



IN BRIEF



GENDER EQUALITY AND THE ISTANBUL PROGRAMME OF ACTION

Photo: UN Women/Ishak Saleh.

Gender equality and the Istanbul Programme of Action

2015 was a pivotal year towards the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. Member States' vision reflected in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes "*A world in which every woman and girl enjoys full gender equality and all legal, social and economic barriers to their empowerment have been removed*".

The 2030 Agenda is universal, indivisible and rights-based, a bold commitment to "leave no one behind", addressing the economic, social, environmental and political dimensions of inequality and unsustainability. It positions the Beijing Platform for Action as a foundational framework for sustainable development, with governments committing to work to significantly increase investments to close the gender gap, to strengthen support for gender equality institutions at all levels, and to systematically mainstream gender perspectives in the implementation of the Agenda.

In addition, in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the outcome of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (FFD) held in July 2015, Member States committed to ensuring gender equality, by setting out a global framework for partnership and financing for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and providing a strong foundation for holding all stakeholders accountable for allocating significantly increased resources to

achieve gender equality and women's empowerment. The unanimously adopted Security Council resolution 2242 (2015) underscores that women's participation is core to the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance and response to crises, and increases the likelihood of reaching sustainable and inclusive peace. The Paris Agreement on climate change commits Parties for the first time to respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, as well as on gender equality. Importantly, the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) for the period 2010 - 2020 contains a dedicated priority area on gender equality and the empowerment of women which outlines a comprehensive set of actions directed to all stakeholders, as well as actions specifically for the LDCs and their development partners to take.

Taken together, these and other intergovernmental outcomes have markedly solidified and strengthened the normative framework and accelerated political momentum towards the realization of gender equality, the

FOLLOW UN WOMEN AT:

www.unwomen.org
www.facebook.com/unwomen
www.twitter.com/un_women
www.youtube.com/unwomen
www.instagram.com/unwomen

empowerment of all women and girls and their human rights. The midterm review of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the LDCs is an opportunity to assess the progress of implementation by the LDCs, their development partners and other stakeholders, including the UN system, as well as to assess how different stakeholders leverage their comparative advantages to support the full, effective and accelerated implementation of gender equality commitments.

For the UN System it is the opportunity to reflect on and shape the future of our support to LDC Member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda, by drawing on our lessons learned to improve our delivery and adapt to an ever challenging context.

Key to poverty eradication and sustainable development

UN Women sees the IPoA midterm review as an opportunity to set more ambitious commitments towards achieving gender equality and women's empowerment in LDCs.

Furthermore, empowering women and unleashing their potential, and removing structural, cultural, social and economic barriers that prevent women from participating fully in the economic and political life of their countries, is critical for achieving sustainable development and poverty eradication. This will require:

- Governments to accelerate implementation of commitments to gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment, including those enshrined in the IPoA;
- All areas of action—including infrastructure and energy; agriculture, food security and rural development; trade and investment; good governance; financing for development; migration; science, technology and innovation; and resilience building—and partnerships to support the realization of sustainable development for the LDCs must engage women as active contributors and beneficiaries;
- All stakeholders must contribute to ensuring that gender equality and women's empowerment are at the centre of the sustainable development agenda and implementation frameworks.



UN Women: A strong partner to implement the IPoA

The Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) reflects strong commitments to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. UN Women, as the global champion for women and girls, has been working together with its partners to implement the IPoA. The midterm review conference for the Istanbul Programme of Action for the LDCs, taking place in Antalya, Turkey from 27 to 29 May 2016, provides further opportunities for UN Women to strengthen its programming response, reaffirming the global commitment to address the special needs of the LDCs.

UN Women's offices across different regions are working in the following areas of corporate priorities—Leadership and Political Participation, Ending Violence against Women and Women's Economic Empowerment—for the gender equality and women's empowerment agenda. UN Women is present in almost all LDCs at varying levels. The following examples from 2015 demonstrate some of its interventions on the ground to support the implementation of the IPoA.

LEADERSHIP & POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Gender equality in decision-making is critical for sustainable, people-centred development, just societies and democratic governance. Women's voice, leadership, participation, and influence in decision-making have increased significantly worldwide and the international community recognizes that humanity will not reach its full potential if half of its population remained underutilized.

In the 20 years since the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, the percentage of women in parliament has nearly doubled to 22.1 per cent. Among LDCs for 2015 the percentage is 20.4 per cent, much lower than the 26.9 per cent of OECD countries. Despite progress, gender parity remains unacceptably low (see graphic 1).

