

WE>> WOMEN EMPOWER THE WORLD

PROJECT OUTLINE





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“The empowerment of the world’s women is a global imperative. Yet despite important progress in promoting gender equality, there remains an urgent need to address structural barriers to women’s economic empowerment and full inclusion in economic activity.”

*Ban Ki Moon, Former UN Secretary-General,
January 2016*

Foreword

After the positive experience with WE - Women for Expo (which concluded with the approval by Bureau of International Expositions member countries of a Resolution stating that every future Expo will feature the role of women), the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation**, in collaboration with **AIfE** (the **Aspen Initiative for Europe**), has launched an international project to support the role of women in improving global governance.

Thus is **WE » Women Empower the World** born. This project’s goal is to highlight the gender dimension in international relations and in global challenges, especially with regard to the 2017 Italian Presidency of the G7. The issue has important implications in foreign policy, particularly from a Euro-Mediterranean perspective, given how it conditions any possibility of integration for Islamic communities in Europe.

The Executive Committee of WE » Women Empower the World (created by Ministerial Decree on May 31, 2016) boasts an International Board chaired by Emma Bonino and Marta Dassù. The project’s director is Vichi De Marchi.

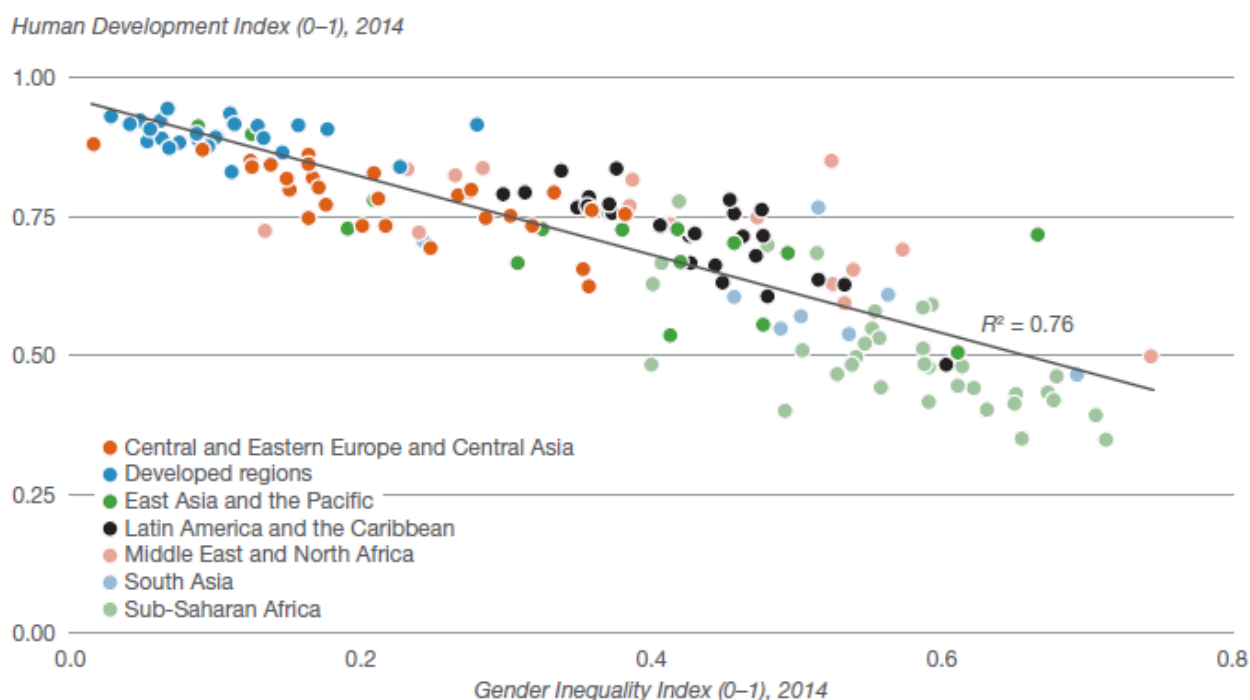
1. Background

Without choices based on meritocracy and without equal rights, social crises will inevitably prevail. Big business has understood this and now favors the careers of female employees as well as international appointments for women. Statistics prove that greater diversity leads to better results in terms both of GDP and of performance. When women contribute more to a nation's income, positive effects are also felt in the food sector and in education.

Empowering women to participate fully in economic life across all sectors is essential to build stronger economies, to achieve internationally agreed goals of development and sustainability, and to improve the quality of life for women, men, families and communities.

Gender equality can bring dramatic gains in human development and well-being for individuals, families and societies. The Human Development Index is a widely used measure of achievement in key aspects of individual well-being, encompassing health and education alongside income. Figure I shows the strong relationship between a country's achievements in human development and its level of gender inequality¹. In terms of benefits for the economy, strong and accumulating evidence suggests that lower levels of gender inequality are associated with gains in terms of income, economic growth and national competitiveness (figures II and III).

Figure I Gender equality is associated with human development

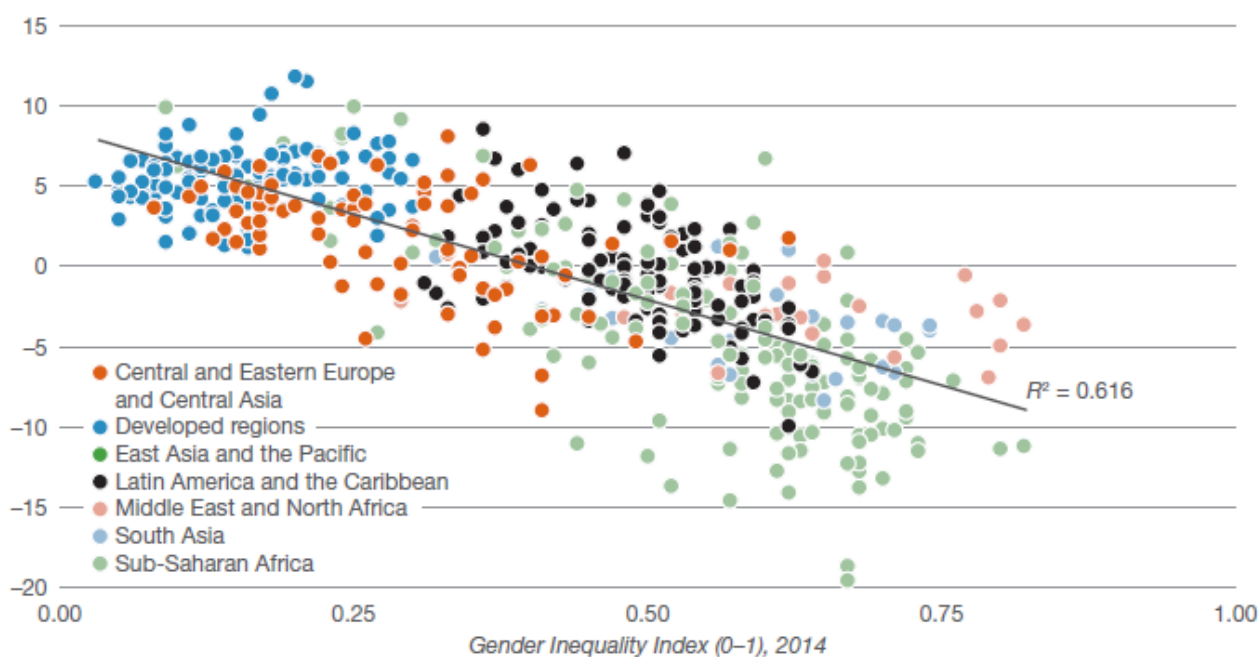


Source: United Nations Development Programme 2015 Human Development Report.

