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Women in development

	Female population % of total 2003	Life expectancy at birth years		Pregnant women receiving prenatal care % 1995–2003 ^a	Teenage mothers % of women ages 15–19 1995–2003 ^a	Women's paid work in non-agricultural sector % of total 2002	Women's paid work in agricultural sector % of total 2000–03 ^a	Unpaid family workers		Women in parliaments	
		Male 2003	Female 2003					Male % of male employment 2000–03 ^a	Female % of female employment 2000–03 ^a	% of total seats 1990	2004
		Afghanistan	37	..
Albania	48.9	72	77	95	..	40.2	..	..	..	29	6
Algeria	49.4	70	72	81	..	14.2	..	..	..	2	6
Angola	50.6	45	48	66	..	..	..	..	..	15	16
Argentina	51.0	71	78	..	..	45.9	22.0	0.7	1.8	6	31
Armenia	51.5	71	79	92	6	..	..	1.1	0.8	36	5
Australia	50.1	77	83	..	..	48.9	31.3	0.4	0.7	6	25
Austria	51.5	76	82	..	..	44.1	47.0	1.4	3.7	12	34
Azerbaijan	50.9	..	..	69	..	48.4	46.8	..	..	..	11
Bangladesh	49.7	62	63	40	35	25.0	46.4	10.1	73.2	10	2
Belarus	53.1	62	74	100	..	55.8	..	..	..	..	10
Belgium	50.9	75	81	..	..	45.2	29.8	..	..	9	35
Benin	50.8	51	55	81	22	..	..	..	..	3	7
Bolivia	50.2	62	66	83	14	37.3	30.2	5.2	11.1	9	19
Bosnia and Herzegovina	50.5	71	77	99	..	..	..	..	..	..	17
Botswana	50.2	38	38	97	..	44.8	..	16.9	17.4	5	17
Brazil	50.7	65	73	86	18	46.6	31.9	..	..	5	9
Bulgaria	51.4	69	76	..	..	51.3	..	..	..	21	26
Burkina Faso	50.4	42	43	73	25	14.0	..	..	..	..	12
Burundi	50.9	41	42	78	..	..	..	..	..	..	18
Cambodia	51.4	53	56	38	8	53.2	..	31.6	53.3	..	10
Cameroon	50.3	47	49	75	31	..	..	..	..	14	9
Canada	50.5	76	83	..	..	48.7	26.8	0.1	0.3	13	21
Central African Republic	51.3	41	42	62	36	..	..	..	..	4	7
Chad	50.6	47	50	42	39	..	..	..	..	..	6
Chile	50.5	73	80	..	..	36.5	11.6	..	..	..	13
China	48.4	69	73	90	..	39.3	..	..	..	21	20
Hong Kong, China	50.9	78	83	..	..	45.9	32.3	..	..	..	..
Colombia	50.6	69	75	91	19	49.2	13.5	5.1	7.1	5	12
Congo, Dem. Rep.	50.4	45	46	68	..	..	..	..	..	5	8
Congo, Rep.	50.6	50	54	..	..	..	..	..	..	14	9
Costa Rica	50.1	76	81	70	..	39.6	8.5	2.5	3.6	11	35
Côte d'Ivoire	49.0	45	46	88	31	19.6	..	..	..	6	9
Croatia	51.9	70	78	..	..	45.7	45.1	2.4	7.8	..	18
Cuba	50.0	75	79	100	..	37.7	..	..	..	34	36
Czech Republic	51.2	72	79	..	..	46.7	..	0.2	1.1	..	17
Denmark	50.5	75	80	..	..	49.0	24.8	..	..	31	38
Dominican Republic	49.3	64	70	99	21	34.9	..	..	..	8	17
Ecuador	49.8	69	74	69	..	40.0	21.6	4.4	10.2	5	16
Egypt, Arab Rep.	49.1	68	71	69	9	20.3	20.8	8.2	26.0	4	2
El Salvador	50.9	67	74	76	..	31.1	5.6	..	..	12	11
Eritrea	50.4	50	52	70	23	..	..	..	..	..	22
Estonia	53.5	65	77	..	..	51.5	30.7	0.8	0.9	..	19
Ethiopia	49.8	41	43	27	16	..	..	..	..	..	8
Finland	51.2	75	82	..	..	50.7	32.8	0.6	0.4	32	38
France	51.4	76	83	..	..	47.0	..	..	..	7	12
Gabon	50.3	52	54	94	33	..	..	..	..	13	9
Gambia, The	50.5	52	55	91	..	..	..	..	..	8	13
Georgia	52.3	69	78	95	..	46.5	49.5	23.2	40.2	..	7
Germany	50.8	76	81	..	..	45.9	35.0	0.5	2.1	..	32
Ghana	50.2	54	55	92	14	..	..	..	..	..	9
Greece	50.7	75	81	..	..	40.5	43.8	4.2	14.7	7	9
Guatemala	49.6	63	69	84	22	39.2	..	..	..	7	8
Guinea	49.7	46	47	71	37	19
Guinea-Bissau	50.6	44	47	62	20	8
Haiti	50.9	50	54	79	18	4