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) upholds women's right to participate in public life, while the Beijing Platform for Action calls for removing barriers to equal participation.

Taking measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making and increasing women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership, have become the gold standards to which every polity, society and economy must aspire.

Towards these ends, UN Women promotes training for women political candidates to help build their capacities, and offers voter and civic education and sensitization campaigns on gender equality. In addition, UN Women advocates for legislative and constitutional reforms to ensure women's fair access to political spheres—as voters, candidates, elected officials and civil service members.

AFGHANISTAN: There now exists a stronger cohort of women leaders within the government as well as the legislative bodies with increasing say and influence in the decision-making processes. These in part are attributable to the capacity development interventions of UN Women in supporting the female Member of Parliaments (MPs) in improving their knowledge and application of the gender-sensitive legislation analysis and review together with its continued support to national institutions and gender mechanisms.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO: With the recent adoption of the parity law, UN Women is pursuing its lobbying and advocacy with the Government for increased participation of women in policy and decision-making positions, which since the first democratic elections has never reached the threshold of 30 per cent. In Parliament, women's representation has increased slightly for the National Assembly (from 8.4 per cent in 2006 to 10.4 per cent in 2011) but this remains very low. The overall rate of women in provincial ministries is about 12.7 per cent.

LIBERIA: The Ministry of Internal Affairs in partnership with UN Women has developed an action plan to promote gender-responsive governance by national and local government officials. A national Gender Focal Point has been appointed at the Ministry of Internal Affairs, with whom

UN Women is working closely to identify context and location specific inputs that would strengthen gender-responsive governance.

UN women supports Member States in taking steps, including temporary special measures, to achieve women's full participation in public and private sector decision-making. Women's capacity to influence decision-making at all levels, whether in public or private institutions (including parliaments, local governments, unions, cooperatives, civil society organizations and movements, firms and households), is an essential feature of the enjoyment of all human rights and freedoms.

HAITI: In 2015, the implementation of the electoral law with the provision of 30 per cent of women's representation in municipalities and local political institutions, has been a significant achievement. To obtain these results, UN Women built strategic partnerships with political parties, the Electoral Council, the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Office of the Head of State and with women's organizations.

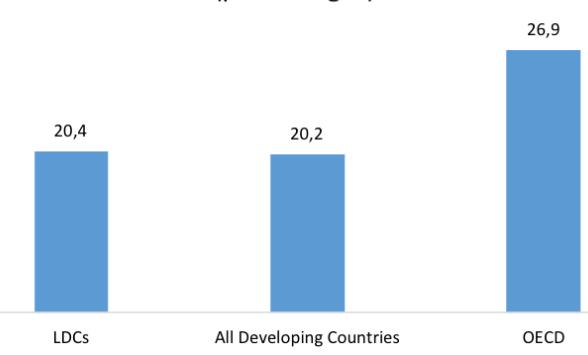
MALI: A achievement in terms of women's political participation and leadership was the adoption of a 30 per cent quota law, on women's minimum representation in all elective or appointment positions. This was the result of continued advocacy, targeting government, Members of Parliament, as well as religious groups. At this point women's representation stands at 20 per cent in government and 10 per cent in the Assembly.

UN Women backs gender equality advocates in calling on political parties, governments and others to do their part in empowering women.

BANGLADESH: UN Women has developed a pool of resource people and built partnerships that will facilitate the engagement and advocacy with political parties in 2016 in order to enhance women's political leadership. In 2013, UN Women used the BRIDGE (Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections) gender and elections module to increase dialogue among civil society, political party activists and election commission officials, generating practical suggestions to facilitate women's participation as voters and recommendations to improve the design and implementation of temporary special measures in the Parliament and political parties.

CAMBODIA: Leadership and participation of women in public life has improved, as shown by the Policy and Strategy on Equal Representation of Women in Civil Service Decision-Making, the updated National Policy on Women,

Graphic 1. Women's share of Seats in Parliament (percentages)



Source: UNDP (2015) Human Development Report 2015, on the basis of IPU data.

the Girl Child and HIV/AIDS/ STIs, and the National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan. Collective activism of young and marginalized women (with HIV and LBTs) was strengthened through the adoption of a cooperation platform and a common advocacy agenda, and the establishment of a network. Furthermore, their concerns were included in the agenda of local community meetings and investment plans, and in HIV/AIDS policies. Skills in leadership, activism and coalition-building of young/women at the subnational level were also improved.

PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES: National policies and assessments were undertaken/developed and launched in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu in 2015, with the support of UN Women. Fiji now has the Fiji National Gender Policy and the Fiji Country Gender Assessment report in place, Vanuatu has the National Gender Policy in place, and the Solomon Islands has the Women's Economic Empowerment Policy in place.

UN Women recognizes women's leadership is central to peacebuilding. The Midterm review of the IPoA represents an opportunity to further the actions outlined in Security

Council resolution 2242 and to enact the recommendations presented to the Security Council during the High-level Review of the implementation of resolution 1325, which underscore that women's participation is core to the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance and response to crises, and increases the likelihood of reaching sustainable and inclusive peace.

YEMEN: UN Women has focused its intervention on advocating to ensure that women leaders and gender equality advocates participate in the ongoing peace process and negotiations. Along with the Office of the Special Envoy for Yemen, UN Women advocated for the inclusion of women in the official delegations of the two parties of the conflict. These efforts resulted in having two women participating in the official delegations of two main parties to the conflict, one in each delegation (each delegation has eight members). Having women at the negotiation table was a great achievement in influencing the ongoing national dialogues. In addition to the establishment of the Yemeni Women's Pact for Peace and Security, with the support of UN Women, women's needs were voiced in the past year's negotiation meetings.



Caption: In Nepal UN Women ensured that for the first time the issues of undocumented women migrant workers were central to the National Action Plan on Foreign Employment. Photo: UN Women/Narendra Shrestha.

ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

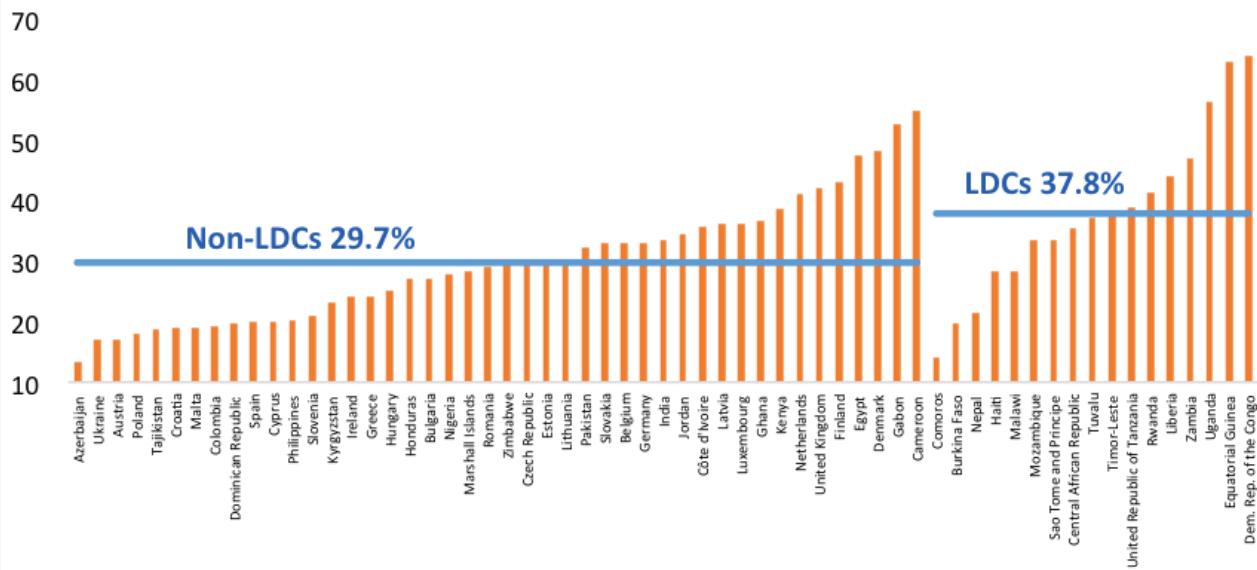
Violence against women and girls is a form of discrimination and a pervasive human rights violation embedded in the unequal power relations between men and women and gender stereotypes that perpetuate or condone such violence. The midterm review of the IPoA comes at a time of unprecedented political and normative commitment to the elimination of violence against women, with it being recognized as an overarching commitment of the 2030 Agenda and its inclusion as a target within the SDG 5.