¹ UN Women Full Report 2016.

Figure II Gender equality is associated with faster economic growth

GDP per capita average growth (%), 1990–2010

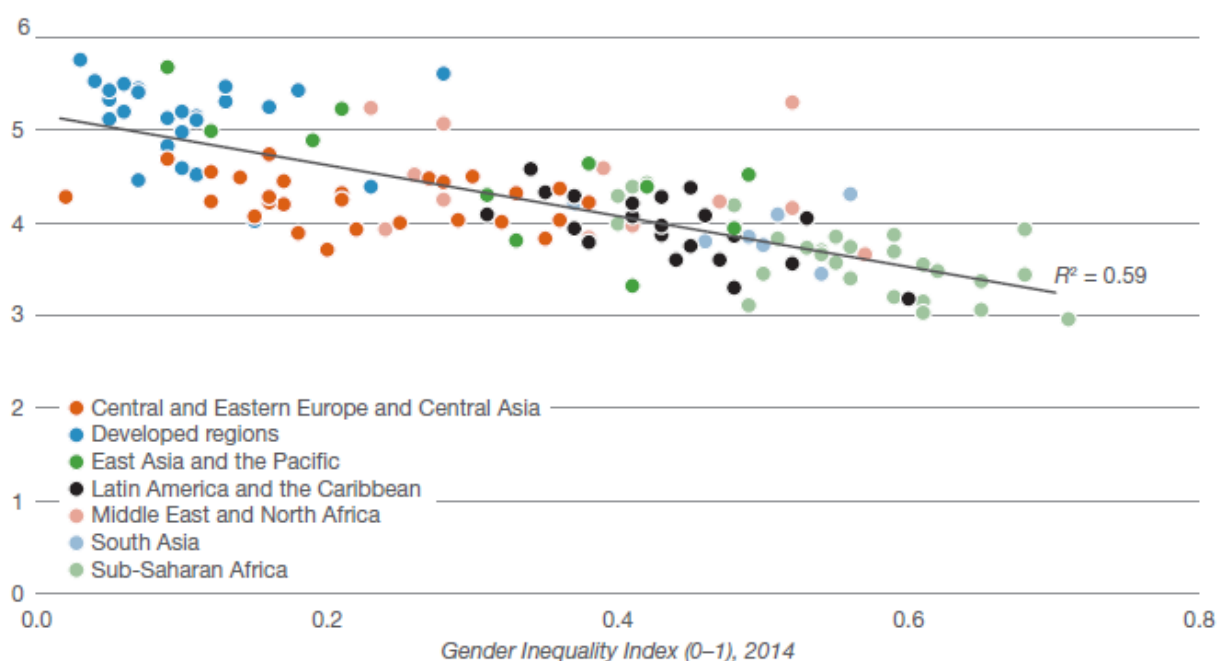


Note: GDP per capita growth was regressed on initial income to control for convergence. Years range from 1990 to 2010.

Source: Development Indicators 2015, IMF staff estimates, and United Nations Development Programme 2015 Human Development Report.

Figure III Gender equality is associated with stronger national competitiveness

Global Competitiveness Index (1–7), 2015



Source: The Global Competitiveness Report 2015–2016 (World Economic Forum) and United Nations Development Programme 2015 Human Development Report.

Given all this, the need arises for policies that help reconcile the role of women in society with classic responsibilities regarding children and the home, even while keeping in mind those welfare policies linked to sociocultural and economic contexts.

Empowering women economically is not only the “right thing” to do to honor the world’s commitments to human rights. It is also the “smart thing” to do for development, economic growth and business. The economic and human development costs of large and persistent gender gaps are enormous. These costs include both actual costs and opportunity costs and are generated from several problems – some common, others different from country to country.

⇒ **Problems common to low-, medium-, and high-income countries:**

- Fewer economic opportunities: wages, percentage of women in employment, and percentage of women in highly-specialized jobs;
- Lower representation in leadership positions (in business and in culture);
- Fewer political opportunities: number of women in parliament and in key political roles;
- Fewer educational opportunities: ability to access different levels of education.

⇒ **High-income countries:**

To date, notwithstanding the undeniable progress made in recent decades, the employment rate for women – even at the European level – remains lower than for men. Despite the fact that women make up the majority of students and graduates, they continue to earn less per hour worked than men; to be underrepresented in positions of political and business responsibility; to carry the load of family duties in looking after the home, children, and aged relatives; and to run a higher risk of poverty than men.

- Barriers to access;
- Pay gap and career gap;
- Stalled growth in Europe, retriggering all factors of growth;
- Gaps in science, technology and innovation;
- Reproductive choices, the demographic pyramid, aging.

⇒ **Low-income countries:**

- Girls and education: education for girls remains limited in many low-income countries: 21 countries still average fewer than five years of girls’ schooling, and only 8 of the 32 low-income countries with data have achieved gender parity in secondary enrollment.
- Health and prevention: lower levels of health and shorter life expectancy; mortality rates compared to men;
- Agriculture: access to food, adequate nutrition, access to appropriate agricultural technologies, land tenure;

⇒ **Legal and cultural protection of women's rights:**

- Migration flows in Europe are reproducing in medium- and high-income countries many of the problems faced by women in low-income countries. This is true not just on an economic level, but also socially and culturally. The socioeconomic impact and the issue of social integration.

2. Facts and Figures²

Throughout their working lives, women continue to face significant obstacles in gaining access to decent work. Only marginal improvements have been achieved since the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, leaving large gaps to be covered in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the United Nations in 2015. Inequality between women and men persists in global labor markets with respect to opportunities, treatment and outcomes. Over the last two decades, women's significant progress in educational achievements has not translated into a comparable improvement in their position at work. In many regions in the world, in comparison to men, women are more likely to become and remain unemployed, have fewer chances to participate in the labor force and – even when they do – often have to accept lower quality jobs. Progress in surmounting these obstacles has been slow and is limited to a few regions across the world. Even in many of those countries where gaps in labor force participation and employment have narrowed and where women are shifting away from family work and moving into the services sector, the quality of women's jobs remains a matter of concern. The unequal distribution of unpaid care and household work between women and men and between families and the society is an important determinant of gender inequalities at work.

