

# Goal 3

## Promote gender equality and empower women

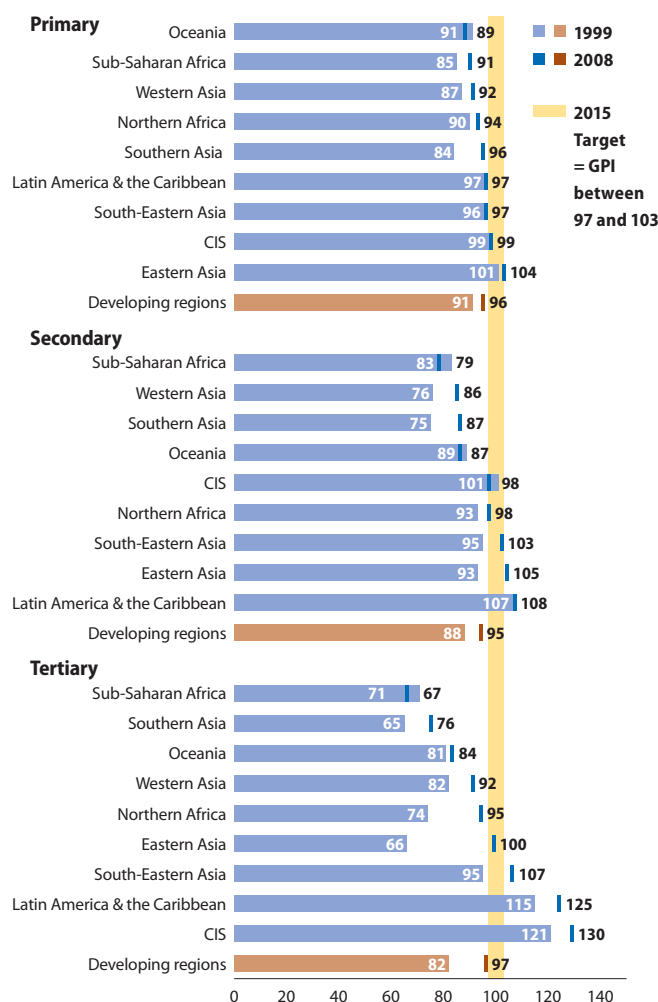


### TARGET

Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015

### For girls in some regions, education remains elusive

Girls' primary-school enrolment in relation to boys', 1998/1999 and 2007/2008 (Girls per 100 boys)



The developing regions as a whole are approaching gender parity in educational enrolment. In 2008, there were 96 girls for every 100 boys enrolled in primary school, and 95 girls for every 100 boys enrolled in secondary school. In 1999, the ratios were 91:100 and 88:100 for the two levels of education, respectively. Despite this progress, gender parity in primary and secondary education—a target that was to be met by

2005—is still out of reach for many developing regions. For primary education, the steepest challenges are found in Oceania, sub-Saharan Africa and Western Asia.

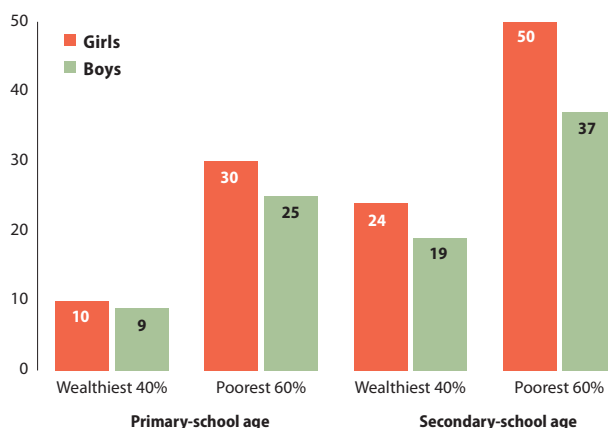
In secondary education, the gender gap in enrolment is most evident in the three regions where overall enrolment is lowest—sub-Saharan Africa, Western Asia and Southern Asia. In contrast, more girls than boys have signed up for secondary school in Latin America and the Caribbean, Eastern Asia and South-Eastern Asia.

In tertiary education, the ratio between girls and boys in the developing regions is close to parity, at 97 girls per 100 boys. This is largely due to the fact that many more girls than boys are enrolled in higher education in the CIS countries, Latin America and the Caribbean, Northern Africa and South-Eastern Asia. But in most other regions, the number of boys heavily outweighs that of girls in colleges and universities. In sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia, for example, only 67 and 76 girls per 100 boys, respectively, are enrolled in tertiary levels of education.