While violence against women is unacceptably high in all countries with data (which tends to be partial, dated and of heterogeneous quality), in LDCs countries its level tends to be higher than in the rest of the world. For example, the prevalence of physical violence against women is 37.8 per cent in LDCs versus 29.7 per cent in non-LDC countries (see graphic 2). The review is the opportunity to forge the full implementation of existing commitments towards the elimination of all forms of violence against women, with a greater focus on prevention by addressing its root causes.

UN Women supports Governments in adopting and enacting legal reforms aligned with international standards. When brought into alignment with international human rights standards, such as those contained in the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), laws and policies can often play a positive role in changing attitudes and behaviours in the long-term, especially when they are accompanied by complementary strategies such as awareness-raising on ending violence. Once laws are in place, they convey a strong message that violence against women is not tolerated and that it is the right of every woman to live free of violence.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO: Sexual violence is rampant in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) due to the presence of armed groups in the eastern region and the sociocultural context. UN Women has been engaged in lobbying and advocacy to get DRC legal frameworks to end violence against women aligned with international standards. As a result, DRC authorities have launched the process of revising the family code. The draft prepared both by the DRC Government and gender equality advocates from civil society organizations with the support of UN

Graphic 2. Proportion of women aged 15–49 years experiencing physical violence (irrespective of the perpetrator) at least once in their lifetime, 1995–2013 (latest available)



Source: Based on UN DESA (2015), *The World's Women 2015*, United Nations. For sample of LDCs and non-LDCs, simple averages.

Women has been sent to the Parliament. Also, the National Strategy to Combat Sexual and Gender-based Violence is under revision. A related roadmap has been developed. UN Women is advocating with the Ministry of Gender to expedite and conclude this process in 2016.

MALAWI: UN Women has supported Malawi in the establishment of a strong policy, legal and institutional framework to prevent and eradicate gender-based violence (GBV) in line with international gender equality normative frameworks that Malawi ratified, including CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action. Prevention and response to GBV is reflected in different legal and policy documents including the Constitution. The Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations (MDFR) Bill was passed and ascended to in April 2015. The passing of the MDFR increased the legal marrying age from 16 to 18.

MYANMAR: In support of the Union Government, UN Women provided policy and technical advisory services to the government for developing the Prevention of Violence against Women (POVAW) law in Myanmar. UN Women also secured a seat on the law drafting committee and provided regular technical feedback to the Government, including presentations on good practices from various countries related to the provisions of the draft POVAW law. UN Women translated evidence-based materials that were used to raise the awareness of the law drafting committee and informed the development of the draft POVAW law.

SOMALIA: To ensure that women and girls live a life free of violence, the Government with support from the UN, including UN Women Somalia, has begun to institute several measures. In 2015, the Sexual Offense Bill for Somalia was drafted and expected to be enacted into law in 2016. Also in Somalia, the zero draft of the Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Bill was developed and round-table discussions are underway to finalize the bill before its submission to the Parliament.

UN Women partners with Governments, UN agencies, civil society organizations and other institutions to develop dedicated national action plans to prevent and address violence against women, strengthening coordination among diverse actors required for sustained and meaningful action. National Action Plans provide comprehensive, multisectoral and sustained 'blueprints for ending violence against women.' Such plans enable all the sectors involved to coordinate and systematize their activity, evaluating and building on initiatives so that approaches remain adaptive and responsive for years to come.

CAMBODIA: Prevention is a key part of the second national action plan on Violence against women. An assessment of capacity for prevention was initiated for developing primary and secondary prevention strategies. A regional joint UN project of UN Women, UNFPA, UNDP and UNV, produced two manuals for young adolescents and caregivers to train community facilitators on gender-based violence prevention. Youth involvement was enhanced through training of youth volunteers and dissemination of the gender-based violence volunteers' manual. Two national HIV policies now recognize links between gender-based violence and HIV.

UN Women supports expanding access to quality multisectoral responses and essential services for survivors. These services are essential as they provide much-needed support to survivors of violence, by keeping them safe, providing health care for their injuries, responding to their sexual and reproductive health needs, including provision of post-rape care and counselling, and facilitating their access to the police and justice system. Particularly vulnerable groups—such as migrants, women living with disabilities, indigenous women or women living in remote areas—have even more limited options and often lack access to basic services.