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WORLD VIEW

	Female population % of total 2003	Life expectancy at birth years		Pregnant women receiving prenatal care % 1995–2003 ^a	Teenage mothers % of women ages 15–19 1995–2003 ^a	Women's paid work in non-agricultural sector % of total 2002	Women's paid work in agricultural sector % of total 2000–03 ^a	Unpaid family workers		Women in parliaments	
		Male 2003	Female 2003					Male % of male employment 2000–03 ^a	Female % of female employment 2000–03 ^a	% of total seats	
										1990	2004
Honduras	49.7	63	69	83	..	50.2	..	..	..	10	6
Hungary	52.2	69	77	..	..	46.7	..	0.4	1.0	21	10
India	48.4	63	64	60	21	17.5	..	..	..	5	9
Indonesia	50.1	65	69	92	12	29.7	..	..	..	12	8
Iran, Islamic Rep.	49.8	68	71	77	..	..	..	..	..	2	4
Iraq	49.2	62	64	77	..	..	..	..	..	11	8
Ireland	50.3	75	80	..	..	47.6	10.4	0.8	1.5	8	13
Israel	50.3	77	81	..	..	48.7	..	0.2	0.7	7	15
Italy	51.5	77	83	..	..	40.9	31.6	3.0	6.0	13	12
Jamaica	50.7	74	78	99	..	47.2	20.5	..	..	5	12
Japan	51.1	78	85	..	..	40.6	42.9	1.6	10.1	1	7
Jordan	48.4	71	74	99	6	21.9	..	..	..	..	6
Kazakhstan	51.6	56	67	91	7	48.1	47.1	..	..	..	10
Kenya	49.8	45	46	88	21	37.6	..	..	..	1	7
Korea, Dem. Rep.	49.8	61	65	..	..	..	..	..	..	21	20
Korea, Rep.	49.7	71	78	..	..	39.7	48.3	1.8	19.5	2	6
Kuwait	39.1	75	79	95	..	19.7	..	..	..	..	0
Kyrgyz Republic	51.1	61	69	97	9	45.4	..	..	..	..	10
Lao PDR	50.0	54	56	27	..	..	..	..	..	6	23
Latvia	54.1	66	76	..	..	53.4	37.1	4.2	4.9	..	21
Lebanon	50.7	69	73	87	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Lesotho	52.6	36	38	85	..	..	..	..	..	..	12
Liberia	49.7	46	48	85	..	..	..	..	..	..	8
Libya	48.4	70	75	81	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Lithuania	52.9	66	78	..	..	50.3	39.6	2.8	3.5	..	11
Macedonia, FYR	50.1	71	76	100	..	41.8	40.3	..	..	..	18
Madagascar	50.1	54	57	73	36	..	50.1	..	..	7	4
Malawi	50.7	37	38	94	33	12.2	..	..	..	10	9
Malaysia	49.4	71	76	..	..	34.6	26.5	..	..	5	11
Mali	50.9	40	42	57	40	..	..	..	..	..	10
Mauritania	50.7	49	53	64	16	..	..	..	..	..	4
Mauritius	50.5	69	76	..	..	38.2	..	..	..	7	6
Mexico	51.4	71	77	86	..	37.1	11.9	6.8	12.5	12	23
Moldova	52.3	63	71	99	..	53.7	49.8	4.7	10.7	..	13
Mongolia	50.3	64	68	97	..	47.4	..	..	..	25	11
Morocco	50.0	67	71	68	..	25.8	19.6	..	..	..	11
Mozambique	51.3	40	42	76	40	..	..	..	..	16	30
Myanmar	50.4	55	60	76	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Namibia	50.9	41	40	91	..	50.0	44.8	..	..	7	26
Nepal	48.7	60	60	28	21	..	..	..	..	6	6
Netherlands	50.5	76	81	..	..	45.0	29.5	0.2	1.1	21	37
New Zealand	51.0	77	81	..	..	50.6	29.6	0.6	1.2	14	28
Nicaragua	50.2	67	71	86	27	..	..	..	..	15	21
Niger	49.7	46	47	41	43	..	..	..	..	5	1
Nigeria	50.6	44	45	58	22	..	..	..	..	..	7
Norway	50.4	77	82	..	..	48.9	27.5	0.2	0.5	36	36
Oman	47.5	73	76	100	..	25.2	19.1	..	..	..	..
Pakistan	48.3	63	65	43	..	8.2	21.1	16.7	50.1	10	22
Panama	49.6	73	77	72	..	43.5	6.0	..	..	8	10
Papua New Guinea	48.6	56	58	78	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Paraguay	49.5	69	73	89	..	40.5	..	..	..	6	10
Peru	49.7	68	72	84	13	35.0	33.2	4.7	11.5	6	18
Philippines	49.6	68	72	88	7	40.7	28.2	..	..	9	18
Poland	51.4	71	79	47.5	44.1	4.0	6.8	14	20
Portugal	51.9	73	80	46.5	51.6	1.1	3.2	8	19
Puerto Rico	51.9	72	82	40.1	4.3	0.2	1.0