Other gender disparities found in tertiary education relate to areas of study, with women being overrepresented in the humanities and social sciences and significantly underrepresented in science, technology and, in particular, engineering. Completion rates also tend to be lower among women than men.

## Poverty is a major barrier to education, especially among older girls

Proportion of girls and boys who are out of school, by age and household wealth, in 42 countries with surveys during 2001/2008 (Percentage)



Poverty puts girls at a distinct disadvantage in terms of education. Girls of primary-school age from the poorest 60 per cent of households are three times more likely to be out of school as those from the wealthiest households. Their chances of attending secondary school are even slimmer, and older girls in general are more likely to be out of school. In the poorest households, about twice as many girls of secondary-school age are out of school compared to their wealthier peers.

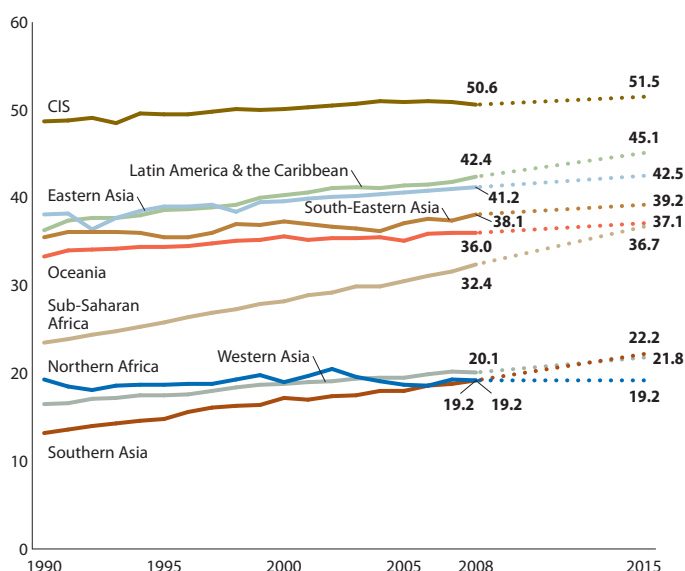
Household survey data also indicate that girls in rural areas face added challenges in getting an education and that the gender gap is much wider for girls of secondary-school age.





## In every developing region except the CIS, men outnumber women in paid employment

Employees in non-agricultural wage employment who are women, 1990–2008, and projections to 2015 (Percentage)



Globally, the share of women in paid employment outside the agricultural sector has continued to increase slowly and reached 41 per cent in 2008. But women in some regions are seriously lagging behind. In Southern Asia, Northern Africa and Western Asia, only 20 per cent of those employed outside agriculture are women. Gender equality in the labour market is also a concern in sub-Saharan Africa, where only one in three paid jobs outside of agriculture are occupied by women.

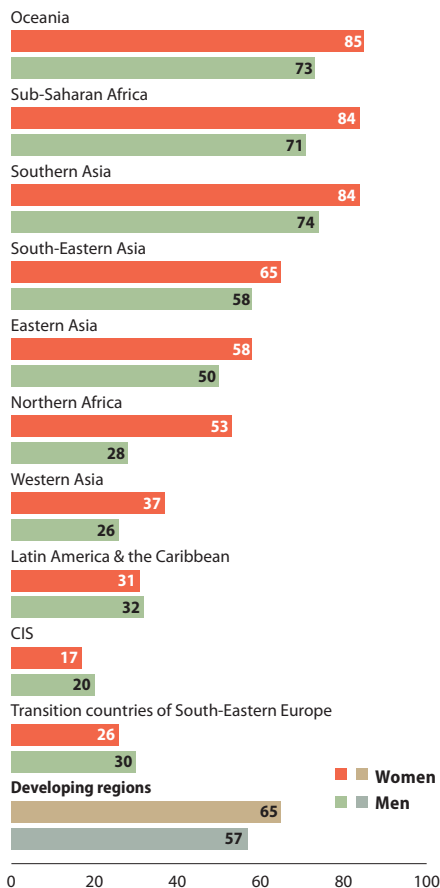
But even when women represent a large share of waged workers, it does not mean that they have secure, decent jobs. In fact, women are typically paid less and have less secure employment than men.

In countries where the agricultural sector predominates, women are mostly employed in agriculture and largely in vulnerable jobs—in subsistence farming, as unpaid family workers or as own-account workers—with no or little financial security or social benefits.



