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Press Release

It's Back to the Future as Women's Pay Finally Equals Men's ... From 2006

By Media Team
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- Despite an additional quarter of a billion women entering the global workforce since 2006, wage inequality persists, with women only now earning what men did a decade ago, according to the *Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2015*.
- The global gender gap across health, education, economic opportunity and politics has closed by only 4% in the past 10 years, with the economic gap closing by just 3%, suggesting it will take another 118 years to close this gap completely.
- Is education failing women? The gap has widened in 22% of surveyed countries since 2006 and, while more women than men are enrolling at university in 97 countries, women make up the majority of skilled workers in only 68 countries and the majority of leaders in only four.
- The Nordic countries still dominate the Global Gender Gap Index. Ireland is the highest placed non-Nordic country, ranking 5th. Rwanda (6), Philippines (7) and New Zealand (10) are the only non-European countries in the top 10; and the United States falls eight places to 28th.
- Access the full report, infographics, videos and more, [here](#)

Geneva, Switzerland, 19 November 2015 – The gap between men and women in health, education, economic opportunity and political representation has closed by 4% in the past 10 years, according to the World Economic Forum's *Global Gender Gap Report 2015*, which launched today. In economic terms, the gap has closed by only 3% with progress towards wage equality and labor force parity stalling markedly since 2009/2010.

The slow pace of progress in bridging the gap in economic opportunity between women and men means that women are only now earning the amount men did in 2006, the year that the Global Gender Gap was first produced. Extrapolating this trajectory suggests that it will take the world another 118 years – or until 2133 – to close the economic gap entirely.

Global Gender Gap Index 2015

Top 10 Leading Nations -

GGGI 2015	Country/Economy	GGGI 2014
1	Iceland	1

For educational attainment, another of the four pillars in the report, the picture is mixed. Overall, the gender gap now stands at 95%, or 5% away from parity. This is an improvement on the 92% where it stood in 2006. Worldwide, 25 countries

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8	Switzerland	11	↑
9	Slovenia	23	↑
10	New Zealand	13	↑

have now closed their gap entirely, with the most progress having been made in university education, where women now make up the majority of students in nearly 100 countries.

But progress has not been universal, with 22% of all countries measured continuously over the past ten years seeing an actual widening of the gap between men and women when it comes to education. There is also a marked lack of correlation between getting more women in education and their ability to earn a living

particularly through skilled or leadership roles. While women make up the majority of enrolled university students in 97 countries, they comprise the majority of skilled roles in only 68, and in far fewer – four countries – do they hold the majority of leadership positions.

Health and survival, the third pillar, is the one which is closest to parity, at 96%. 40 countries have closed this gap entirely, with five having closed it in the past twelve months. Despite this encouraging increase, overall the Health and Survival gender gap has slightly widened compared to 2006.

Political empowerment, the fourth pillar measured by the Index, is the widest. World-wide only 23% of this gender gap has been closed although this area has also seen the most improvement, up by 9% from 14% in 2006. Only two countries have reached parity in parliament and only 4 have reached parity on ministerial roles.

With no one country having closed its overall gender gap, Nordic nations remain the most gender-equal societies in the world. As last year, the leading four nations are Iceland (1), Norway (2), Finland (3) and Sweden (4) – with Norway overtaking Finland. Denmark (14) and Belgium (19) slipped out of the top ten while Ireland (5) gained three places. Rwanda (6) which entered the Index last year for the first time gained one place. The Philippines (7) gained back two places consolidating its place in the top ten. Nicaragua (12) is still the highest ranking country from Latin America but drops out of the top ten. Three new countries join the top ten: Slovenia (9) climbed 14 places, while Switzerland (8) and New Zealand (10) both gain three places.

Elsewhere, the United States (28) loses eight places since 2014, due to slightly less perceived wage equality for similar work and changes in ministerial level positions. Other major economies in the top twenty include Germany (11), France (15) and the UK (18).

Among the BRICS grouping, the highest-placed nation remains South Africa (17), supported by strong scores on political participation. Russia (75) is next, followed by Brazil (85) which lost 14 places this year due to growing wage gaps and a decline in the number of women in ministerial level positions. China (91) lost 4 places while India (108) gains 6 spots.