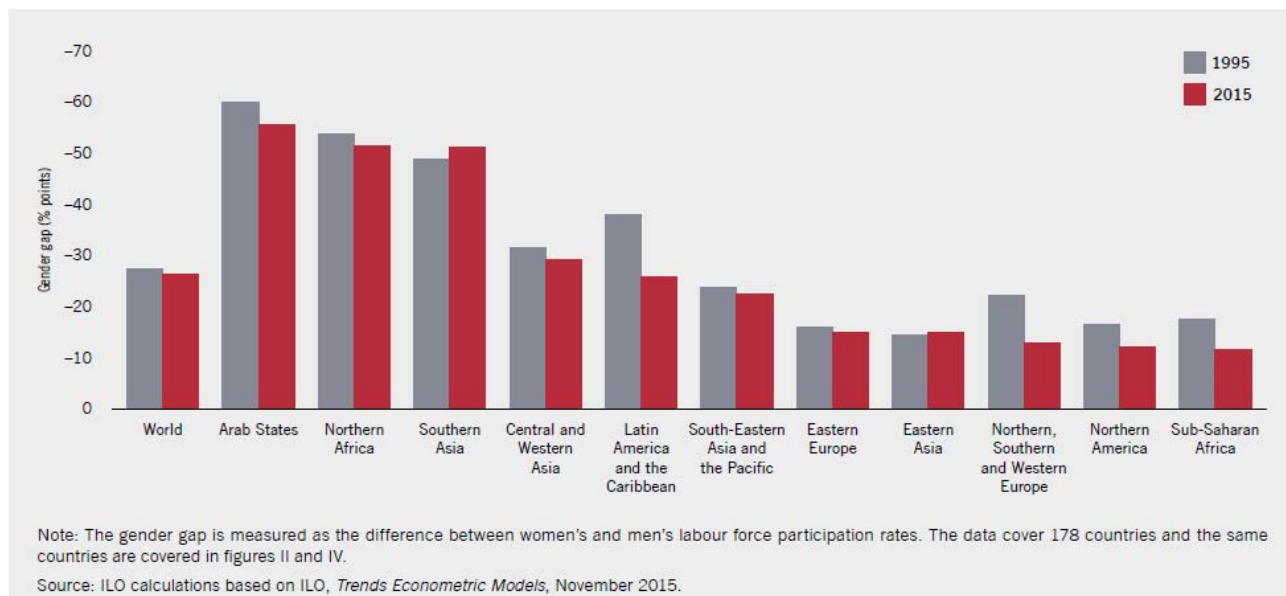
⇒ **Gender gaps in labor force participation and employment rates declined only marginally**

Between 1995 and 2015, the global female labor force participation rate decreased from 52.4 to 49.6 per cent. The corresponding figures for men are 79.9 and 76.1 per cent, respectively. Worldwide, the chances for women to participate in the labor market remain almost 27 percentage points lower than those for men (figure I). In regions where gender gaps in participation have been high, they have remained so. In Southern Asia and Eastern Asia, the gap has grown even wider. Women's lower participation rates translate into fewer employment opportunities, with little variation over time, which negatively affects women's earning capacity and economic security. In 2015, the gender gap in the employment rate amounted to 25.5 percentage points in women's disfavor, only 0.6 percentage points less than in 1995. It is only in Northern, Southern and Western Europe that employment gaps have closed marginally as women continue to enter the labor market in higher numbers in that region – but also as a result of the reduction of men's employment rates due to the economic downturn. In addition, the global financial crisis led to a temporary reduction in gender gaps in employment in North America. Overall, however, change has been virtually absent.

² ILO, Women at Work, Trends 2016, Executive Summary.

Figure IV

Gender gaps in labor force participation rates by region, 1995 and 2015



⇒ Young women face the highest risk of unemployment

Women are more likely to be unemployed than men, with global unemployment rates of 5.5 per cent for men and 6.2 per cent for women. With the exception of East Asia, Eastern Europe and North America, male unemployment rates are lower than female unemployment rates in all other regions of the world, with the highest gender unemployment gaps found in Northern Africa and the Arab States. In Northern, Southern and Western Europe, and in North America, the gender unemployment gaps have narrowed as a result of the financial crisis, largely under the impact of the economic downturn on the male-dominated sectors as well as the rising employment rates for married women. In some contexts, the latter are entering employment to compensate for losses in family income caused by male unemployment.

Globally, youth unemployment remains an issue of concern. Unemployment is affecting young women more than young men in almost all regions of the world. In Northern Africa and the Arab States, the female youth unemployment rate is almost double that of young men, reaching as high as 44.3 and 44.1 per cent, respectively. In contrast, youth unemployment is higher for young men than for young women in North America, East Asia and Northern, Southern and Western Europe. As a result of the financial crisis, this inverse gender gap in youth unemployment has even increased in Northern, Southern and Western Europe and in North America; in this last region, however, there have been some signs of the narrowing of gaps in recent years.

⇒ Gender gaps in the distribution of unpaid household and care work mean that women are more likely to work shorter hours for pay or profit

Unpaid household and care work

In both high- and lower-income countries, women continue to work fewer hours in paid employment, while performing the vast majority of unpaid household and care work. On average, women carry out at least two and a half times more unpaid household and care work than men in countries where the relevant data are available. Although this gender gap remains substantive, it has decreased over time, mostly because of some reduction in the time spent by women on housework, while there have been no

significant reductions in the time that they spend on childcare. Women, however, continue to work longer hours per day than men when both paid work and unpaid work are taken into consideration. In particular, employed women (in both self-employment and in wage and salaried employment), have longer working days on average than employed men, with a gender gap of 73 and 33 minutes per day in developing and developed countries, respectively. Even when women are employed, they still carry out the larger share of unpaid household and care work.

