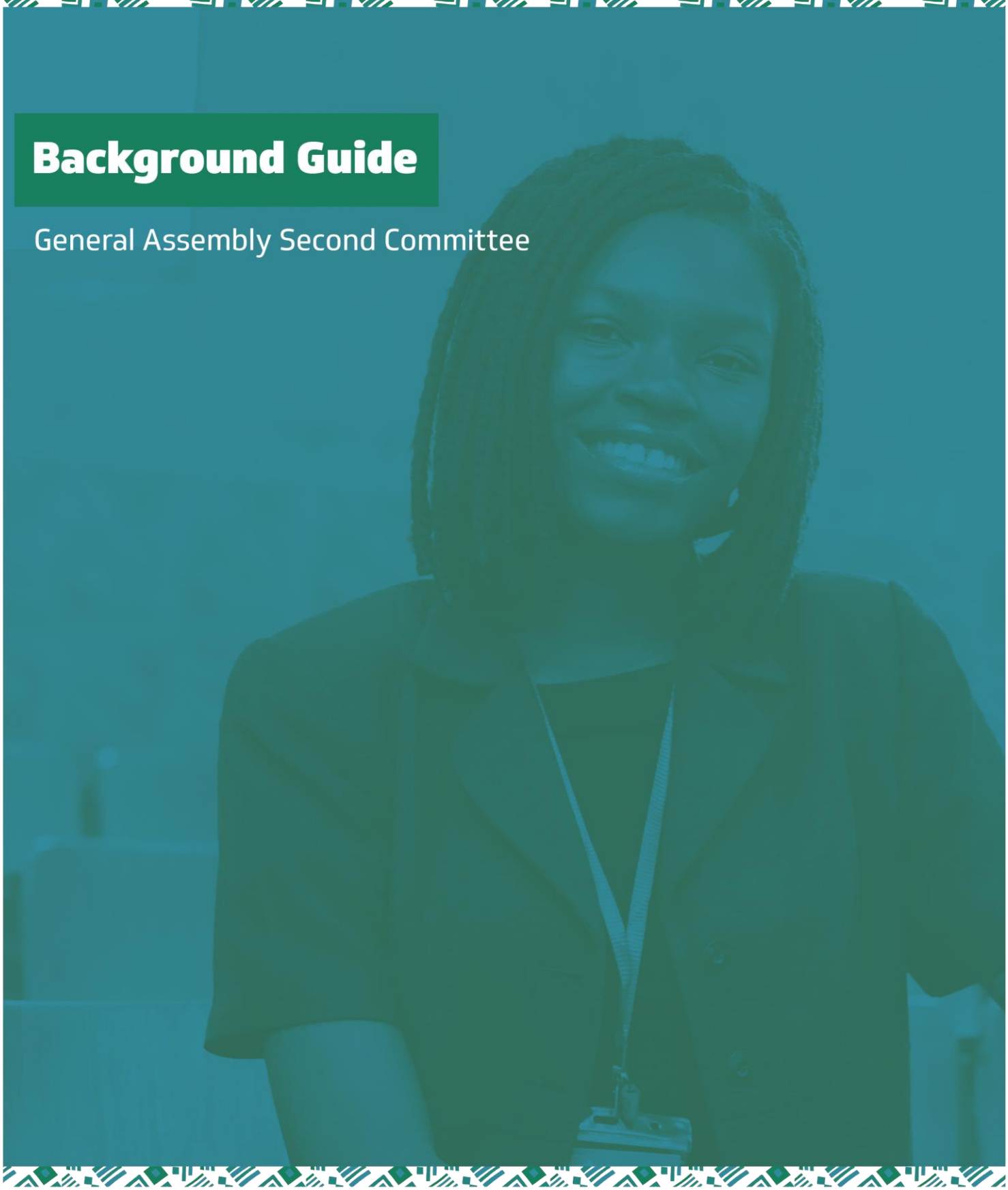
LAGOS MODEL UNITED NATIONS '20

Background Guide

General Assembly Second Committee



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Background Guide: General Assembly Second Committee.

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LMUN 2020: The Fifth Session.

Table of Contents

Letter from the USG 1
Abbreviations 2
Committee Overview 3
Introduction 3
Structure and Membership 3
Mandate, Functions and Powers 5
Recent Sessions and Current Policies 6
Annotated Bibliography 6
Bibliography 8
I. The Role of ICT in Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction 12
Introduction 12
International and Regional Framework 13
Role of the International System 14
The Digital Divide 19
Interdependence and Linking Governance Via ICT 21
Improving Agricultural Productivity and Healthcare Access Through ICT 23
Role of ICT in Education 24
Conclusion 25
Annotated Bibliography 25
Bibliography 27
II. Combating Gender Income Inequality 29
Introduction 29
International and Regional Framework 30
The Role of International System 32
Balancing Productivity, Gender Discrimination and Bias 32
Women Empowerment and Education 34
The Gender Pay Gap 36
Factors Affecting the Gender Pay Gap 37
Strategies for Reducing the Gender Pay Gap 41
Gender Income Distribution 41
Gender Income Gaps 42
Gender Accommodating Environment 46
Gaps in the Existing Laws 49
Conclusion 51
Further Research 51
Annotated Bibliography 51
Bibliography 53

Letter from the USG

Dear Delegates,
It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the Lagos Model United Nations (LMUN) Conference, 2020. This Conference is a great opportunity for deliberation on contemporaneous world issues and self-discovery. The aim of LMUN is to create a platform for delegates to hone and learn skills in leadership, teamwork, research, public speaking, negotiation and diplomacy. It is a time for delegates to put aside personal idiosyncrasies and embrace diverse worldviews, particularly in this era of globalization. It is our hope that delegates have a great MUN experience as they proffer solutions to the issues before them.