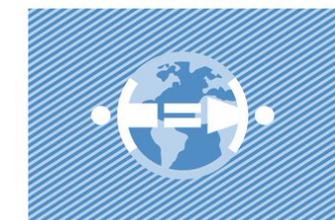
GGI 2015	Country/Economy	GGI 2014	
11	Germany	12	↑
15	France	16	↑
17	South Africa	18	↑
18	UK	26	↑
28	USA	20	↓
30	Canada	19	↓
41	Italy	69	↑
75	Russia	75	→
85	Brazil	71	↓
91	China	87	↓
101	Japan	104	↑
108	India	114	↑

Regional Analysis

Countries from **Europe and Central Asia** occupy 14 of the top 20 positions in the index, two more than last year. Of the region's major economies, Germany and France

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both climb one place while the United Kingdom's eight-point gain, which returns it to the same position it held in 2013, can be explained by improved performance in the Economic, Health and Political pillars. Belgium and Denmark have regressed most while Estonia and Slovenia have experienced the most gains. The lowest performing countries from the region are Malta (104), Armenia (105) and Turkey (130) which lost five places despite a slight score increase as other countries moved ahead faster.

In **Asia and the Pacific**, the Philippines (7) remains the region's highest-ranked country, followed by New Zealand (10) and Australia (36). These nations are regional outliers as no other nation from the region is part of the top 50. Lao PRD (52), Singapore (54) and Mongolia (56) come next. China's (91) overall score and rank slightly decreased due to a further drop in the sex ratio at birth. Indonesia (92), Japan (101) and India (108) have all improved compared to last year on their overall score despite some losses in their economic scores. Korea Rep. (115) gained two places this year due to an increase in the Economic pillar. The lowest performing countries from the region are Fiji (121), Iran (141) and Pakistan (144).

Nicaragua (12) which was previously the only country from **Latin America and the Caribbean** in the top ten loses 6 places this year due to decreases in wage equality and the percentage of women in parliamentary and ministerial positions. There are eleven countries from the region in the top 50, one more than last year. Among the largest economies, Mexico (71) gains 9 places due to improvements in the political pillar while Brazil drops to 85th position as a result of increased wage gaps and lower numbers of women in ministerial roles. The lowest performing countries from the region are Belize (103), Guatemala (106) and Paraguay (107).

In the **Middle East and North Africa**, Israel (53) and Kuwait (117) are the highest-placed countries in the region. The United Arab Emirates follows in 119th position. Both Kuwait and the UAE lose 4 places this year despite a slight increase in their overall scores due to relatively faster change in countries such as India, Korea. Rep and Zambia. The MENA region is also home to the lowest-ranked country in the index, Yemen, which, at 145th, has remained at the bottom of the index since 2006; but has significantly improved relative to its own past scores.

Sub-Saharan Africa boasts three countries in the top 20 of the index. The highest placed, Rwanda (6), gained one place due to improvements in the economic and political pillars. Next is Namibia (16) which gains 24 positions this year and is among the five countries which have made the most progress globally compared to last year. South Africa (17) moved up one spot due to improvements in wage equality. South Africa is followed by Burundi (23) and Mozambique (27). Nigeria (125), the region's largest economy, lost seven places due to losses in all pillars except education. Finally, the lowest performing countries from the region are Côte d'Ivoire (133), Mali (137) and Chad (142).

Ten Year Analysis

Ten years of data from the *Global Gender Gap Report* – first published in 2006 – reveal the pattern of change around the world relative to the 109 continuously covered countries' own past performance and in relation to each other. The region with the largest absolute improvement is Latin America, followed by Asia and the Pacific, Sub-Saharan Africa, Europe and Central Asia, Middle East and North Africa and North America. When compared to their own starting points nearly a decade ago, however, the order of relative change is slightly different, with Middle East and North Africa at the third position, Sub-Saharan Africa at the fourth and Europe and Central Asia at the fifth.

The direction of change within countries from 2006 to the present day has been largely positive, but not universally so. Of the 109 countries that have been continuously covered in the report over the last ten years, 103 have narrowed their gender gaps, but

another six have seen prospects for women deteriorate. These six countries are spread across regions: in Asia, it is Sri Lanka; in Africa, Mali; in Europe, Croatia and Slovak Republic; and in the Middle East, Jordan and Iran, Islamic Rep. In the Americas, no country has widening gender gaps.

While the Nordic nations continue to act as role models in terms of their ability to achieve gender parity, some of the biggest absolute and relative improvements of the past ten years have come from countries lower in the rankings.