Figure V Time spent on paid and unpaid work for employed person by sex, 23 developing and 23 developed economies (latest year available)

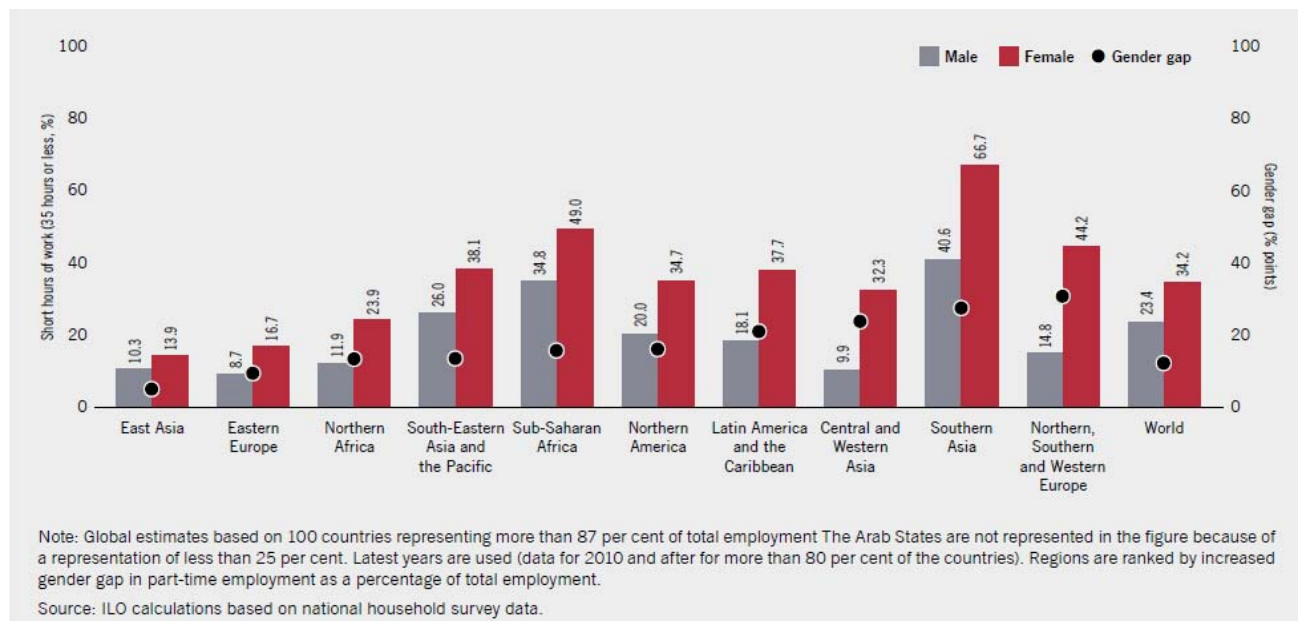


Short hours of work

As a consequence, women are more likely than men to work short hours, whether voluntarily or against their choice (thus finding themselves in “time-related underemployment”). Across the world, women represent less than 40 per cent of total employment, but make up 57 per cent of those working on a part-time basis. Estimates based on 100 countries show that more than one third of employed women (34.2 per cent) work less than 35 hours per week, compared with 23.4 per cent of employed men. Overall, the gender gap for part-time employment between women and men in employment is 11 percentage points (figure VI). Gender gaps are larger in most of the countries in Europe, Central and Western Asia, Southern Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition, underemployment is significantly higher for women than it is for men. In countries in Africa and Asia, the prevalence of underemployment for both women and men is high, with gender gaps of 7.5 and 6.4 percentage points, respectively, in those two regions. In some countries in sub-Saharan Africa, time-related underemployment for women is as high as 40 or 50 per cent of total employment.

Figure VI

Persons working less than 35 hours per week and gender gap, 100 countries (latest year available)



Excessive hours of work

In addition, across the 100 countries surveyed, more than one third of men in employment (35.5%) and more than one fourth of women in employment (25.7%) work more than 48 hours a week. Excessive hours are most common in Asia, notably in East Asia and in Western and Central Asia, where close to one half of men and women employed work more than 48 hours a week. Two main findings are worth highlighting. First, men tend to work longer hours than women, whether in wage and salaried employment (where there is a gender gap of over 10 percentage points) or in self-employment (gender gap of 5.5 percentage points). Second, the proportions of people working both long hours and short hours are higher among the self-employed, which means that self-employed people are likely to work either more than 48 hours or less than 35 hours a week. This suggests that working hours tend to be more polarized for self-employed than for wage and salaried workers, whose working hours tend to cluster around a standard number of hours, in line with national regulations. It also has implications for workers' healthy harmonization of work and family life and the equal distribution of unpaid household and care work between women and men.

⇒ At current trends, it will take 70 years to close the gender wage gap

Globally, the gender wage gap is estimated to be 23%; in other words, women earn 77% of what men earn. Even when considering hourly wage rates (given the fact that women are working shorter hours than men), women continue to face a persistent gender wage gap, amounting to 10% or more in countries for which data are available. These gaps cannot be explained solely by differences in education or age, but are also linked to the undervaluation of the work that women undertake and of the skills required in female-dominated sectors or occupations, to the practice of discrimination, and to the need for women to take career breaks to attend to additional care responsibilities, for instance after the birth of a child. Recently, some progress has been made in reducing these gender wage gaps, but improvements are small and, if current trends prevail, it will take more than 70 years before gender wage gaps are closed completely. Reductions in the gender wage gap are mostly attributable to explicit policy actions to address gender imbalances in the labor market, rather than to general improvements in living standards. In fact, the gender wage gap is unrelated to a country's level of economic development, as some of the countries with high

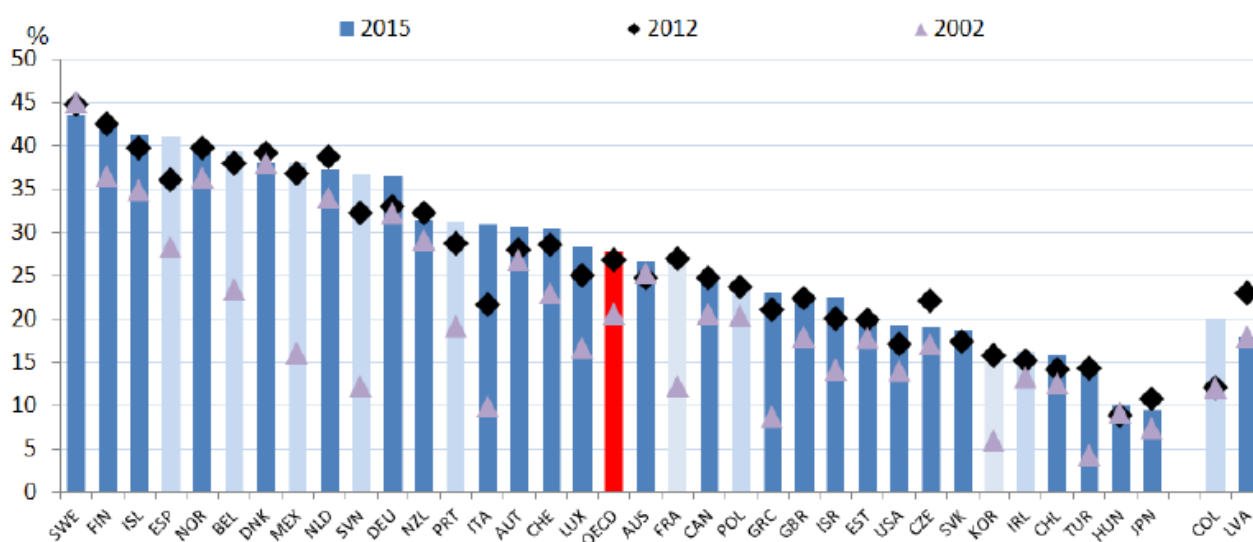
per-capita levels are among those with the highest gender wage gaps. Economic development alone will not ensure an equitable distribution of the gains from growth between men and women.