This year's staff for the **General Assembly (GA) Second Committee** are; **Oloyede Agbolarin** (Under-Secretary General) **Aduloju Oluwatofunmi Isaac** (Chair), **Amirah Najiba Momodu** (Vice-Chair), **Ogidi Gamaliel Gatsby** (Researcher) and **Olagboye Barakah Olohuntosin** (Researcher).

Agbolarin is a final year student of the faculty of law, University of Lagos. He was delegate at LMUN 2016, where he won the Outstanding Position Paper Award. He served as a delegate at LMUN 2017 where he was awarded the Distinguished Delegate Award. He won the Honourable mention award at GIMUN 2018. He was also part of the NMUN NY 2019 team that won the Outstanding Delegation Award. In addition to these, he has served in several official capacities, including as Chair of GA3 at LMUN 2019, a researcher for UNICEF at LMUN 2018, Chair of GA3 at GIMUN 2020, and Rapporteur of the IMO at GIMUN 2019. **Isaac** is a final year law student at the Faculty of Law, University of Lagos. His first contact with the Lagos Model United Nations was at the 2017 conference when he emerged as a finalist at the idea fair. In 2018, He represented the United Kingdom, where he won multiple awards, including the distinguished delegate of the General Assembly 1st committee and his delegation was awarded the best delegation. In 2019, Oluwatofunmi was involved in the planning of different MUNs in the country and helped several delegates prepare for their conference, the majority of whom have awards to their names. **Amirah** is a final year Law student at the University of Lagos. Her love for Model United Nations began as a delegate at the Lagos Model United Nations 2019, where she won the awards for Best Position Paper and Honourable mention. She has also participated as a delegate at the Germany Model United Nations 2019. **Gamaliel**, a 300 level Genetics Student of the University of Lagos, in love with Activism for Human rights alongside Diplomacy. Gamaliel began his Model United Nations experience at the Lagos Model United Nations 2019 where he won the Best Position Paper and Outstanding Delegate Awards in the General Assembly 2 (ECOFIN) representing the Republic of Sudan. **Barakah** is a 400level student of the Faculty of Law, University of Lagos. Her love for sustainable development goals motivated her to participate in Lagos Model United Nations,2019 under General Assembly 3 where she represented India. She was training as a delegate participant for the Rome Model United Nations 2020.
The General Assembly Second Committee, one of the GA committees that acts as the representative and deliberative body of the UN, is the Economic and Financial committee and it focuses on matters related to addresses topics of development and economic policy, including international trade, sustainable development, globalization, and the eradication of poverty, among others.
The two topics to be deliberated upon are:

I. The Role of ICT in Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction
II. Combating Gender Income Inequality

Delegates are reminded that this background guide is not to serve as a replacement for your individual research but as an introduction to the topics being discussed. Delegates are encouraged to conduct their research beyond the background guides and make use of the Annotated Bibliography and Bibliography which has been provided for in depth research. In order to prepare for the Conference, each delegate or delegation is to submit a Position Paper on the date communicated after registration and assignment of country and committee, in accordance with the guidelines in the LMUN Position Paper Guide.
Other essential documents which delegates are to download for further Conference preparation are; the LMUN Delegate Prep Guide and the LMUN Rules of Procedure. These documents are available on the LMUN website – www.lmun.ng.

If you have any questions concerning your preparation for the committee or the Conference itself, please contact me at – usggeneralassembly@lmun.ng or the committee at – ga3@lmun.ng.

We look forward to seeing you at the LMUN 2020 Conference!

Oloyede Agbolarin
USG General Assembly, LMUN 2020

Abbreviations

AIS	Association for Information Systems
AISI	African Information Society Initiative
AMCIS	Americas Conference on Information Systems
DOT Force	Digital Opportunities Task Force
ECIS	European Conference on Information Systems
ECOFIN	Economic and Financial Affairs Council
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GAID	Global Alliance for ICT and Development
GDDI	Global Digital Divide Initiative
GESCI	Global E-Schools and Communities Initiative
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organisation
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
IT	Information Technology
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
NICI	National Information and Communication Infrastructure
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNGIS	United Nations Group on the Information Society
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNITeS	United Nations Information Technology Service
WEF	World Economic Forum
WHO	World Health Organisation
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organisation
WMO	World Meteorological Organisation
WSIS	World Summit of the Information Society