AFGHANISTAN: UN Women is at the forefront of a protection programme essential for saving lives of women and girls at risk of violent extremism and domestic violence. The support provided through UN Women-funded Women Protection Centres and Family Guidance Centres has been instrumental in reaching more than 3,500 women survivors of violence who received support services, including legal assistance, shelter, livelihoods training, information and awareness on addressing violence against women and girls.

MALI: UN Women in partnership with government agencies contributed to building violence against women survivors' services, establishing functional support and service units. UN Women also strengthened the availability and quality of government and non-governmental violence against women service providers. UN Women provided training of security forces on quick alert and response to violence against women cases or threats, and supported the expansion of the toll-free help line to different regions. The midterm evaluation conducted in 2015 confirmed an increase in women's confidence in police and other security forces, as a result of UN Women's interventions

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

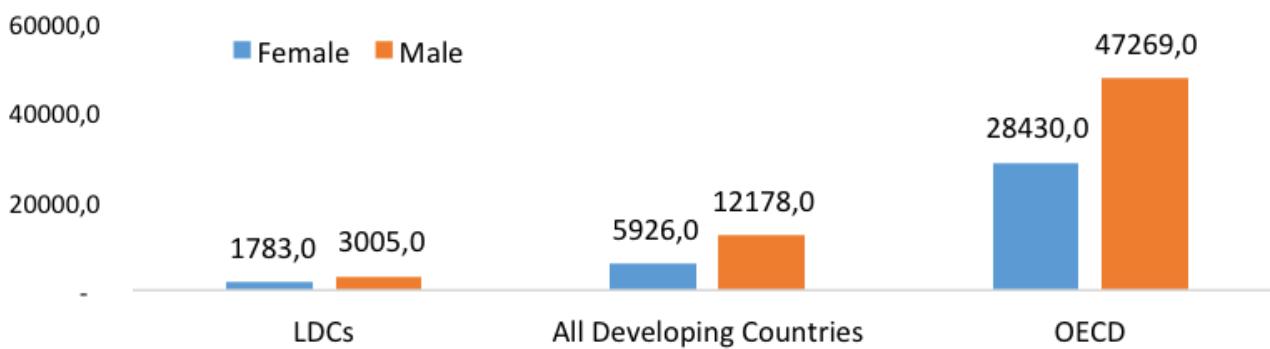
Many international commitments support women's economic empowerment, including the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and a series of International Labour Organization conventions on gender equality. UN Women supports women's economic empowerment in line with these, and with the growing body of evidence that shows that gender equality significantly contributes to advancing economies and sustainable development.

The situation of women in LDCs portrays a huge imbalance between productive effort and economic compensation and empowerment. The per capita income of women in LDCs is extremely low (based on available estimates) in spite of the fact that they have, on average, some of the highest labour participation rates in the world (65.7 per cent), close that of male labour participation in OECD countries (68.9 per cent).

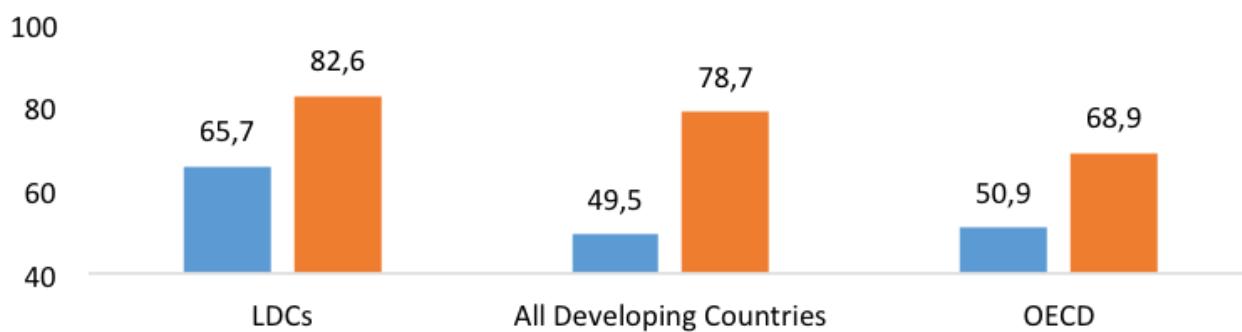
This highlights the fact that employment is not enough: women need decent jobs, typically in high productivity sectors. Also it is key to give women access to credit to the management of productive assets (see graphic 3).