⇒ Gender equality in public leadership: a glance at women and men in public leadership³

When it comes to an inclusive public workforce and leadership, gender equality is arguably the most universal challenge across OECD member and partner countries (OECD, 2015a). The lack of gender balance in senior roles is a consequence of a range of external and internal barriers present in all areas of the public domain. Understanding the multiplicity and complexity of factors hindering women's access to top positions is key for the development of sound public policies aimed at breaking down barriers and guaranteeing equal access.

Over the past decade, important strides have been made in increasing women's representation in parliaments. In OECD countries, on average, while women occupied only 20.6% of seats in lower/single house parliaments in 2002, this figure increased to 28.6% in 2015. Progress remains patchy, with representation ranging from above 40% in Sweden, Finland, Iceland, Mexico and Spain to less than 10% in Japan. Still only 14 OECD countries in their lower houses of parliament and only 5 countries in their combined houses of parliament reach or exceed the 30% critical mass recommended by the United Nations and Inter-Parliamentary Union for women to effectively influence policy outcomes. On a global scale, on average, women only hold 15% of the posts of presiding officers in houses of parliament. In MENA countries, while women's representation has increased by 5% between 2008 and 2015, it still remains stagnant at about 13% on average in lower and single houses of parliament (IPU, 2015a). Available data from EU countries also shows that, in 2015, on average, only 17% of leaders of major political parties were women (European Commission, 2015a).

Figure VII Share of women parliamentarians and legislated gender quotas. Lower or single houses of parliament



Note: Bars in light blue represent countries with lower or single houses of parliament with legislated candidate quotas as of January 21, 2013. Data refer to share of women parliamentarians recorded as of February 1, 2015, October 31, 2012 and October 25, 2002. Percentages represent the number of women parliamentarians as a share of total filled seats. 2002 data for the Slovak Republic are unavailable.

Source: OECD Government at a Glance 2015, IPU.

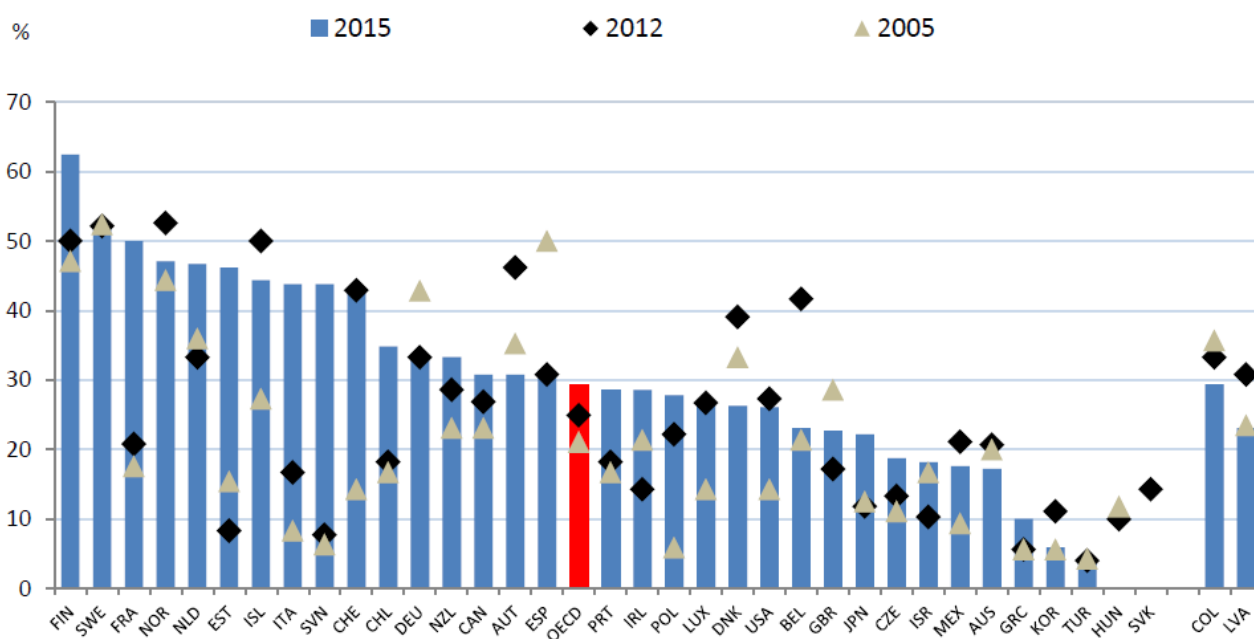
³ Background report, OECD Conference on improving women's access to leadership, March 8, 2016, Paris.

Recent data from European Union countries on women and men in decision-making shows that women also remain underrepresented in decision-making bodies at the local level. With regard to women elected as members of municipal councils, they account for 36% of the seats and 15% of mayoral or leadership positions (European Commission, 2015b).

Political executives

The representation of women in ministerial positions has been increasing, with 29.3% of ministerial positions appointed to women, on average, in OECD countries (IPU, 2015b). Between 2005 and 2015, there was an 8% increase in the representation of women in ministerial positions in OECD countries. (It should be noted that data can vary significantly from one year to another depending on political cycles and cabinet re-organizations.) Furthermore, there is significant variation of women's representation in ministerial positions among OECD countries. While gender parity was achieved in Finland, France, Sweden and Canada, women still accounted for fewer than one in ten ministers in Hungary, Korea, the Slovak Republic and Turkey (OECD, 2015b). Research on European cabinets indicates that the portfolios allocated to women often reflect the educational and occupational categories that women usually choose, resulting in a more "feminine" allocation of ministerial portfolios. Rarely are women appointed to more powerful decision-making departments, especially finance and economy.

Figure VIII Share of ministers



Note: Data represent women appointed ministers as of January 1, 2012 and January 1, 2005. The total includes Deputy Prime Ministers and Ministers. Prime Ministers/heads of government were also included when they held ministerial portfolios. Vice-Presidents and heads of governmental or public agencies have not been included.

Source: OECD Government at a Glance 2015, Inter-Parliamentary Union.