Committee Overview

Introduction

The United Nations (UN) General Assembly Second Committee, also known as the Economic and Financial Committee (ECOFIN) is one of the six main committees of the General Assembly. It deals with global finance and economic matters across the world. The Second Committee focuses on economic and financial issues of both the international system and Member States. It specifically addresses the promotion of development and economic growth, the reduction of global poverty levels, and the improvement of social conditions and living standards.[1] The Second Committee seeks to address the root causes of global economic instability and works with key actors, such as the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development of the World Bank Group to reduce structural problems faced in developing states and promote economic stability.[2] The Second Committee has delegated some of its work to other key international organizations, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) due to the rise of economic crises across the international system.[3] As a result of these changes, the Committee has structured its agenda to focus on attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within the confines of its mandate.[4] This results in the creation of a platform in the Second Committee that allows Member States to discuss the root causes and effects of crucial economic events and their triggering factors, prevention strategies to avoid crises and create innovative policies that address economic growth and development.[5] The Committee also discusses cases of International debts, Means of Interdependence and Globalization, Urbanization, Poverty eradication, Provision of clean and affordable energy, ICT for development, Youth and Women Empowerment alongside Agriculture development and Climate Change.

Structure and Membership

The General Assembly was established in 1945 under the Charter of the United Nations. The General Assembly occupies the central role as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of United Nations. The General Assembly comprises of 193 members of the United Nations and two non-member observer states (Holy See and Palestine), having its President (President of the General Assembly - PGA) and 21 Vice presidents. It

[1] *Charter of the United Nations* 1945, arts. 55-60.
[2] UN DPI, Proposal for Sovereign Debt Restructuring Framework among 6 Draft Texts Approved by Committee (GA/EF/3417), 2014; General Assembly & ECOSOC, Summary by the President of the Economic and Social Council of the special high-level meeting of the Council with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) (New York, 14 and 15 April 2014) (A/69/83-E/2014/71), 2014.
[3] General Assembly, *Economic and Financial*, 2018.
[4] UN DPI, *Regulation of Financial Institutions Critical to Avoiding Spread of Global Risk*, Speaker Says as Second Committee Debates Economic Crisis (GA/EF/3386), 2013; General Assembly, *United Nations Millennium Declaration* (A/RES/55/2), 2000; General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (A/RES/70/1), 2015.
[5] General Assembly, *Economic and Financial*, 2019.

provides a unique forum for multilateral discussions of international issues covered by the Charter. The Second Committee meets early October every year with aims to finish its work by the end of November. The General Assembly Second Committee recently concluded its 74th session of chaired by His Excellency Cheikh Niang of Senegal.

Although having a different area of focus, the Second Committee follows the United Nations plenary structure that comprises 193 Member States as well as some Observer States and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).[6] With the exception of NGOs and Observers, each Member State in the General Assembly has a single vote of equal weight.[7] This allows all Member States to express their voices and encourages an atmosphere of collaboration and cooperation.[8] The General Assembly meets annually in New York starting with the General Debate in the third week of September.[9] The agenda lays out the main areas for discussion and is set by the Main Committees.[10]

The allocation of items on the agenda to each of the Main Committees, including the Second Committee is the responsibility of the General Committee.[11] The General Committee is formed by the President of the General Assembly and 22 Vice-Presidents from different regional blocs.[12] From January to September, the General Committee focuses on thematic debates, consultations, and meetings through organized working groups.[13] During these Committee sessions, Member States can discuss and address solutions to the assigned topics.[14] As a part of the United Nations reporting structure, there are five primary types of organizations that report to the General Assembly and its six Main Committees: subsidiary bodies, funds and programs, research and training institutes, related organizations, and other entities.[15] The General Assembly receives and considers reports on ongoing topics and may take action on any of the items reported by these bodies, including ordering further study and investigation, creating a working group, or including it in documentation or resolutions drafted by the committee.[16] At the end of each year, the Second Committee submits a report that includes draft resolutions to the General Assembly Plenary on each agenda item that was allocated to it.[17] The Plenary then considers each report and votes on the adoption of the included draft resolutions.[18] The adopted resolutions require a simple majority to pass, should a vote be ordered.[19]

[6] New Zealand, *United Nations Handbook 2017-18*, 2017, p. 12.
[7] General Assembly, *Functions and Powers of the General Assembly*, 2018.
[8] UN Foundation, *What We Do: The General Assembly*, 2013.
[9] New Zealand, *United Nations Handbook 2017-18*, 2017, p. 17.
[10] General Assembly, *Agenda of the 72nd session of the General Assembly* (A/72/251), 2017.
[11] Switzerland, *The PGA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2011.
[12] *Ibid.*
[13] General Assembly, *Past Sessions*, 2019.
[14] *Ibid.*
[15] UN DPI, *The United Nations System*, 2015.
[16] New Zealand, *United Nations Handbook 2017-18*, 2017, p. 12.
[17] UN Dag Hammarskjöld Library, *UN Documentation: General Assembly*, 2017.
[18] *Ibid.*
[19] UN Foundation, *What We Do: The General Assembly*, 2013.