Working with a variety of partners, UN Women's programmes promote women's ability to secure decent jobs, accumulate assets, and influence institutions and public policies determining growth and development. In line with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, UN Women promotes women's economic independence, including employment, and eradicates the persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women by addressing its structural causes through changes in economic structures, ensuring equal access for all women, including those in rural areas, as vital development agents, to productive resources, opportunities and public services (Beijing Declaration, Paragraph 26).

**Graphic 3.a. Estimated GNI per capita
(US\$PPP 2011)**



**Graphic 3.b. Labour Force Participation Rates
(percentages)**



Source: UNDP (2015) Human Development Report 2015, Statistical Annex.

AFGHANISTAN: In 2015, UN Women continued its support towards increased capacity and access of women to economic opportunities and livelihoods at the national and subnational levels. Development of the Women's Economic Security and Rights Strategy developed by the Ministry of Women's Affairs with UN Women's support, provides a road map for increased opportunities and an enabling environment to advance Afghan women's ability to fulfil their duties and enjoy their rights in the economic arena.

CAMBODIA UN Women supported several interventions in Cambodia to enhance women's economic empowerment. In October 2015, the Government's Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training set a new monthly minimum wage for the country's garment workers, most of whom are young women, at USD 140 (an increase from the 2015 wage of USD 128) effective from January 2016. The women bamboo producers came together to establish a social enterprise, formally registered with the Ministry of Interior, which will empower them to improve their economic status.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action also stresses the need for ensuring women's equal access to economic resources, including land, credit science and technology, vocational training, information, communication and markets, as a means to further the advancement and empowerment of women and girls, including through the enhancement of their capacities to enjoy the benefits of equal access to these resources.

ETHIOPIA: Through the Fund for Gender Equality and joint programme on gender equality and women's empowerment, UN Women has contributed towards economic empowerment of women in Ethiopia. By providing savings and credit services to self-help groups and cooperatives UN Women has strengthened the financial and economic capacities of poor and marginalized rural women. More than 2,000 rural women have increased skills, abilities, and competency in six Woredas/ districts in five regions, to run feasible income generating activities. They were grouped in 130 social and economic groups to acquire group synergy and dynamism, to foster cooperation, and share resources, experiences and challenges. The beneficiaries have acquired knowledge of women's rights that even local leaders do not have; as a result several women became natural leaders and participated in local elections.

UN Women advocates for employment policies that improve labour market conditions and advances decent work for

women, including domestic workers. UN Women also promotes women's economic leadership, whether in public decision-making, on corporate boards or in labour unions.

SIERRA LEONE: UN Women is supporting entrepreneurship development in addition to diverse livelihood packages for 650 women survivors and other women seriously impacted by Ebola. This is aimed at restoring and increasing sustainable livelihood means for women, as well as providing psychosocial services.

SOMALIA: UN Women in partnership with the International Labor Organization (ILO) facilitated the training of trainers of beneficiaries of UN Women's project on economic empowerment of women in Somalia. The training focused on women's empowerment through Business Membership Organizations (BMOs). It also looked at creating an entrepreneurship ecosystem supportive of Somali women. Achievements include: better understanding of developing the right strategies for BMOs to effectively help women entrepreneurs; greater insights into how to advocate effectively for women's economic empowerment; and a better experience of how trainers should apply adult learning methodologies in their local context. With the support of ILO and UN Women, training materials have been developed for other beneficiary BMOs and staff from the Somali Chamber of Commerce.

PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES: Under UN Women's flagship "Markets for Change" project, in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, women market vendors have been trained on leadership and advocacy (Fiji and Solomon Islands), financial literacy (Fiji), and how to establish market vendor associations focusing on the gender dimension, which led to having gender parity in almost all the market associations that were established and assisted. Market vendors in Fiji and Vanuatu benefited from the physical infrastructure developments and improvements undertaken in 2015.

UN Women promotes women's economic empowerment within the broader sustainable development agenda, with a focus on green economy and climate change.

BANGLADESH: In partnership with national agencies and communities, UN Women has been working with women in poverty-stricken communities severely affected by climate change. The intervention has benefited them through increased income, livelihood and leadership skills. Of the 5,296 women who received skills training, 85 per cent reported an increased income. 3,820 of these women

also received livelihood inputs, and approximately half of this group built assets that significantly changed their economic status, such as expanding their home-based business to a shop in the local market, hiring other women, buying livestock, and in a few cases, purchasing land.