This gender divide in political life stems from various factors. In many OECD countries, the working hours of elected or appointed officials are unpredictable and voting times are not known in advance, making it difficult to organize one's private life. Several barriers are more acute at the entry level of political life, perpetuating uneven representation of women in decision-making positions in parliaments, and political functions. These factors may include uneven access to campaign financing, internal party dynamics that disadvantage women, prevailing gender stereotypes, voter preference for men and limited political encouragement. On the supply side, the reasons for a short supply of female candidates are manifold. It is often a result of the economic inequality between men and women, limited opportunities for women to exhibit their skills; perceived lack of work-life balance, limited political encouragement; uneven pressure for women to perform well in comparison to men and electoral lists that disadvantage them. The economic inequalities that generate women's uneven access to funding and financial networks may discourage them to pursue a political career as the latter can be an expensive undertaking. Moreover, many women tend to opt out of high-ranking careers due to the perceived lack of work-life balance, thus reducing the available candidate pool.

Judiciaries

Women's access to judicial appointments in OECD countries ranged from highs of 60% in Slovenia and Greece to lows of approximately 20% in the United Kingdom in 2010. Data from the European Commission shows that, in 2014, in the EU on average, women held 37% of seats among members of the Supreme Courts. In the United States, only four of the 112 Supreme Court Justices to have served have been women, and 2010 marked the first time in U.S. history that a third of the members of the highest court in the land were women.

In the judiciary, a perceived lack of qualified female candidates to serve as jurists is losing ground in most OECD member and partner countries. Still, statistics show that women are vastly underrepresented in top-ranking judicial positions. The barriers faced by women in the judiciary are very similar to those encountered in politics and in senior public service. In addition to common barriers listed earlier (e.g. career path aspirations, challenges in balancing work and life, persisting gender stereotypes, lack of development opportunities, gender bias in selection for promotions), stringent requirements for judicial appointments and selection methods tend to impede women on the path to become top judges. Experts interviewed by the OECD confirm that in Commonwealth countries "traditionally the assumption has been that only barristers become top judges. The profession of barrister is highly demanding and, hence, there is a large attrition of women who start as qualified lawyers, but some years later are no longer in the private practice."

Senior public service

In public service, on average, women occupied over 50% of central government jobs in OECD countries, but only 29% of top management positions in 2010. In the EU, the average proportion of women at the level of the highest-ranking civil servants was 34% in 2015 (European Commission, 2015a). Some of the challenges for women's access to the top public service positions relate to senior management appointment systems. For example, the use of political appointments for top posts may limit women's access as they are often less present in informal networks. Men tend to be promoted more quickly and more often, as well as paid more than women, despite equal educational attainment and credentials. As it is men that occupy a majority of senior roles, their sponsorship can be a determining factor for an employee's advancement, and within a "good ol' boy" system, women are passed over for promotions, creating a glass ceiling for women's upward mobility. Moreover, cuts in public sector jobs, which tend to primarily affect women, as they are often overrepresented in public jobs, can result in a reduction of the pool of women who can be potential leaders in the public sector. This may widen gender gaps at the top (OECD, 2014b).

⇒ Gender balance in corporate leadership: a glance at women and men in the private sector⁴

Despite the growing consensus on the key role of women at the top of companies and a notable increase in their participation, progress towards the sustainable inclusion of women in leadership positions remains slow. While barriers to women's access to leadership vary largely across countries, they remain more severe in those where women's workforce participation rates more generally are significantly low, such as in India.

Evidence shows that while quota policies and regulations are driving more women to the boardroom, the share of women in executive roles remains significantly unequal and mostly skewed to areas of less influence (Credit Suisse, 2014). According to a ten-year survey with Fortune Global 200 companies (CWDI, 2015), there has been less than a 1% increase of women on boards (WOB) per year since 2004.

Globally, women only account for 12% of board seats among the world's largest companies, with 64% having one woman director, and 13% with at least three.⁵ In developed markets, women account for 13.4% of directors versus 8.8% in emerging markets (MSCI, 2014). The largest publicly listed companies across the EU hold 21% WOB (European Commission Database, 2015). Countries in the Middle East count fewer than two percent of WOB⁶. With regard to senior management roles, Europe and the People's Republic of China (PRC) have taken the lead over the United States; while the PRC counts 52 women in senior executive positions for every 48 men, the US has 58 for every 42 women (Financial Times, 2016).

At a time when the labor market faces talent shortages, these trends are alarming. In fact, these numbers are relatively low compared to the proportion of women who attain tertiary education and who graduate in pertinent disciplines, such as business or science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). In the United Kingdom for example, WOB represent 26%, while 51% of business degrees are held by women. Along the same lines, the US counts 19% of WOB while more than 50% of STEM degrees are held by women.

New research by Mercer (2015) shows that women make up 41% of the overall representation of the workforce in organizations globally.⁷ The global figure further decreases at the executive level where women continue to be underrepresented at 19%. According to Catalyst⁸ (2015) women represent less than 5% of S&P 500 companies' CEOs and hold less than a quarter of senior management roles. Research by Credit Suisse on FTSE 100 and S&P 500 companies finds that men in CEO positions outweigh women by 20 to one, and in the UK, men in executive director positions outnumber women 10 to one. With increasing numbers of women in the workforce at all levels, their presence at the top remains scarce with higher departure levels too (Mercer, 2015; RobecoSAM, 2015).

⁴ Cfr. *supra* nota 3.

⁵ Data covers 6,566 companies in 58 countries, in MSCI World Index and other large-cap indices. Research suggests that having at least three WOB sets a benchmark for increased balance in leadership styles.

⁶ The OECD-MENA Women's Business Forum (WBF), part of the MENA-OECD Competitiveness Programme, seeks to enhance women empowerment in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). The WBF's mandate includes gathering qualitative and quantitative data to develop evidence-based policy recommendations to advance women leadership.