Resolutions adopted within the General Assembly are not legally binding but generally represent the global consensus.[20]

Due to the large scope of the Second Committee's mandate, several United Nations entities work closely with the Committee; one such entity, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), is an arm of the United Nations Secretariat that focuses on development.[21] This organization maintains nine divisions, each related to different facets of development.[22] The work it completes is considered the bridge between national action and economic, social and environmental policy.[23] Another entity, the Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination provides the main operational and policy support for ECOSOC and the Second Committee on development issues.[24] Additionally, the office prepares and advises the General Assembly on the periodic review of funding operational development activities, and facilitates links between ECOSOC and the General Assembly through the United Nations Development Group (UNDG).[25] While the two bodies often work together on many issues, it is important to the note that ECOSOC serves as the main coordination arm of economic and social policies, which are defined and agreed upon by the General Assembly.[26] ECOSOC coordinates these efforts through collaborating with other United Nations entities, which include agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), among others.[27] Lastly, the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly leads the Main Committees on issues of budgetary allocations, especially in regards to resolutions that require the allocation of financial resources.

Mandate, Functions and Powers

The mandate of the General Assembly Second Committee falls under the following thematic clusters for economic and financial growth: macroeconomic policies, operational activities for development, financing for development, globalization and interdependence, eradication of poverty, food security nutrition and agriculture, human settlements and urbanization, Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) for development, group of countries in special in situations alongside the sovereignty of the Palestinian people over their natural resources.

It functions in accordance with its Charter which is to promote its mandates above as the Economic and Financial Committee, it endorses urbanization of rural areas, global finance and global partnerships. In September 2015, the General Assembly agreed on a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

[20] General Assembly, *Functions and Powers of the General Assembly*, 2018.
[21] UN DESA, *About UN DESA*, 2018.
[22] *Ibid.*
[23] UN DESA, *What We Do*, 2018.
[24] ECOSOC, *Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination*, 2018.
[25] *Ibid.*
[26] ECOSOC, *ECOSOC at a Glance*, 2018.
[27] ECOSOC, *ECOSOC System*, 2018.

The General Assembly may also take action in cases of threat to the peace, breach of peace or act of aggression when the Security Council has failed to act owing to the negative vote of a permanent member. The Assembly also plays a significant role in taking actions on states within its strengths, while providing resolves in the codification of international law and the process of setting standards.

Recent Sessions and Current Policies

The Economic and Financial Committee (General Assembly Second Committee) at its 74th session dealt with issues concerning economic growth and development such as macroeconomic policy questions; financing for development; sustainable development; sustainable development; human settlement; globalization and interdependence; eradication of poverty; operational activities for development, agriculture development; food security and nutrition; information and communication technologies for development; and towards global partnerships.

The Second Committee considered issues relating to groups of countries in special situations alongside the permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. It also considered the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan with focus placed on their natural resources' claims.

At the Seventy-third sessions, the Second Committee took action on 41 draft proposals and is expected to act on a similar number if not more in the 74th session. The Second Committee has engaged in updating its working methods and practices in order to improve the quality of debates and the impacts of their deliberations and decisions; this has been done by the introduction of the interactive "question time" sessions with secretariat officials after the presentation of substantive reports to streamline the draft resolutions adopted during its sessions and Committee's agenda and programme of work.

Annotated Bibliography

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> *This handbook provides a comprehensive look at the United Nations and its principal organs and committees. Delegates can find a detailed explanation of the structure, processes, and procedures of the Main Committees of the General Assembly in this source. The breakdown of the structure, membership, and functionality of these committees can be a useful point for delegates to begin their research and gain an overall understanding of where the committee falls within the United Nations framework.*

Switzerland, Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, *The PGA Handbook: A Practical guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, available at: http://www.unitar.org/ny/sites/unitar.org.ny/files/UN_PGA_Handbook.pdf (accessed 25 January 2020)

This source is a comprehensive guide of the General Assembly, its different committees, and the links each have with different United Nations system actors. This resource will provide delegates with a good foundation in understanding the Main Committees, practically and directly. The guide also serves as a useful point in starting their research and understanding of the mandate of the Second Committee.

United Nations, General Assembly, "Economic and Financial Committee (Second Committee)", available at: https://www.un.org/en/ga/second/index.shtml (accessed 25 January 2020)

This source is the official website of the Second Committee. It represents the main platform used by the Committee to give information about its role, functions and mandate, other than publishing its activities and initiatives. This is a good resource for delegates to deepen their knowledge on the previous sessions of this body and stay up to date on the new draft resolutions that are before the body for consideration.