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		Male 2003	Female 2003					Male % of male employment 2000–03 ^a	Female % of female employment 2000–03 ^a	% of total seats	
										1990	2004
Romania	51.2	66	74	..	..	45.2	48.2	10.4	29.1	34	11
Russian Federation	53.3	60	72	..	..	49.6	..	..	..	..	10
Rwanda	52.4	39	40	92	7	..	..	..	..	17	49
Saudi Arabia	46.0	72	75	90	..	14.0	1.8	..	..	..	0
Senegal	50.3	51	54	77	22	..	..	..	..	13	19
Serbia and Montenegro	50.2	70	75	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	8
Sierra Leone	50.9	36	39	68	..	..	..	..	..	..	15
Singapore	48.8	76	80	..	..	46.7	..	0.3	1.7	5	16
Slovak Republic	51.4	69	78	..	..	52.0	..	0.1	0.2	..	19
Slovenia	51.3	72	80	..	..	47.9	46.1	3.8	7.0	..	12
Somalia	50.4	46	49	32	..	..	..	..	..	4	..
South Africa	50.8	45	46	94	16	..	..	0.7	1.4	3	30
Spain	51.1	76	84	..	..	39.9	27.9	1.0	3.3	15	28
Sri Lanka	50.6	72	76	98	..	44.6	..	..	..	5	4
Sudan	49.7	57	60	60	..	14.7	..	..	..	..	10
Swaziland	51.6	42	43	87	..	29.3	..	..	..	4	11
Sweden	50.3	78	82	..	..	50.9	23.9	0.3	0.4	38	45
Switzerland	50.3	78	83	..	..	47.2	..	..	..	14	25
Syrian Arab Republic	49.5	68	73	71	..	18.4	35.3	..	..	9	12
Tajikistan	50.2	63	69	71	..	50.4	..	..	..	..	13
Tanzania	50.3	42	43	49	25	..	51.8	..	..	..	21
Thailand	50.8	67	72	92	..	46.1	42.5	16.4	39.8	3	9
Togo	50.4	49	51	73	19	..	..	..	..	5	7
Trinidad and Tobago	50.4	70	74	92	..	40.8	11.1	1.0	0.6	17	19
Tunisia	49.5	71	75	92	..	..	..	..	..	4	12
Turkey	50.2	66	71	68	10	20.6	48.9	10.2	51.3	1	4
Turkmenistan	50.5	61	68	98	4	..	..	..	..	26	26
Uganda	50.0	43	44	92	31	..	..	..	..	12	25
Ukraine	53.5	63	74	..	..	53.2	43.6	0.8	1.7	..	5
United Arab Emirates	35.0	74	77	97	..	12.7	0.1	..	..	..	0
United Kingdom	50.8	75	80	..	..	50.4	22.8	0.2	0.5	6	18
United States	51.0	75	80	..	..	48.6	25.7	0.1	0.1	7	14
Uruguay	51.5	72	79	94	..	45.8	12.0	..	..	6	12
Uzbekistan	50.3	64	70	97	10	41.8	..	..	..	..	7
Venezuela, RB	49.7	71	77	90	..	41.8	7.2	..	..	10	10
Vietnam	50.5	68	72	86	6	..	..	..	..	18	27
West Bank and Gaza	49.3	71	75	..	..	..	37.0	6.0	27.3	..	..
Yemen, Rep.	49.0	57	58	45	16	5.8	..	..	..	4	0
Zambia	49.9	36	37	93	32	..	..	..	..	7	12
Zimbabwe	50.3	39	38	93	21	20.6	..	..	..	11	10
World	49.7 w	65 w	69 w			36.6 w				13 w	15 w
Low income	49.2	57	59			19.9				11	12
Middle income	49.7	67	72			39.9				14	14
Lower middle income	49.6	67	72			39.7				15	14
Upper middle income	50.6	71	77			41.6				12	16
Low & middle income	49.5	63	66			34.4				13	14
East Asia & Pacific	49.0	68	71			38.7				18	17
Europe & Central Asia	52.0	64	73			45.7				21	12
Latin America & Carib.	50.6	68	74			42.9				12	19
Middle East & N. Africa	49.2	67	70			..				5	6
South Asia	48.6	62	64			18.3				6	9
Sub-Saharan Africa	50.3	45	46			..				9	13
High income	50.8	76	81			45.8				12	21
Europe EMU	51.1	76	82			44.4				12	22

a. Data are for the most recent year available.