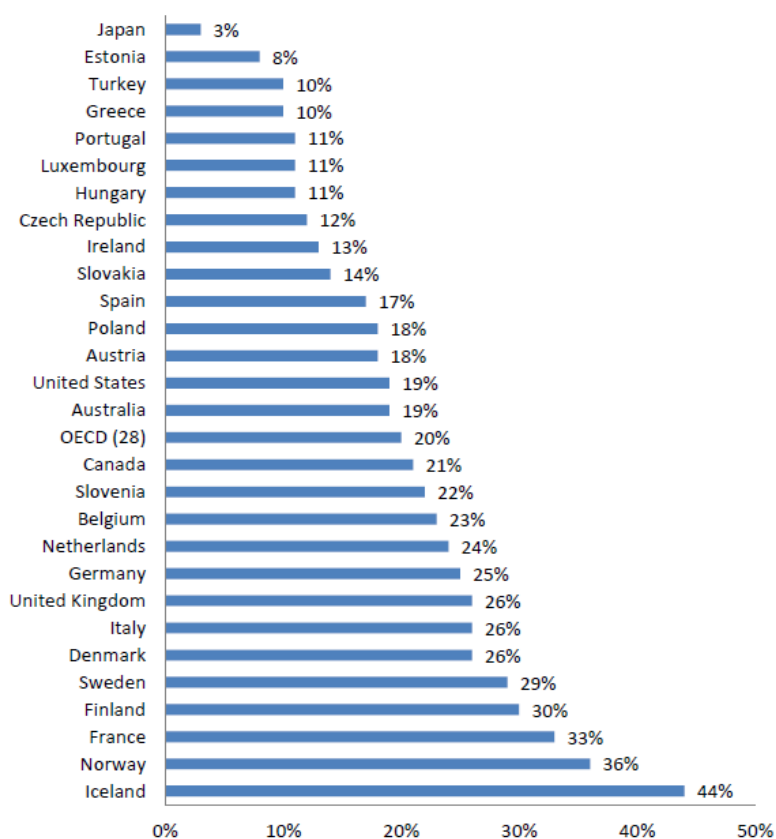
⁷ Data is based on 164 companies in 28 countries, and 1.7 million employees (of which 680,000 women).

⁸ Catalyst Inc. is a non-profit organization aiming to accelerate progress for women through workplace inclusion.

⇒ Pathways to Gender Balanced Corporate Leadership

The growing awareness of the underrepresentation of women in leadership and their key contributions to business has led to increased efforts to improve gender balance at the top of companies. Governments, shareholders, investors and companies have established measures to attempt to close the gender gap through boardroom quotas, regulatory reforms, disclosure, targets and other tools. The revised G20/OECD Principles of Corporate Governance provide a non-binding reference for policy-makers to build effective corporate governance processes. It recommends considering “voluntary targets, disclosure requirements, boardroom quotas, and private initiatives” to improve gender balance on boards and in senior-level roles (OECD, 2015b). Further, the OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-Owned Enterprises encourages the ownership entity to consider the OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality. It recommends that jurisdictions encourage measures such as voluntary targets, disclosure requirements and private initiatives that enhance gender balance on boards and in senior management of listed companies, as well as consider the costs and benefits of other approaches such as boardroom quotas (OECD, 2015d).

Figure IX Share of female board members, 2015 or latest



Source: EC (2016) Database on women and men in decision making; Catalyst (2015) Catalyst Census: Women Board Directors.

3. Mission and goals

“We were right to put the role of women center-stage at Expo. We women are 50% of the world, and we want to have a say in matters. We represent a large part of the world, and we want to count and participate in making that world a better place. To eschew the energy that we bring would be a real waste”.

Emma Bonino, President, WE

We are committed to giving women the tools needed for them to reach their full economic potential, inspiring men and women to promote change in this direction. We want to furnish resources, opportunities, and a global platform that facilitates networking, learning, and the sharing of experiences, to inspire a new generation that is more aware of its rights and responsibilities.

The project aims to:

- ✓ increase the level of awareness of women’s evolving role where awareness is insufficient or very low;
- ✓ facilitate the adoption of practical policy measures where the level of awareness is already relatively high;
- ✓ ensure that sufficient resources are made available to pursue the agreed policies;
- ✓ launch and cultivate targeted and practical initiatives in selected countries / regions of special relevance.

4. Intervention strategy

The line of action will unfold through three main areas of activity:

⇒ “Starting from Girls”

A concrete plan for concerted endeavors to facilitate access to education for female children and adolescents and to protect their rights. Activities will be based on the combined efforts of **NGOs** (Oxfam, ActionAid and Save the Children), the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (**MAECI**), and the **World Food Programme**. The platform will also be open to participation by private actors.

Today more than ever there is a need to invest in adolescents and youth, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. A demographic boom is expected by 2050, with a rise in Africa’s population to over two billion people, making up 25% of the entire global population, compared to 15% today. This potential presents a unique situation, and planning for it is crucial.

A huge proportion of the population in Africa is made up of adolescents and youth. Among these, girls and young women still face inequalities and discrimination which constantly undermine the process of improving their status, as well as their socioeconomic rights. On average, the level of female human development is 13% lower than that of males.

Girls and teenage mothers also represent a high proportion of the labor force in many sub-Saharan African countries, particularly in the agricultural sector. They are largely engaged in informal work, especially at the household level. However, their role remains near invisible.

What we must know about being a girl in developing countries:

- ✓ Almost 60% of girls complete **primary school**, while just 30% have access to **secondary school** (UNICEF, 2012).
- ✓ Every 10% increase in the **enrollment of girls in secondary school** in low-income countries **will save approximately 350,000 children's lives** and reduce maternal mortality by 15,000 each year (SC, 2014). It is estimated that half the reduction in deaths of children under 5 over the last 4 decades can be attributed to basic education for girls.
- ✓ An educated girl will use **90% of her future income towards her family**, while boys re-invest only 35% (Nike Foundation, 2009).
- ✓ One in three girls in developing countries is **married before the age of 18**, and one in nine **before the age of 15**. Early marriage frequently leads to early childbirth – the leading killer of adolescent girls in Africa (UNICEF, 2012).
- ✓ Each year 7.3 million girls below the age of 18 give birth; and **complications related to pregnancy** and childbirth are the leading cause of death among adolescent girls between 15 and 19.
- ✓ The prevalence of **HIV/AIDS** is more than **twice** as high for females aged 15-24 as it is for males. An estimated 2.2 million adolescents are living with HIV – around 60% of whom are girls (UNICEF, 2012).

By exploring potential strategies to empower girls, there are several dimensions to be considered that are interrelated and interdependent. **Most of them can be categorized under:**

1. Access to **decision-making** processes in their families, households and countries;
2. Economic empowerment; access to **resources/assets**;
3. Access to sexual and reproductive health (**health services**) and clean water supplies;
4. Access to **education** (at minimum the completion of primary and secondary education);
5. Access to **social protection**, regulations and legal frameworks.

⇒ “Women, Identity and Migration in Europe”:

An international task force will explore issues relating to the integration difficulties faced in Europe by migrant communities from Mediterranean countries. The initial findings of the task force's deliberations will be presented in Rome at the forthcoming Rome MED Dialogue (December 2016) and will be focused on **“A more gender-sensitive agenda for migrants and refugees as a common Euro-Mediterranean priority”**.

Main issues:

- **Women as refugees:** The need for a more focused assessment of the gender dimension of the refugee crisis
- **Are women refugees different?** Specific vulnerabilities and special needs
- **Addressing the gender dimension of the refugee crisis** more thoroughly and effectively: Promising practices and criteria for action
- **The challenge of integration in Europe:** comparing strategies and testing new ideas

⇒ **“Fighting the Gender Gaps”:**

A series of seminars held in conjunction with international organizations and business partners, aimed at addressing the problem of low female participation in the workplace and the persistence of gender-based wage gaps in high-income countries.