## Women are largely relegated to more vulnerable forms of employment

### Proportion of own-account and contributing family workers in total employment, 2009 projections (Percentage)



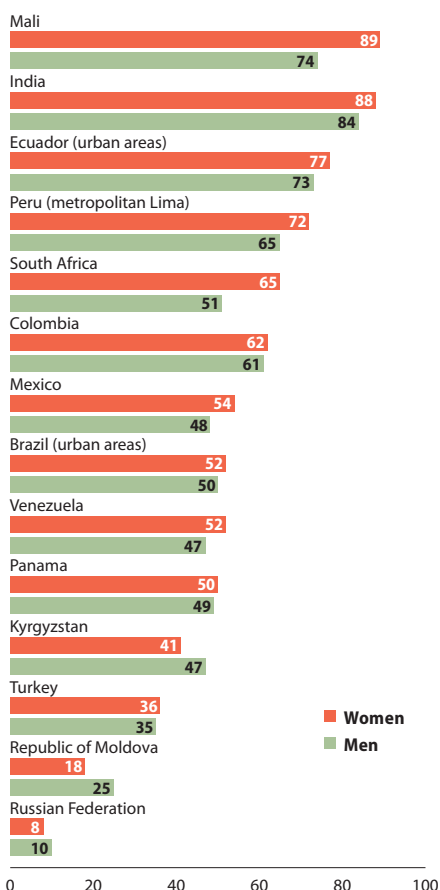
The 2008 financial crisis has eroded employment around the world. As both women and men lost their jobs, unemployment rates shot up, especially in the first half of 2009. The good news is that the rate at which unemployment is increasing appears to be slowing, according to the latest data. However, the fact that women are disproportionately represented in temporary employment, and occupy a substantial share of jobs in export-oriented manufacturing industries in many developing countries, may result in higher unemployment rates for women.

While the crisis has drawn attention to the levels of unemployment, the *quality* of available jobs is also worrisome. Many wage and salaried workers who lost their jobs, as well as many first-time job seekers who entered the labour market in the midst of the financial turmoil, have resorted to own-account or unpaid family work, resulting in deteriorating working conditions and lower incomes for the poorest. Women are more likely than men to be in vulnerable jobs, with the gap being particularly evident in those regions where paid employment opportunities for women are the lowest—in Western Asia and Northern Africa.



## Women are overrepresented in informal employment, with its lack of benefits and security

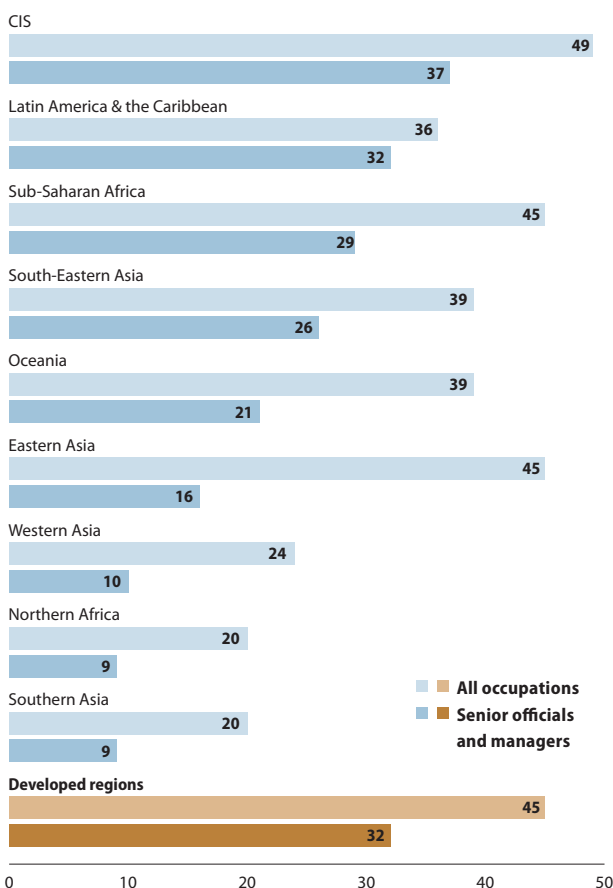
Informal employment as a percentage of total non-agricultural employment, women and men, selected countries, 2003/2005 (Percentage)



It is likely that the recent financial crisis has also led to a surge in informal employment due to job losses in the formal sector. In some developing countries, over 80 per cent of workers have informal jobs—as owners of informal-sector businesses, contributing family workers or employees without written contracts or social security benefits (including subcontracted workers operating from home and domestic services workers). In most of these countries, women are overrepresented in informal employment.

