

# **EMBARGOED until 12 February 2014, 10 a.m. EST**

## **DIGNITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

The principles of the ICPD affirm “that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights”, are entitled to all rights and freedoms as set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, without distinction of any kind. These principles underscore the urgent need to eradicate all forms of discrimination and assert that the principal aim of population-related goals and policies is to improve the quality of life of all people.

### **Poverty**

Since ICPD, the world has seen significant poverty reduction and economic growth, yet many still live in poverty. Increasing economic inequality is disruptive to societies and detrimental to sustainable development. The ability of societies to innovate is threatened by the large segment of the population who are caught in “development traps” and are living day-to-day without real prospects for a better future.

- Between 1990 and 2010, the number of people living in extreme poverty fell by half as a share of the total population in developing countries (from 47 per cent in 1990 to 22 per cent in 2010), a reduction of almost one billion people.
- 93 per cent of governments responding to the ICPD Beyond 2014 Global Survey indicate that they are addressing “the eradication of poverty, with special attention to income generation and employment strategies.”
- The current distribution of wealth presents a serious threat to further economic growth, inclusiveness and both social and environmental sustainability. Globally, wealth is estimated at US\$48,500 per capita for each of the world’s 4.6 billion adults. This average hides enormous inequalities. Approximately 69 per cent of all adults were found in the lowest wealth category with only three per cent of global wealth. The next category (US\$ 10,000 to 100,000) had 1,066 million adults who owned 13.7 per cent of global wealth.
- Income inequality within and among many countries has been rising. More than half of the absolute gains in global income over the period 1988-2008 went to the richest 5 per cent. None went to the bottom 10 per cent.

### **Women’s Empowerment and Gender Equality**

Despite progress made since 1994, the empowerment of women and girls and gender equality remain unfulfilled and discrimination against women is evident in all societies. Women’s empowerment and gender equality are pivotal to creating the enabling conditions in which half the global population can define the direction of their lives, expand their capabilities, and contribute fully to society.

- Women’s total (i.e. working age) participation rates in the labor force remained

steady at the global level, with a slight decline in the last few years, while men's rates also declined slightly throughout the period. At the regional level, change in women's labor force participation has been variable. It increased the most in Latin America and the Caribbean, and decreased slightly in Eastern Europe, and much of Asia other than South Asia – where it increased slightly.

- Women continue to be paid less than men for equal work; over-represented in vulnerable and informal employment; and under-represented in positions of power and decision-making.
- 90 per cent of countries reporting in the Global Survey state that they have a law in place with an enforcement provision for paid maternity leave (of any length). Yet, only 54 per cent have such an instrument in place for paid paternity leave, constituting a major barrier to men's participation in parenting.
  - Fewer than half of responding countries report having enforced laws guaranteeing daycare centers and facilities for breastfeeding mothers in the public (41 per cent) or private sectors (39 per cent).
  - Only one in four African countries - the region where most of the population growth will occur in the next decades - has laws in place to ensure the compatibility between breastfeeding and work responsibilities (25 per cent for both public and private sectors).
  - Fewer than two-thirds of countries (64 per cent) reporting to the Global Survey have addressed the issue of "facilitating compatibility between labour force participation and parental responsibilities", making it easier for women to combine child-rearing with participation in the workforce.
- 85 per cent of all countries report having budgetary policies and programmes to address the issue of "increasing women's participation in the formal and informal economy", and this does not vary by the wealth of countries. 85 per cent of countries report that they currently have a law in place (with an enforcement provision) against gender discrimination at work in hiring, wages and benefits.
- Promoting and enabling the "economic empowerment" of women was the most frequently mentioned priority by at least two thirds of countries in four of the five regions: Africa (67 per cent), Asia (78 per cent), Europe (79 per cent) and Oceania (71 per cent). In the Americas, it was the second most widely mentioned priority at 59 per cent, following "Elimination of all forms of violence". "Political empowerment & participation" was the second highest ranking global priority, with more than 60 per cent of governments across Africa (63 per cent), Asia (66 per cent) and Oceania (64 per cent); in Europe and the Americas the issue was a priority among 48 per cent and 53 per cent of governments, respectively.

Data suggests that values of gender equality have been trending upwards in most countries since the mid-1990', but the extent of support depends on the specific gender value under consideration.

- Two-thirds of countries reporting to the Global Survey have "engaged men and boys to promote male participation, equal sharing of responsibilities such as care work" during the past 5 years (63 per cent).

An estimated one in three women worldwide report they have experienced physical and/or sexual abuse, mostly at the hands of an intimate partner, making this form of

violence against women and girls one of the most prevalent forms of human rights violations worldwide.

- A 2013 UN multi-country study on Men and Violence in Asia and the Pacific found that nearly half of the 10,000 men interviewed reported using physical and/or sexual violence against a female partner, ranging from 26 per cent to 80 per cent across sites. Nearly a quarter of men interviewed reported perpetrating rape against a woman or girl, ranging from 10 per cent to 62 per cent across the sites.
- Harmful practices, such as early, child and forced marriage and FGM/C remain prevalent in many countries, despite advances in legislation.
- Of all the issues related to the ICPD listed in the Global Survey, 'ending gender-based violence' was among those addressed by the highest proportion of governments (88 per cent). Regionally, this issue was addressed by 94 per cent of governments in Africa, 87 per cent in the Americas, 90 per cent in Asia, 82 per cent in Europe and 77 per cent in Oceania.

Many countries continue to have gender discriminatory property and inheritance laws or practices. Even when civil laws have been introduced to provide equal rights to inheritance and ownership, these are not necessarily implemented or respected at a local level due to persistent discriminatory social norms, and the applications of customary or religious laws.