United Nations, General Assembly, *Administrative & Budgetary (Fifth Committee) Proposed Strategic Framework for the period 2017-2018*, available at: https://www.un.org/en/ga/fifth/70/Prop_strat_framework_2018-2019.html (accessed 25 January 2020)

This source provides a proposal of the strategic framework for 2017-2018. That includes detail on programs such as Economic and Social Council Affairs, Human Settlements, plus Trade and Development, among others. This is useful to delegates by making them more aware of current trends and goals of the United Nations in the coming years. Moreover, the individual proposals of each topic allow delegates to gather what direction the United Nations is taking and consider this while drafting solutions to global issues. Delegates can thus approach the topics with more of a realistic scope and improve the quality of their work

United Nations, General Assembly, seventy-second session, *Allocation of agenda items to the Second Committee: Note by the Secretariat* (A/C.2/72/1), available at: http://undocs.org/A/C.2/72/1 (accessed 25 January 2020)

This resource provides delegates with the General Assembly Second Committee agenda and schedule for the 72nd session. This agenda allows delegates to have an immediate overview of the topics which are going to be discussed by the Committee in the next months. By studying the schedule of the next meeting of the Second Committee, delegates will be able to understand the objectives and goals of this Committee. At the same time, it will be possible to appreciate the continuous attention to certain topics, and other topics under discussion, as well. Furthermore, delegates will also realize the current relevance of the topics that will be discussed at LMUN in 2020.

United Nations, General Assembly, *Economic and Financial Committee (Second Committee)*, available at: http://www.un.org/en/ga/second/index.shtml (accessed 25 January 2020)

> *This source is the official website of the Second Committee. It represents the main platform used by the Committee to give information about its role, functions and mandate, other than publishing its activities and initiatives. Exploring this resource delegates might deepen their knowledge on the previous sessions of this body, and stay updated on the new draft resolutions which are going to be approved by the end of the year.*

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I. The Role of ICT in Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction

"Sustainable development is the pathway to the future we want for all. It offers a framework to generate economic growth, achieve social justice, exercise environmental stewardship and strengthen governance" – **Ban Ki Moon, Former Secretary General of the United Nations**

Introduction

The emergence of ICT over the last century has undeniably effected changes in the day to day affairs of various countries and on a global level. ICT refers to technologies that provide access to information through telecommunications. ICT is the integration of information processing, computing and communication technologies. It is similar to Information Technology but focuses primarily on communication technologies. This includes the Internet, wireless networks, cell phones, and other communication mediums. The further development of ICT has remarkably contributed to making the world a "global village". An explosion in the free flow of information and ideas has brought knowledge and its myriad applications to many millions of people, creating new choices and opportunities in some of the most vital realms of human endeavour. Research and statistics have revealed that ICT activities are relatively high in developed countries in comparison to underdeveloped countries.[28] It is recognised that although more and more people worldwide are using mobiles, barely 15% of the population in developing countries own portable phones compared to 70% in industrialized countries. As such the role of ICT cannot be made isolated as it affects the nation's development. A stable ICT system would aid the eradication of poverty, as well as increase and sustain the country's development. ITU estimated that at the end of 2019, 53.6% of the global population or 4.1 billion people will be using the internet with the increase in the use of ICT in developing countries from 811 million in 2008 to 3 billion in 2019.

ICT is key in assisting decision-makers and responders during disasters. A recent advantage is it afforded sustainable development efforts observed in the catastrophic incident occurring between August and October 2019 that befell the Amazon forest where a fire raged on for more than 2 weeks, ICT was effective in getting petitions across the world for the Brazilian government to act hastily as the forest contributes 20% of the world oxygen and the fire continuity would have been detrimental to global health.[29] Lenni Montiel[30] stated:

The Internet has an impact on just about every aspect of life. It has undeniably sparked innovation and entrepreneurship, created new forms of public engagement and economic activity. This helps people connect, organize and act towards a common purpose.

28 Transforming Education: The Power of ICT Policies, UNESCO, 2011.
29 UN DESA, About UN DESA, 2018.
30 Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development in the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

International and Regional Framework

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes that the spread of information and communication technology (ICTs) and global interconnectedness has great potential to accelerate human progress, to bridge the digital divide and to develop knowledge societies. SDG 9 in particular—helping to build resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization and fostering innovation (specifically SDG Target 9.c). This is important in terms of encouraging ICT as a medium through which sustainability may be achieved. It is part of the SDGs adopted by the UN in 2015. Efficient and affordable ICT infrastructure and services allow countries to participate in the digital economy and to increase their overall economic well-being and competitiveness.

The General Assembly sees ICT infrastructure as a cross-cutting "means of implementation", underpinning the achievement of every goal. All three pillars of sustainable development – economic prosperity, social inclusion and environmental protection – need ICT as a key catalyst. The 17 SDGs can be realized, but only with greater progress in the speed, degree and equality of development. Economic growth in the business-as-usual context will not achieve the SDGs. Only ICT, particularly broadband, can provide this surge in development.[31] The GA has thus adopted a plethora of documents to incorporate ICT in sustainable Development over the years. Amongst them are A/RES/73/218, A/RES/72/200 both on ICTs for sustainable development. They recognize the potential of information and communications technologies to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development 8 and other internationally agreed development goals, noting that they can accelerate progress across all 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

UNESCO introduced the report "Communication for development programmes in the United Nations system" (A/71/307), providing an overview of actions taken by the United Nations system to facilitate the empowerment of individuals and communities through communications and participation in media. Among some core achievements, there was development with regard to Strengthening grass-roots communication capabilities, addressing crisis, disaster and humanitarian emergency situations, knowledge-sharing and capacity-building, and global digital campaigns since the preparation of the last version of the report in 2014, there had been much progress in coordinating United Nations organizations and setting a coherent, cohesive action agenda.