MALI: UN Women has invested in the rural women's technical and managerial capacity around climate change processing units in 14 communities in Mali. This was also reinforced by negotiation and marketing skills to engage in economic governance issues. Economic sectors and value chains are fishery, food processing and mining. To build on these achievements, with USD 1.5 million in grant support from two private sector partners, UN Women is helping systematize the women's entrepreneurship strategy in 2016.

UN Women aims for higher incomes, better access to and control over resources, and greater security, including protection from violence for rural women. Rural women are key agents for achieving the transformational economic, environmental and social changes required for sustainable development. Women represent about 50 per cent of the agricultural labour force of the LDCs.

Globally, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) estimates that providing women with the same access to productive resources as men could increase yields on their farms by 20–30 per cent, raising total agricultural output by 2.5–4 per cent. This may in part reflect gender differences in access to or effectiveness of extension services, which are often more "attuned" to the needs of male rather than of female farmers. Extension services tend to be male-dominated, and are not designed to respond to the practical needs of women, particularly with respect to the time constraints on their participation in training activities.

MALAWI: Economic exclusion of women is a fundamental problem in Malawi, reinforced by many factors, including the country's patriarchal social system. Women have limited access to factors of production such as land, capital and credit. These challenges are exacerbated by the limited abilities of most women due to low levels of education. Women comprise 80 per cent of the agricultural labour force in Malawi. The 2015 Cost of the Gender Gap Report estimates that the cost of the gender gap in Malawian



Caption: Through its Markets for Change project in Fiji, UN Women works with local groups to provide women market vendors with tools, supplies, seeds and training. Photo: UN Women/Murray Lloyd.

agricultural productivity is about USD 100 million. Closing this gap could lift 238,000 people out of poverty. UN Women, in collaboration with partners, is providing technical assistance to the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development and through its Gender and Agriculture Programme, aiming to empower women to become transformative agents of change. Mainstreaming gender in the agriculture sector's processes and systems is underway with guidance from the gender audit recommendations.

NEPAL: UN Women provided technical and financial support to the government to develop a gender-sensitive National Action Plan on Foreign Employment, as well as to ensure a gender-responsive Agriculture Development Strategy. Women's economic empowerment, especially of the poorest and the most excluded, is acknowledged as a key priority in both policy documents. The National Action Plan has a stand-alone goal on women migrant workers, and gender equality has been mainstreamed in all other thematic goals. As a result of UN Women's technical support and policy advocacy, the National Action Plan, for the first time, focuses on the issues of undocumented women migrant workers, a key concern in the context of Nepal.

TANZANIA: In 2015, UN Women supported training for more than 2,000 Tanzanian women, including very poor and vulnerable ones. The women were trained in entrepreneurship skills, business formation processes, marketing and branding, cross-border trade requirements and solar electrification. They also learned about their rights and about the responsibilities of duty bearers. Since the training, increased incomes, increased access to finance and increased levels of production were reported. Many women have been able to expand their business activities and create new jobs. They gained a new confidence and are now seen as valued members of their communities.

LOOKING AHEAD

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs balance the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental – and are integrated and indivisible covering global priority issues, from poverty eradication and climate change to reducing inequalities within and between countries, promoting peaceful and inclusive societies as well as access to justice.

The Agreed Conclusions of the sixtieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women have set out a roadmap for the why, what and how of implementation of all key SDGs for gender equality and women's empowerment. The recommendations of the midterm review of the IPoA should align with the 2030 Agenda, with gender equality commitments addressed as a cross-cutting issue.

UN Women is committed to support the full gender-responsive implementation of the Istanbul Plan of Action aiming at expanding the gender equality normative gains achieved in 2015 into sectoral outcomes for gender equality, women's empowerment and the realization of women's human rights. In order to do so, UN Women has identified and promotes the following vectors of changes defined as the ten 'I's:

INSPIRATION from the historic intergovernmental normative frameworks to drive national sustainable development, human rights, peace and security and humanitarian response strategies and agendas at all levels.

INDIVISIBILITY of the SDGs and targets, horizontal and vertical: all SDGs deliver for gender equality and women's empowerment, in particular SDG 5 and gender-sensitive targets, threaded across all SDGs, must be prioritized.



Photo: UN Women/Joe Saade.

INTEGRATION and systematic mainstreaming of gender equality across all SDGs and the entire 2030 Agenda in all three dimensions of Sustainable Development – economic, social, and environmental.