## Top-level jobs still go to men — to an overwhelming degree

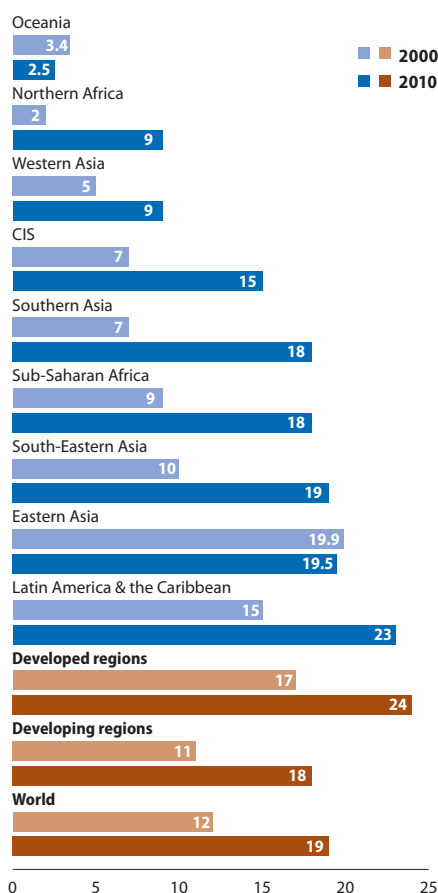
Share of women in top-level and all occupations, average for the period 2000/2008 (Percentage)



Though the number of women who secured paid jobs outside the agricultural sector increased between 1990 and 2008, women have generally failed to access higher-level positions. The top jobs—as senior officials or managers—are still dominated by men. Globally, only one in four senior officials or managers are women. And in all regions, women are underrepresented among high-level workers, accounting for 30 per cent or more of such positions in only three out of 10 regions. In Western Asia, Southern Asia and Northern Africa, less than 10 per cent of top-level positions are held by women.

## Women are slowly rising to political power, but mainly when boosted by quotas and other special measures

**Proportion of seats held by women in single or lower houses of national parliaments, 2000 and 2010 (Percentage)**



The global share of women in parliament continues to increase slowly and reached an all-time high of 19 per cent in 2010. This represents a gain of 67 per cent since 1995, when 11 per cent of parliamentarians worldwide were women. But it is far short of the target of 30 per cent of women in leadership positions that was to be met by 1995, and further still from the MDG target of gender parity.

Women make up 30 per cent or more of the members of lower houses of parliament in 26 countries and 40 per cent or more in seven countries. There were 35 women presiding

officers in 269 parliamentary chambers (13 per cent) in January 2010, up from 24 in 1995.

Following parliamentary elections and renewals in 2009, gains for women were registered in sub-Saharan Africa, where 29 per cent of the renewed seats went to women, bringing the regional average up to 18 per cent. In South Africa, women took 44 per cent of seats in the lower-house election, placing it third in terms of global ranking, after Rwanda and Sweden. Similarly, there was some progress in most countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, with 25 per cent of seats up for renewal going to women. Bolivia's upper house elected more than 40 per cent women members, bringing the regional average up to 23 per cent.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, 58 countries have 10 per cent or fewer women members of parliament and, in nine chambers, women have no seats at all. During 2009, no women gained seats in parliamentary renewals in the Comoros, the Federated States of Micronesia and Saudi Arabia.

Electoral systems, quota arrangements and other affirmative action measures taken by political parties continue to be key predictors of progress for women. During 2009, the average share of women elected to parliament reached 27 per cent in countries that applied such measures; in contrast, women gained only a 14 per cent share of seats in countries that did not. Women are also elected in far greater numbers under systems of proportional representation, rather than majority/plurality systems.

In addition to electoral systems and quotas, gender-sensitive electoral arrangements, well-trained and financed women candidates and political will at the highest levels of political parties and governments are key to overcoming gender imbalances in the world's parliaments. Given that there are still four men for every one woman in parliament, efforts will be needed on all these fronts if the target of 30 per cent is to be met.

Progress in achieving greater representation by women in the executive branches of government is even slower than in the legislative branches. In 2010, just nine of 151 elected heads of state (6 per cent) and 11 of 192 heads of government (6 per cent) were women. This is an improvement over 2008, when only seven women were elected as heads of state and eight as heads of government. On average, women hold 16 per cent of ministerial posts and only 30 countries have more than 30 per cent women ministers. On the other hand, 16 countries have no women ministers at all. The majority of these countries are in Northern Africa and Western Asia, the Caribbean and Oceania.