In 2004, the UN system presented its first system-wide Information and Communications Technology (ICT) strategic framework in response to General Assembly Resolution (A/RES/57/295) on ICT for Development. Since then, dramatic advances in the global ICT landscape allow Agencies to better deliver on their mandates, and satisfy the provisions of the resolution more effectively and efficiently than before.

31 Human Development Report 2016: Human Development for Everyone.

Role of the International System

The United Nations acknowledges that leveraging ICT will play a vital role in their efforts. The General Assembly for the 2030 Agenda has stated that:

the spread of information and communications technology and global interconnectedness has great potential to accelerate human progress, to bridge the digital divide and to develop knowledge societies.

The General Assembly in its resolution adopted on 20 December 2013 recalls that, there remains an important and growing digital divide between countries in terms of the availability, affordability and use of information and communications technologies and access to broadband; stressing also the need to close the digital divide especially concerning issues such as Internet affordability and to ensure that the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications technologies, are available to all, reaffirming the need to more effectively harness the potential of information and communications technologies to promote the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals, through sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development.

International organisations have stressed that ICT is an essential component of measures to reduce poverty, prevent disaster, improve health and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in many other ways. The ITU, for instance, is not alone in recognizing the power and potential of ICT. The Plan of Action decided at the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society calls upon international organisations and financial institutions to develop strategies for the use of ICT to promote sustainable development, and for achieving the goals expressed in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.[32] Many of these organisations and their ICT-related activities are listed in the WSIS Stocktaking Report. Some examples are; The United Nations Information and Communication Technologies Task Force raised awareness about the central role of ICT at its Global Forum on "Promoting an Enabling Environment for Digital Development", held in Berlin in 2004. Other United Nations bodies that are taking on the task of promoting ICT include the World Health Organisation. Its Health Inter Network aims to provide access to high quality, timely information online, for health professionals, researchers and policy-makers in developing countries. The World Intellectual Property Organisation undertakes a wide variety of activities relevant to the WSIS process, especially concerning e-commerce and the Internet, while the International Civil Aviation Organisation has developed a Master Plan to ensure that all its applications and security components are interoperable with each other and with other entities.[33]

32 United Nations ICT Task Force, Global forum 2004.
33 Doc 10004 Global Aviation Safety Plan - ICAO.

The Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) holds more than 30 years of experience in rural radio, with noticeable developments in recent projects due to the deployment of contemporary technologies with traditional technology.[34] FAO established an agricultural information system worldwide via radio with FAO-trained staff manning the 52 focal points in Africa. The United Nations extends support to developing countries to implement national ICT policies promoting e-business, competitiveness and exports through the UNCTAD; also partners in the global e-policy resource network.

At a time when extreme weather events seem to be regularly causing enormous damage and loss of life, the World Meteorological Organisation is working hard to develop an ICT system as the basis of a single, coordinated infrastructure for the collection and sharing of weather, water and climate information.[35]

As well as United Nations bodies, other international entities are active in promoting ICT. The World Bank provides support to governments in the development of a pro-competitive policy and regulatory environment for the ICT sector. Active in some 80 countries, the bank's portfolio for these activities amounts to more than $3 billion.[36] The work of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in the area of government relations with civil society reviews member countries' efforts to strengthen access to information and encourage the active participation of citizens in shaping public policy. International academic institutions, too, are involved, such as CERN (the European Organisation for Nuclear Research), whose project using ICT to gather and share scientific data is described in the article, building information networks to support science.

The United Nations ICT Task Force was created by the former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan in November 2001, acting upon a request by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) dated July 11, 2000, with an initial term of mandate of three years (until the end of 2004). It followed in the footsteps of the WEF, Global Digital Divide Initiative, and the Digital Opportunities Task Force, established in 2000 by the G8 at their annual summit in Okinawa, Japan. By providing it with a home in the United Nations, this accorded the United Nations ICT Task Force, in the eyes of many developing countries, a broader legitimisation than the previous WEF and G8 initiatives. The Task Force's principal aim was to provide policy advice to governments and international organisations for bridging the digital divide.

In addition to supporting the WSIS and leading the United Nations in developing ICT strategies for development, the Task Force's objective was to form partnerships between the United Nations system and states, private industry, trusts, foundations and donors, and other stakeholders. The United Nations ICT Task Force has involved major companies

34 FAO (1966), "Agriculture and Industrialisation".
35 Watching the weather and climate, 2015.
36 World Investment Report 2018: Investment and New Industrial Policies.

in the computer industry, international NGOs, governments and various international agencies.[37]

Its coordinating body was a multi-stakeholder bureau, assisted by a small secretariat at United Nations headquarters in New York. Technical advice was provided by a high-level panel of technical advisors. Within the Report of the high-level panel of experts on information and communication technology (22 May 2000) suggesting a United Nations ICT Task Force, the panel welcomed the establishment of a United Nations Information Technology Service, suggested by Kofi Annan in "We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the 21st century".[38] The panel made suggestions on its configuration and implementation strategy, including that ICT4D volunteering opportunities make mobilizing "national human resources" (local ICT experts) within developing countries a priority, for both men and women

