamic and stable economies, by generating decent work and by mobilizing resources to finance vital public services.*

### THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ECONOMIC GROWTH AND GENDER EQUALITY

Gaps in labour force participation are associated with lower growth rates overall. In the Sub-Saharan Africa gender gaps in the labour market reduce GDP per capita by nearly 9 per cent.

However, in some cases *gender inequality* fuels growth. In some contexts, lower wage rates for women contribute to lower average labour costs, providing a short-term boost to growth in labour-intensive industries. Virtually all economies rely on the unpaid care and domestic work that is largely provided by women. Firms, for example, depend on the human resources that are produced and sustained through such work. The unequal distribution of the costs of care therefore supports economic growth.

To support substantive equality for women, macroeconomic policies need to go beyond a sole focus on GDP growth, to work in conjunction with

social policy, with the aim of creating inclusive economies that truly work for women—and indeed all members of society.

### UNPAID CARE WORK UNDERPINS ECONOMIC GROWTH AND MUST BE RECOGNIZED AND SUPPORTED

The work involved in caring for people is essential for reproducing the labour force and generates real economic value, but it is not incorporated into the calculation of GDP, reflected in other macroeconomic indicators, or taken into account in economic policymaking.

In South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania, for example, the total value of time spent on unpaid care and domestic work is estimated to be 15 and 35 per cent of GDP, respectively.

### MOBILIZING RESOURCES TO FUND SOCIAL POLICIES

Macroeconomic policies can and should support the realization of women's rights, by creating strong stable economies, by generating decent work and insuring resources are available to pay for vital social spending.

Rwanda has made significant strides by reforming its tax system, resulting in a 60 per cent increase in government revenues as a share of GDP between 1998 and 2005—from 9 per cent to 14.7 per cent.

The Government of Mauritius has reduced defense and security expenditures in order to support increased social spending. Botswana is using revenues generated from natural resource extraction to finance its social protection systems, including health-care programmes, income support for vulnerable populations and old-age pensions.

In the United Republic of Tanzania, the women's organization, TGNP Mtandao has engaged in gender budget analysis, training and lobbying to push for greater gender equality in economic policymaking. As a result, primary school fees were abolished and farm input subsidies were reintroduced, with significant benefits for women and girls.