Nicaragua and Bolivia are the strongest performers in reducing the overall gender gap over the last decade, followed by Nepal, Slovenia and France. The most improved countries relative to their own starting points ten years ago are Saudi Arabia for economic participation and opportunity, Burkina Faso for educational attainment, Georgia for health and survival, and UAE for political empowerment. In absolute terms, the most improved countries include Bahrain for economic participation; Burkina Faso for educational attainment; Georgia for health and survival; and Bolivia for political empowerment. The countries with the most losses relative to their past performance are: Jordan on economic participation; Malaysia on educational attainment; India on health and survival; and Hungary on political empowerment. The least-improved countries in absolute terms are: Tanzania for economic participation; Malaysia for educational attainment; India for health and survival; and Sri Lanka for political empowerment.

Progress has not been even across the four pillars of economy, politics, health and education. On educational attainment and health and survival, although many countries have already crossed parity, there are still setbacks in some parts of the world. In fact, 22% of the countries covered have wider education gaps than they did ten years ago, and 39% of countries have wider health and survival gaps than they did ten years ago. The largest gender gaps remain in the economic and political pillars but there have been fewer reversals, with only 16% of countries losing any ground on political empowerment and only 13% of countries losing ground on economic participation and opportunity.

Within the economic participation category, over 80% of countries have made absolute progress on labour force participation with Nepal experiencing the largest increase. Other countries which have shown particular strong growth on this indicator include Botswana, Nigeria, Spain, Nicaragua, South Africa and Lesotho. The largest absolute gains on women in senior roles – legislator, senior official and manager positions – have come from Colombia, Ghana and France, while on high-skilled roles in general – professional and technical workers – Lesotho, Albania and Guatemala made the most absolute progress.

Among the most improved in the political pillar are Bolivia, Slovenia, Nicaragua, Iceland, France, with Italy and Switzerland close behind. They have closed between 20 and 35% of their political gender gaps.

The Case for Gender Equality

“Increased levels of automation ushered in by the Fourth Industrial Revolution are likely to affect not only the economy but also humanity. In this context, we need to create a world where women's contributions and ideals are as valued as those of men. Gender parity in our thinking and actions will be critical in helping to ensure that the future is served by humanity and not threatened by it,” said Klaus Schwab, Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum.

“More women than men are enrolled in universities in nearly 100 countries but women hold the majority of senior roles in only a handful of countries. Companies and governments need to implement new policies to prevent this continued loss of talent

and instead leverage it for boosting growth and competitiveness", said Saadia Zahidi, Head of the Global Challenge on Gender Parity at the World Economic Forum.

The report covers the latest research on the benefits of gender equality from a variety of sectors, the current use of policy tools and business practices, and future implications for business leaders and policy-makers, including new findings in the context of disruptions to labour markets.

Methodology

In 2015, the Global Gender Gap Index ranks 145 countries on the gap between women and men on health, education, economic and political indicators. It aims to understand whether countries are distributing their resources and opportunities equitably between women and men, irrespective of their overall income levels. The report measures the size of the gender inequality gap in four areas:

- Economic participation and opportunity – salaries, participation and leadership
- Education – access to basic and higher levels of education
- Political empowerment – representation in decision-making structures
- Health and survival – life expectancy and sex ratio

Index scores can be interpreted as the percentage of the gap that has been closed between women and men, and allow countries to compare their current performance relative to their past performance. In addition, the rankings allow for comparisons between countries. Thirteen out of the 14 variables used to create the index are from publicly available hard data indicators from international organizations such as the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Health Organization and one comes a perception survey run by the World Economic Forum.

Global Challenge on Gender Parity

In addition to benchmarking gender gaps through the *Global Gender Gap Report* series and other topical studies, the World Economic Forum's Global Challenge on Gender Parity disseminates actionable best practices to close economic gender gaps, creates public-private partnerships to close economic gender gaps in selected countries, cooperates with industries to analyse and address contextual and industry-factors contributing to persistent gender gaps and works with multistakeholder communities of leaders and experts dedicated to closing gender gaps.

Partners of the Global Challenge on Gender Parity are: A.T. Kearney, Bank of America, Bloomberg, Burda Media, Centene Corporation, The Coca-Cola Company, EY, Heidrick & Struggles, Johnson Controls, JLL, ManpowerGroup, Old Mutual, Omnicom Group, Ooredoo, PwC, Renault-Nissan Alliance, SABMiller, Takeda Pharmaceutical and Tupperware Brands Corporation.

Notes to Editors

Read the report here: <http://wef.ch/gendergap15>

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