- Analysis of data from the OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index shows that, for countries where data are available, women hold just 15 per cent of all land titles.
- Given that formal credit relies heavily on collateral, women's reduced access to land limits their access to credit, and resulting economic opportunities.

Worldwide, over 97 per cent of countries report having programmes, policies and/or strategies addressing "gender equality, equity and empowerment of women." At least nine in every 10 countries across all regions have such frameworks in place (Africa, 100 per cent; Asia, 100 per cent; Europe, 94 per cent; Americas 94 per cent; Oceania, 93 per cent). However, only three quarters of responding countries have committed to "improving the situation and addressing the needs of rural women" (76 per cent) and to "improving the welfare of the girl child, especially with regards to health, nutrition and education" (80 per cent).

## Adolescents & Youth

Demographic changes in the past decades have led to the largest generation of young people (aged 10-24 years) in the world today. The declining fertility rates are also providing low and middle income countries with a window of opportunity because the proportion of the population that is in the young working years is historically high, and these cohorts can – if provided with learning and work opportunities - jumpstart economic growth and development.

- Substantial gains have been made concerning primary and secondary school attainment globally, with primary school enrollment rates having now reached 90 per cent; but there is considerable variation in access and quality across regions, as well as within countries.
- While the largest gains in primary school completion between 1999 and 2009 were observed among girls, secondary education remains a challenge for girls in many regions, especially in sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia.
- Of the estimated 197 million unemployed people in 2012, nearly 40 per cent were aged 15 to 24.
- The creation of 600 million productive jobs over the next decade is required to absorb current unemployment levels and to provide employment opportunities to the 40 million labor market entrants each year.
- The unemployment scenario is further aggravated by the work of large numbers of young people in poor quality and low paid jobs with intermittent and insecure work arrangements. As many as 60 per cent of young persons in developing regions are either without work, not studying, or engaged in irregular employment.
- As of 2010, 158 countries have a legal age of marriage of 18 years. Nevertheless, for the period 2000-2011, an estimated 34 per cent of women aged 20-24 in developing regions had been married or in union before age 18; further, an estimated 12 per cent had been married or in union before age 15. Girls in rural areas, with limited or no education or belonging to poor households are at higher risk to be married or in union before age 18.
- Adolescent birth rates have been declining from 1990 to 2010 across countries in all income groups and regions, yet worldwide, more than 15 million girls age 15 to 19 years give birth every year. A significant proportion of adolescent pregnancies result from non-consensual sex, and nine out of 10 take place in the context of early marriage. Higher secondary school enrolment among those aged 15-19 is associated with lower adolescent birth rates.
- Early parenthood can increase the risk of poverty.

## Older Persons

Older persons are the world's fastest growing population group, a consequence of demographic changes resulting from fertility decline and increased longevity.

- Over the past two decades, the number and proportion of older persons aged 60 years or over rose in all countries, with the increase in the population of older persons in developing countries more than twice (72 per cent) that of developed countries (33 per cent).
- It is projected that more than 20 per cent of the global population will be age 60 and above by 2050; the number of older persons is projected to surpass the number of children by 2047.
- Due to longer life expectancy among women than among men at older ages, elderly women outnumber elderly men in most societies.
- Among persons aged 65+, global illiteracy rates are 26 per cent, with rates among women consistently above those of men.

- Globally, the highest proportion of older persons' labour force participation is in Africa, where more than 40 per cent of those over 65 years of age are economically active, followed by nearly 25 per cent in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Women make up an increasing proportion of the older workforce; their likelihood of participating in the labour force after age 65 has risen as men's has declined.

### Discrimination and its social costs

Many individuals and groups continue to be exposed to discriminatory behaviour, including stigma, unfair treatment, social exclusion or violence due to dimensions of their identity or circumstances. In addition to women, adolescents and youth, older persons, these include, among others, persons with disabilities, and indigenous peoples, ethnic and racial minorities, persons of diverse sexual orientation and gender identity, sex workers, migrants and people living with HIV.

- Discrimination may be compounded by laws criminalizing their behaviour or laws that remain silent regarding their need for social protection. E.g. 76 countries world-wide continue to criminalize consensual, same-sex behaviour and 116 countries criminalize aspects of sex work.
- Attitudes towards discrimination of women and intolerance towards racial and ethnic minorities, migrants, and persons living with HIV vary considerably across countries. Where attitudes were found more intolerant, they tended to be directed towards multiple population groups.
- Sustained discrimination can lead to intergenerational cycles of poverty and disadvantage. There is growing evidence that social cost of discrimination is high and negatively affects mental and physical health, childbearing, performance and productivity.

### Recommendations

- 1. Despite economic growth since the ICPD, inequalities in income are increasing, and threaten further progress towards the elimination of severe poverty. States should increase efforts to eradicate poverty and promote equitable livelihood opportunities.**
- 2. The empowerment of women and gender equality remain unfulfilled, requiring further actions to ensure women's leadership in public spheres, equality before the law and in practice for economic transactions, elimination of all forms of violence, and empowerment of women in exercising their sexual and reproductive health and rights.**
- 3. Substantial investment is needed in the capabilities of children, adolescents and youth, while ensuring that every child and young person, regardless of circumstances, has access to quality pre-primary, primary and secondary education and comprehensive sexuality education holistically defined, and has a rapid, safe and productive transition from**

**school to working life and adulthood.**

- 4. Active efforts are needed to eliminate discrimination and marginalization, and promote a culture of respect for all.**