The seminars could serve as one of the G7's working groups during Italy's Presidency in 2017.

5. Method

The mission of the project will be pursued through gatherings of international experts and policy makers with high levels of expertise in the areas of intervention. They will identify:

⇒ **Lessons learned**

What social, economic, institutional trajectory has been more typical in affluent liberal democracies as regards a greater role for women? Learning from practice.

What policy measures have a proven track record of success in supporting women? Learning from policy success.

Are there policy patterns that have turned out to be consistently counterproductive (or at least costly and of limited effectiveness)? Learning from mistakes.

⇒ **Factors of resistance to change and constraints**

Political and legal obstacles: understanding cases where the system is directly designed to underrepresent women.

Extensive social and cultural obstacles: understanding cases where formal institutions do protect women's rights but daily practice is vastly different.

Selective social and cultural obstacles (plus incomplete or outdated institutional measures): understanding cases where formal institutions and mainstream social practices support a greater role for women, but areas of concern remain.

⇒ **Policy prescriptions**

How can we encourage reforms without provoking a “sovereignist” backlash where institutions do not protect women's rights?

How do we foster gradual changes in social habits? What policies at the national level can accelerate change?

6. 2016-2017 agenda

⇒ Design conferences

- International Conference, “**Why women matter. Promoting gender balance in public life and economic strategies**”. Rome, October 21, 2016. Meeting organized in cooperation with OECD.
- The MED Conference, “**Migration, integration and gender issues**”. Rome, December 2016.
- The International Conference on Women and Global Governance, “**A concrete contribution to the G7 gender agenda**”. Rome/Milan, February 2017.

7. Organizational Structure

The international task force of **WE » Women Empower the World** boasts a high level international board:

⇒ Executive Committee:

- » **Emma Bonino**, President
- » **Marta Dassù**, Executive President
- » **Vichi De Marchi**, Director
- » **Rossella Citterio**, Head of Communication
- » **Gabriella Biondi**, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
- » **Bianca Pomeranzi**, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

⇒ International Board⁹:

Madeleine Albright, Former United States Secretary of State

Pietro Antonioni, President, Actionaid

Elisabetta Belloni, Secretary General, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

Emma Bonino, President, WE

Diana Bracco, Chairman and CEO, Gruppo Bracco

Monica Carco, Investment and Technology Unit Chief, UNIDO

Mara Carfagna, Member of the Italian Parliament

Evelina Christillin, President, Enit

Ertharin Cousin, Executive Director, WFP

Marta Dassù, Executive President, WE; Chair, AlFe – Aspen Initiative for Europe

Staffan De Mistura, UN Special Envoy for Syria

Veronica De Romanis, Stanford University, The Breyer Center for Overseas Studies; Scientific Committee, Fondazione Luigi Einaudi, Rome

Sara Dethridge, International Lawyer, former Board Member, Unicef Italy

Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Chair of the African Union Commission

Linda Douglass, Global Head of Communications, Bloomberg

⁹ The composition of the board is a slightly revised version of the board set up on the occasion of Women for Expo.

Patricia Espinosa, Ambassador, Former Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Mexico

Livia Firth, Founder and Creative Director, Eco Age

Louise Fréchette, Chair of the Board, CARE Canada

Laura Frigenti, Director, Italian Agency for Development Cooperation

Jacqueline Franjou, CEO, Women's Forum for the Economy and Society

Paolo Gentiloni, Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

Sylvie Goulard, Member of the European Parliament for France

Patrizia Grieco, Chairman, Enel

Elisabeth Guigou, President of the Foreign Affairs Commission, French National Assembly

Maurizia Iachino, President, Oxfam Italia

Hadeel Ibrahim, Executive Director, Mo Ibrahim Foundation

Irene Khan, Director General, International Development Law Organization IDLO

Linda Lanzillotta, Vice President of the Italian Senate; Executive Board Member, Women in Parliaments Global Forum

Maria Latella, Journalist, SKY Italia

Beatrice Lorenzin, Italian Minister of Health

Monica Maggioni, Chairman, RAI

Emma Marcegaglia, Chairman, Eni

Giovanna Melandri, Former Italian Minister of Culture; Chairwoman, Human Foundation; President Fondazione Maxxi

Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission

Letizia Moratti, Former Minister for Education, University and Scientific Research; Former Mayor of Milan

Samia Nkrumah, President of Kwame Nkrumah Pan African Centre

Claudia Parzani, International Lawyer

Vesna Pusić, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Croatia

Lia Quartapelle, President WIIS Italy; Member of the Italian Parliament

Gabriela Ramos, OECD Chief of Staff and Sherpa

Sabina Ratti, Director, Fondazione Enrico Mattei

Aung San Suu Kyi, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate 1991; Chairperson of the National League for Democracy in Burma

Paola Severino Di Benedetto, Chancellor, LUISS Guido Carli

Federico Soda, Director, Coordination Office for the Mediterranean, International Organization for Migration

Hanna Tetteh, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ghana

Beatrice Trussardi, President of Nicola Trussardi Foundation

Marcela Villarreal, Director of the Office for Communication, Partnerships and Advocacy, FAO

Jody Williams, Nobel Peace Prize

8. Stakeholders

⇒ Institutional partners

WE secured the cooperation of non-governmental and governmental partners such as **OECD, World Food Programme, Oxfam, Action Aid** and **Save the Children**.

⇒ Business partners

WE will focus on companies that have developed direct interest in the mission of the Project. Business stakeholders will offer financial support and/or contribute in kind. They will be actively involved in the implementation of the intervention strategy.

9. Financial model

For the first two-year period (2016-2017) the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and the Aspen Initiative for Europe will promote and provide seed funding to launch the activities of the **WE » Women Empower the World** program.

The program – to be sustainable – also needs the support of an engaged and involved business community. This support can sustain our mission of uniting women in order to achieve their full social and economic potential.

⇒ How to get involved

We call on the business community to team up with us and support our efforts, by contributing financially and by sharing ideas and a wealth of experience.

Representatives of participating businesses will be involved in WE activities, and may propose ideas and present their respective firms' gender-oriented initiatives, either in written form or by making an address in person at the annual gathering.

There are three sponsorship categories:

- » **Main Partner:** starting from 50.000 euro
- » **Partner:** from 11.000 to 50.000 euro
- » **Sponsor:** up to 10.000 euro

10. Branding and communication approach

The **media campaign's goal** will be to strengthen and disseminate the WE brand on the basis of its program and intervention strategy, supported by the contribution of top political/business leaders to be brought into the Initiative.

11. Get in touch with us



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