The Global Gender Gap Report

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The Global Gender Gap Report 2010 is published by the World Economic Forum. The Global Gender Gap Index 2010 is the result of collaboration with faculty at Harvard University and the University of California, Berkeley.

The term 'country' and 'nation' as used in this report do not in all cases refer to a territorial entity that is a state as understood by international law and practice. The term covers well-defined, geographically self-contained economic areas that may not be states but for which statistical data are maintained on a separate and independent basis.
We are at a unique turning point in history. Never before has there been such momentum around the issue of gender parity on the global stage. Numerous multinational companies have aligned core elements of their businesses and products to support and provide opportunities for women in the communities in which they are active. The United Nations has created a new entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women. There is a strong movement around greater investment in girls’ education in the developing world. Businesses around the world are starting to take into account the increasing power of women consumers. As women begin to make up more than half of all university graduates in much of the developed world, there is an increased consciousness that this talent must be given the opportunity to lead. Several countries have introduced legislation that mandates minimum requirements for women’s participation, in both business and politics.

The World Economic Forum has been among the institutions at the forefront of driving this change in mindset, primarily by emphasizing the message that gender gaps have an impact on competitiveness and by engaging the business community. Measuring the size of the problem is a prerequisite for identifying the best solutions. Through the Global Gender Gap Reports, for the past five years, the World Economic Forum has been quantifying the magnitude of gender-based disparities and tracking their progress over time. By providing a comprehensive framework for benchmarking global gender gaps, the Report reveals those countries that are role models in dividing resources equitably between women and men, regardless of their level of resources. In 2008, we launched our Global Gender Parity Group and Regional Gender Parity Groups in Latin America, the Middle East, Africa and Asia. To date, these multi-stakeholder communities of highly influential leaders—50% women and 50% men—from business, politics, academia, media and civil society have jointly identified the biggest gaps in each region, based in part on the findings of this Report, and have collectively committed to strategies to improve the use of female talent. The Global Agenda Council on the Gender Gap, an expert council, has used the insights of this Report to propose the creation of an online repository of information on best practices to close gaps in economic participation, education, health and political empowerment. There is also the impact we cannot measure—the countless universities, schools, researchers, media entities, businesses, governments and individuals that use this Report as a resource for their work.

We would like to express our deep appreciation to Ricardo Hausmann, Director, Center for International Development, Harvard University and Laura D. Tyson, S.K. and Angela Chan Professor of Global Management University of California, Berkeley, USA for their invaluable contribution to this Report. We would also like to thank Yasmina Bekhouche for her research assistance and Marc Cuénod and Eimear Farrell for their support on this project at the World Economic Forum.

The Global Gender Gap Index was created with the specific purpose of being comparable across time. The 2010 Report aggregates five years of data and seeks to reveal country progress in a transparent manner. By doing this, we hope this Report will serve as a call to action to the international community to pool its knowledge and resources and to leverage the current unique window of opportunity so that faster progress can be achieved. Every moment that we wait entails colossal losses to the global society and economy.
Part 1

Measuring the Global Gender Gap
between men and women in high-skilled jobs such as legislators, senior officials and managers (an outcome variable) but does not include data on length of maternity leave (a policy variable).

**Gender equality vs. women’s empowerment**

The third distinguishing feature of the Global Gender Gap Index is that it ranks countries according to their proximity to gender equality rather than to women’s empowerment. Our aim is to focus on whether the gap between women and men in the chosen variables has declined, rather than whether women are “winning” the “battle of the sexes”. Hence, the Index rewards countries that reach the point where outcomes for women equal those for men, but it neither rewards nor penalizes cases in which women are outperforming men in particular variables.

**The four pillars**

The Global Gender Gap Index examines the gap between men and women in four fundamental categories: **economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival and political empowerment**. Table 1 displays all four of these subindexes and the 14 different variables that compose them, along with the sources of data used for each.

**Economic participation and opportunity**

This area is captured through three concepts: the participation gap, the remuneration gap and the advancement gap. The participation gap is captured through the difference in labour force participation rates. The remuneration gap is captured through a hard data indicator (ratio of estimated female-to-male earned income) and a qualitative variable calculated through the World Economic Forum’s Executive Opinion Survey (wage equality for similar work). Finally, the gap between the advancement of women and men is captured through two hard data statistics (the ratio of women to men among legislators, senior officials and managers, and the ratio of women to men among technical and professional workers).

**Educational attainment**

In this category, the gap between women’s and men’s current access to education is captured through ratios of women to men in primary-, secondary- and tertiary-level education. A longer-term view of the country’s ability to educate women and men in equal numbers is captured through the ratio of the female literacy rate to the male literacy rate.

**Health and survival**

This category attempts to provide an overview of the differences between women’s and men’s health. To do this, we use two variables. The first variable included in this subindex is the sex ratio at birth. This variable aims specifically to capture the phenomenon of “missing women” prevalent in many countries with strong son preference. Second, we use the gap between women’s and men’s healthy life expectancy, calculated by the World Health Organization. This measure provides an estimate of the number of years that women and men can expect to live in good health by taking into account the years lost to violence, disease, malnutrition or other relevant factors.

**Political empowerment**

This category includes mainly measures of the gap between men and women in political decision-making at the highest levels. This concept is captured through the ratio of women to men in minister-level positions and the ratio of women to men in parliamentary positions. In addition, we include the ratio of women to men in terms of years in executive office (prime minister or president) in the last 50 years. A clear drawback in this category is the absence of any variables capturing differences between the participation of women and men at local levels of government. Should such data become available at a global level in future years, they will be considered for inclusion in the Global Gender Gap Index.

**Construction of the Index**

The Global Gender Gap Index is constructed using a four-step process, outlined below.

**Convert to ratios**

First, all data are converted to female/male ratios. For example, a country with 20% of women in ministerial positions is assigned a ratio of 20 women /80 men = 0.25 on this variable. This is to ensure that the Index is capturing gaps between women’s and men’s attainment levels, rather than the levels themselves.

**Truncate data at equality benchmark**

As a second step, these ratios are truncated at the “equality benchmark”. On all variables, except the two health variables, this equality benchmark is considered to be 1, meaning equal numbers of women and men. In the case of the sex ratio at birth, the equality benchmark is set to be 0.944, and the healthy life expectancy benchmark is set to be 1.06. Truncating the data at the equality benchmarks for each variable translates to assigning the same score to a country that has reached parity between women and men and one where women have surpassed men.

The type of scale chosen determines whether the index is rewarding women’s empowerment or gender equality. To capture gender equality, two possible scales were considered. One was a negative-positive scale capturing the size and direction of the gender gap. This scale essentially penalizes either men’s advantage over women or women’s advantage over men, and gives the highest points
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