ITU is also assisting countries to transition into the digital era. Central to ITU's strategy to leverage the power of ICTs to accelerate progress on the SDGs is the "four I's" framework based on building Infrastructure, securing Investment, promoting Innovation and ensuring Inclusivity.[39]ITU's contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals starts with SDG 9: Building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and fostering innovation. ITU supports countries in achieving SDG 9 (specifically SDG Target 9.c) by enabling access to the Internet and other ICTs, in the following three ways:[40]

1. ITU plays a vital role in brokering international agreements to allocate and coordinate the use of the global radio-frequency spectrum and satellite orbits. This effort allows ICT devices anywhere in the world to be used on the same frequency bands, which in turn ensures that radio communication services run smoothly, without interference from other radio communication services and users, and benefit from the resulting economies of scale. ITU is the only body for the management of the radio-frequency spectrum at the international level.

2. ITU and its members, including governments, the private sector and academia, are developing the international standards—the technical criteria, processes and practices—that ensure that key ICTs perform smoothly, efficiently and safely and provide further opportunities for economies of scale.

3. ITU has been assisting developing countries in making ICTs affordable, relevant and accessible to all. For example, ITU supports countries in developing programmes to build the necessary physical infrastructure, strengthen cybersecurity, develop digital skills for youth and others, improve digital inclusion for people with special

37 United Nations Information and Communication Technologies Task Force.
38 Millennium Report of the Secretary-General.
39 ICT for Education and Development.
40 ITU Report 2019, ICT to Achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

needs, enhance the regulatory and market environment to increase access to ICTs, and promote ICT-centred innovation and entrepreneurship.[41]

ITU also raises awareness and rallies the commitment necessary to achieve the SDGs through many processes. For example, ITU leads the coordination of the WSIS process, leveraging pre-existing WSIS mechanisms and Action Lines to promote the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The annual WSIS Forum takes stock of the positive impact of ICTs on people's lives around the world. ITU maintains the WSIS Stocktaking database which is a repository of more than 10,000 ICT for Development projects and more than 350,000 members as well as awards WSIS Prizes that give international recognition to stakeholders who implement ICT for Development Projects.[42] ITU has also developed an SDG Mapping Tool that illustrates how ITU activities contribute to the SDGs. ITU is the custodian of the SDG indicators 4.4.1, 5.b.1, 9.c.1, 17.6.2 and 17.8.1 and responsible for tracking them at the international level.

A Task Force was also created by the UN and held 10 semi-annual meetings in various places that served as important venues for the exchange of best practices and to bring the various stakeholders together to work on common themes. Also, a Global Roundtable Forum on "Innovation and Investment: Scaling Science and Technology to Meet the MDGs" was held in New York City, 13 September 2005. The primary focus of the Forum was on the critical role of science, technology and innovation, especially information and communication technologies, in scaling-up grassroots, national and global responses to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.[43] One of the notable outcomes of the work of the United Nations ICT Task Force was the establishment in 2003 of the GESCI, to improve education in schools and communities through the use of information and communication technologies.[44] GESCI was officially launched during the WSIS.[45]

Another outcome is the Global ePolicy Resource Network, designed to marshal global efforts in support of national e-strategies for development. The network provides ICT policymakers in developing countries with the depth and quality of information needed to develop effective national e-policies and e-strategies.[46] The network was first proposed by the members of the Digital Opportunities Task Force, who merged their activities with the United Nations ICT Task Force in 2002. The ePol-Net was also officially launched during the WSIS.[47]

[41] UN DPI, The United Nations System, 2019.
[42] ITU Report, 2019, "ICT to Achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals".
[43] United Nations Information and Communication Technologies Task Force.
[44] AISI Report, 2018.
[45] *Ibid*.
[46] *Ibid.*
[47] UNCTAD, "Frontier technologies, emerging approaches and opportunities", in Technology and Innovation Report 2018: Harnessing Frontier Technologies for Sustainable Development, UN, New York.

Another outcome of the WSIS is the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament. Launched by the UNDESA in cooperation with the Inter-parliamentary Union on the occasion of the WSIS in Tunis in November 2005. The Global Centre for Information and Communication Technologies in Parliament responds to the common desire to build a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society, where legislatures are empowered to better fulfil their constitutional functions through ICT.[48]

The task of bridging the digital divide is yet unfinished. The WSIS has called for an Internet Governance Forum to allow for a global multi-stakeholder discussion of issues related to the governance of the global resource that the Internet represents. The WSIS also called for a follow-up and implementation process, for which the principles embodied in the multi-stakeholder composition and workings of the United Nations ICT Task Force can provide a useful model. The Task Force was active, inter alia, in the process leading to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva in December 2003 and WSIS II in Tunis, Tunisia, in November 2005.[49] In order to participate in the second phase of the WSIS, the Task Force's original three-year mandate was extended by another year and expired on 31 December 2005, with no further extension. Work is being carried on by the United Nations Group on the Information Society with a focus on the United Nations System, and the successor to the United Nations ICT Task Force, the Global Alliance for ICT and Development, with an international development emphasis.[50]

