

UNDP in Action: Women and Girls in Crisis

Key statistics:

Overview:

Women make up half of the world's population (more than 3.3 billion people), yet experience the brunt of the world's poverty, illiteracy and violent crime.



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Poverty:

By 2005, women accounted for roughly 40 percent of the world's economically active population. Women's estimated earned income is about 30 percent of men's in surveyed countries in the Middle East and North Africa, 40 percent in Latin America and South Asia, 50 percent in Sub Saharan Africa and 60 percent in Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States, East Asia and industrialized countries. Women own 1 percent of the land in the world.

Security:

Ninety percent of fatalities in conflicts since 1990 have been civilians—primarily women and children. Sexual abuse of women and children has become a method of war: in Rwanda, up to 500,000 women were raped during the 1994 genocide; in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, an estimated 60,000 women were raped in the war; and in Sierra Leone, the incidence of war-related sexual violence among internally displaced women from 1991 to 2001 was as high as 64,000.

Conflict prevention and peace building:

Out of 12 peace agreements reached between 1991 and 2001 that put an end to conflicts in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kosovo, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste, only four (El Salvador, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Timor Leste) included a provision directly related to women. The most recent peace agreement in Sudan does not allow for women's participation.

Access to political representation:

At current annual rates of progress, gender parity in national legislatures will not be achieved until 2068. Thirty percent of Africa's councilors are women, 26 percent in South America, 24 percent in Central America, 17 percent in Asia and the Pacific, 23 percent in Europe and 2.1 percent in the Middle East. Only one woman has served as a judge on the International Court of Justice since it was established more than 80 years ago and the 34-member International Law Commission had no women throughout its 55-year history until 2001.

Natural disasters:

After the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, in many communities, the death rate of women was at least three to four times higher than that of men. Women can also be at greater risk of violence and inequity during recovery from natural disasters. In addition, natural disasters, such as droughts, can place an undue burden on women, who are often responsible for providing water and food for households.

Call to Action:

In 2007, UNDP launched an Eight Point Agenda for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality in Crisis Prevention and Recovery. The action plan offers a comprehensive approach to address the needs of women and girls in crisis and gives them a voice in the recovery process. This call to action aims to:

1. Strengthen women's security in crisis: Stop violence against women;
2. Advance gender justice: Provide justice and security for women;
3. Expand women's citizenship, participation and leadership: Advance women as decision-makers;
4. Build peace with and for women: Involve women in all peace processes;
5. Promote gender equality in disaster risk reduction: Support men and women to build back better;
6. Ensure gender-responsive recovery: Promote women as leaders of recovery;
7. Transform government to deliver for women: Include women's issues on the national agenda; and
8. Develop capacities for social change: Work together to transform society.



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UNDP in Action:

- In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, strengthens women's security and access to justice by supporting free legal aid centres, training legal staff, and raising awareness of human rights and the rule of law; in Sudan by facilitating free legal aid to survivors of sexual violence; and in Somalia by encouraging the participation of women in the police force and by establishing the first women lawyers' association to provide legal assistance to survivors of rape and domestic violence.
- In Sierra Leone, includes women in peace processes by helping women's organizations mobilize a constituency for peace during the 2007 national elections.
- In Côte d'Ivoire, addresses the needs of women in post-crisis situations by creating the first post-conflict support centre for women and girls, which is run by a local women's non-governmental organization and provides psychological, health and economic support to women and girls affected by the conflict.
- In Timor Leste facilitates women's access to livelihoods and property by supporting training for displaced women to promote their self-employment; in Sudan, offering livelihood training for women; in Ecuador, analyzing how best to assist women who move across borders in search of employment.
- In Latin America and Caribbean region, encourages gender equality in disaster risk reduction by developing a gender and disaster toolkit.
- In Nepal, promotes women's participation in government by conducting gender audits of key ministries and supporting the establishment of a Legal Aid Unit in the National Women's Commission; in South Sudan, facilitating women's entry into government to reach the government's quota of 25 percent female participation.

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