INSTITUTIONS: National gender mechanisms need to be an integral part of the national institutional arrangements for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. We must continue to empower and strengthen gender equality institutions at all levels and promote a gender perspective in all key institutions – political, economic, judicial, social, cultural, etc. at all levels. Gender units at all levels must be strengthened and adequately funded to ensure all policies and programmes mainstream gender equality and make operational guidance more effective, coherent and flexible, in particular with regards to our joint action.

INVESTMENT: Significantly increased and enhanced financial investment and resource mobilization from all sources and at all levels is critical. Our challenge is to push for a gender-responsive, inclusive and sustainable macroeconomic framework that generates resources for gender equality, including investments in essential services and public infrastructure. Domestic resource mobilization and allocation are needed to redress the historic underinvestment in gender equality and women's empowerment. Gender-responsive budgeting should be used to track and monitor such investments. At the FfD conference, UN Women and partners launched the Addis Ababa Action Plan on Transformative Financing for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, which proposes a number of strategic policy options to mobilize resources at national and international level to fulfil gender equality commitments.

INFORMATION: Adequate data to monitor the SDGs' gender-related indicators is important for ensuring that women and men, girls and boys benefit from implementation efforts, 'leaving no one behind'. UN Women is committed to this agenda, and we will continue to work with all stakeholders to support global, regional and national indicators frameworks, data, SDGs monitoring and review at all levels to assess progress and gaps.

INCLUSION: UN Women will support Member States to engage with civil society organizations, feminist, women's, community based, and youth-led organizations, as well as women's human rights defenders in an "open, inclusive and transparent" manner and for movement building, transforming social norms and addressing the

needs of all women and girls, especially those facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and marginalization to ensure that no one is left behind. We will work strategically with men and boys, youth and faith-based organizations and we will mobilize a socially responsible private sector to play their part in the achievement of gender equality.

INNOVATION presents a particularly exciting – and even necessary – pathway for seizing the present moment. Gender equality and women's empowerment is quintessentially about social, economic and political innovation through creative means including technologies/ ICT. Innovation in the form of processes, products, services, technologies, and practices is a force for social change. Innovation is about how we use the tools available to us to disrupt, to recalibrate, to upend, to challenge inequalities and to accelerate human development and gender equality.

IMPLEMENTATION through adoption and reform of laws, policies and special measures and actions – we will need to support Member States in this and in ensuring their full, effective and accelerated gender-responsive implementation.

IMPACT: The impact of our action will be measured by our capacity to create cultural and social norms that are conducive to women's empowerment and change those that hamper it. We need to focus on the need for social transformation for women's empowerment and how women's empowerment brings about social transformation. Driving for impact means fostering an enabling environment and effecting the reality of women and girls, especially those most marginalized. This involves supporting gender-responsive follow-up and review and helping Member States develop monitoring and accountability mechanisms for implementation. It is critical that women and girls live in a world of substantive gender equality by 2030, a reality that will only be possible through a committed, accelerated and gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda by all countries including the LDCs.

In conclusion, for the second half of the IPoA, adapting the ten 'I's will be critical to ensure its gender-responsive implementation and exploit the opportunities we have to overcome the challenges which remain. It is important that the outcome of the midterm review lives up to the standards established in the 2030 Agenda.



Photo: UN Women/Catherine Mwangi

In the way forward, UN Women will also continue to contribute to the implementation of the IPoA through a number of its Flagship Programming Initiatives including:

- Climate-resilient Agriculture;
- Equal Opportunities for Women Entrepreneurs;
- Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces;
- Gender Inequality of Risk (Disaster Risk Management);
- Women's Engagement in Peace, Security and Recovery;
- Gender Statistics for Localization of the SDGs.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT UN WOMEN'S FLAGSHIP PROGRAMMES:

[http://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/
programme-and-technical-assistance](http://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/programme-and-technical-assistance)

FOLLOW UN WOMEN AT:

www.unwomen.org
www.facebook.com/unwomen
www.twitter.com/un_women
www.youtube.com/unwomen
www.instagram.com/unwomen

**UN WOMEN
IS THE UN ORGANIZATION
DEDICATED TO
GENDER EQUALITY
AND THE EMPOWERMENT
OF WOMEN.
A GLOBAL CHAMPION
FOR WOMEN AND
GIRLS, UN WOMEN WAS
ESTABLISHED
TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS
ON MEETING THEIR NEEDS
WORLDWIDE.**

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.