About the data

Despite much progress in recent decades, gender inequalities remain pervasive in many dimensions of life—worldwide. But while disparities exist throughout the world, they are most prevalent in poor developing countries. Gender inequalities in the allocation of such resources as education, health care, nutrition, and political voice matter because of the strong association with well-being, productivity, and economic growth. This pattern of inequality begins at an early age, with boys routinely receiving a larger share of education and health spending than do girls, for example.

Because of biological differences girls are expected to experience lower infant and child mortality rates and to have a longer life expectancy than boys. This biological advantage, however, may be overshadowed by gender inequalities in nutrition and medical interventions, and by inadequate care during pregnancy and delivery, so that female rates of illness and death sometimes exceed male rates, particularly during early childhood and the reproductive years. In high-income countries women tend to outlive men by four to eight years on average, while in low-income countries the difference is narrower—about two to three years. The difference in child mortality rates (table 2.19) is another good indicator of female social disadvantage because nutrition and medical interventions are particularly important for the 1–5 age group. Female child mortality rates that are as high as or higher than male child mortality rates might be indicative of discrimination against girls.

Having a child during the teenage years limits girls' opportunities for better education, jobs, and income and increases the likelihood of divorce and separation. Pregnancy is more likely to be unintended during the teenage years, and births are more likely to be premature and are associated with greater risks of complications during delivery and of death.

In many countries maternal mortality (tables 1.2 and 2.16) is a leading cause of death among women of reproductive age. Most maternal deaths result from preventable causes—hemorrhage, infection, and complications from unsafe abortions. Prenatal care is essential for recognizing, diagnosing, and promptly treating complications that arise during pregnancy. In high-income countries most women have access to health care during pregnancy, but in developing countries an estimated 8 million women suffer pregnancy-related complications every year, and over half a million die (WHO 2004). This is reflected in the differences in maternal mortality ratios between high- and low-income countries.

Women's wage work is important for economic growth and the well-being of families. But restricted access to education and vocational training, heavy workloads at home and in nonpaid domestic and market activities, and labor market discrimination often limit women's participation in paid economic activities, lower their productivity, and reduce their wages. When women are in salaried employment, they tend to be concentrated in the nonagricultural sector. However, in many developing countries women are a large part of agricultural employment, often as unpaid family workers.

Among people who are unsalaried, women are more likely than men to be unpaid family workers, while men are more likely than women to be self-employed or employers.

There are several reasons for this. Few women have access to credit markets, capital, land, training, and education, which may be required to start up a business. Cultural norms may prevent women from working on their own or from supervising other workers. Also, women may face time constraints due to their traditional family responsibilities. Because of biases and misclassification substantial numbers of employed women may be underestimated or reported as unpaid family workers even when they work in association or equally with their husbands in the family enterprise.

Women are vastly underrepresented in decision-making positions in government, although there is some evidence of recent improvement. Gender parity in parliamentary representation is still far from being realized. In 2004 women represented 16 percent of parliamentarians worldwide, compared with 9 percent in 1987. Without representation at this level, it is difficult for women to influence policy.

For information on other aspects of gender, see tables 1.2 (Millennium Development Goals: eradicating poverty and improving lives), 2.3 (employment by economic activity), 2.4 (unemployment), 2.12 (education efficiency), 2.13 (education outcomes), 2.16 (reproductive health), 2.18 (health risk factors and future challenges), and 2.19 (mortality).

Definitions

- Female population is the percentage of the population that is female.
- Life expectancy at birth is the number of years a newborn infant would live if prevailing patterns of mortality at the time of its birth were to stay the same throughout its life.
- Teenage mothers are the percentage of women ages 15–19 who already have children or are currently pregnant.
- Pregnant women receiving prenatal care are the percentage of women attended at least once during pregnancy by skilled health personnel for reasons related to pregnancy.
- Women's paid work in nonagricultural sector refer to women wage employees in the nonagricultural sector as a percentage of total nonagricultural employment.
- Women's paid work in agricultural sector refer to women wage employees in the agricultural sector as a percentage of total agricultural employment.
- Unpaid family workers are those who work without pay in a market-oriented establishment or activity operated by a related person living in the same household.
- Women in parliaments are the percentage of parliamentary seats in a single or lower chamber occupied by women.

Data sources

The data on female population and life expectancy are from the World Bank's population database. The data on pregnant women receiving prenatal care are from United Nations Children's Fund's (UNICEF) State of the World's Children 2005. The data on teenage mothers are from Demographic and Health Surveys by Macro International. The data on labor force and employment are from the ILO's Key Indicators of the Labour Market, third edition and LaborSta. The data on women in parliaments are from the Inter Parliamentary Union.