Regional activities were carried out in five regional networks—Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia, the Arab States, and Europe and Central Asia. The African Information Society Initiative, launched in 1996 is perhaps one of the most comprehensive regional ICT-for-development frameworks of its kind. Preceding the Geneva Action Plan of the WSIS of 2003 and the WSIS Tunis Commitments, 2005, AISI can be credited for being a reference point for an African digital vision and agenda in a globalized world.[51] The AISI originated from a 1996 resolution (812 –XXXI) adopted by the ECA Conference of Ministers requesting the Commission to "constitute a high-level workgroup to develop an action plan on ICTs to accelerate socio-economic development in Africa".[52]The Ministers were convinced that building Africa's Information Society would help the continent to "accelerate its development plans, stimulate growth and provide new opportunities in education, trade, health care, job creation and food security, helping African countries to leapfrog stages of development and raise their standards of living".

By and large, the first 10 years of AISI has been devoted to laying the necessary foundations and building blocks in building the Information Society in African countries. As evidence, three-quarters of ECA's 53 member States now have national e-strategies

[48] *Ibid.*
[49] UN DPI, The United Nations System, 2015.
[50] UNECA, "AISI, a decade's perspective".
[51] United Nations Dag Hammarskjöld Library, United Nations Documentation: General Assembly, 2017.
[52] *Ibid.*

complimenting their development efforts as well as harnessing their ICT sectors to play a greater role in their economies, through the NICI Plans and Strategies. Indeed, to quote His Excellency Joachim Chissano:[53]

Ever since the African Information Society Initiative was launched in the mid-90s, a host of achievements have been recorded on the continent: thanks to the Project, intra-African traffic and network integration has improved; tele density has risen significantly in recent times, telecentres and community multimedia centres are taking root and providing access to under-serviced areas.

Although the AISI vision called for the "formulation and development of NICI plans in every African country",[54] the strategic objectives of the framework also called on the African Member States to improve communication services and create a continent-wide information and telecommunication network that will allow for fast and reliable communications to and from the continent. Here are several international conferences that provide tracks for ICT researchers to share their research from and about Africa, for example, the Association for Information Systems, Special Interest Group on ICTs in Global Development's track at the annual Americas Conference on Information Systems, the annual European Conference on Information Systems and the annual International Conference on Information Systems.

The Digital Divide

The Digital Divide refers to the differing amount of information between those who have access to the ICT and those who do not or have restricted access.[55] The problem in an international context indicates that certain countries are far more equipped than other developing countries to exploit the benefits from the rapidly expanding ICT. Before the 20th century, it referred mainly to the divisions between those with or without telephone access; after the late 1990s, the term began to be used mainly to describe the split between those with and without Internet access, particularly broadband.[56]

In the socio-economic context, the idea of the "digital divide" refers to the growing gap between the underprivileged members of society, especially the poor, rural, elderly, and handicapped portion of the population who do not have access to computers or the internet; and the wealthy, middle-class, and young people living in urban and suburban areas who have access.

The Internet and other ICTs are transforming society, improving our mutual understanding, making a better platform for exercising the right to freedom of expression as well as freedom of the press, realizing a truly free and democratic world society, and other

[53] Former President of Mozambique.
[54] African Information Society Initiative (AISI) Report 2018.
[55] Gunkel DJ, "Second thoughts: toward a critique of the digital divide" (2003) 5(4) *New media & society*, 499-522.
[56] UNCTAD Report, 2018.

benefits.[57] However, there exists a different set of people without access to ICT with varying causes; also in existence are the set that possesses little access to ICT while another involves those possessing unlimited access to the ICT. Digital Divide exists between those in cities and those in rural areas; between the literate and the illiterate; between socioeconomic groups; and, globally, between the more and less industrially developed countries.[58] Access to the telephone is considered so vital that governments implement various policies to offer affordable telephone service. Unfortunately, some countries lack sufficient telephone lines while the masses are so occupied with sourcing for food that they instinctively view ICT has a waste of time. Telecommunication facilities are more readily available for wealthier communities and are more attractive for developing companies to establish themselves. The effects being that outside companies have it less appealing to invest in less fortunate neighbourhoods, contributing to the already existing divide. With the power of information at the beck and call of those with computers and internet access, they become richer while those without information become poorer when compared.

The location of individuals in a country also affects the level of information and communication received. Research has pointed to industrialized/city area possessing access to ICT than the rural area. For example, while three-fifth of urban Chinese use the Internet, less than a quarter of the rural population do so, and the gap is growing; a World Bank Report assures that the improved coordination and inclusion mechanisms can accelerate ICT usage in Chinese villages and spur the transformation of the rural countryside.[59] Klaus Rohland said:

The report illustrates how mobile phone and web applications are improving productivity for farmers by facilitating access to agricultural information. Other impactful services that can leverage China's spreading rural information infrastructure include e-learning materials for students; e-commerce opportunities beyond traditional agriculture; and communications tools for fostering social inclusion among the elderly.[60]

Illiteracy is considered as another factor responsible for the digital divide; while there is the provision of ICT, there is a need for knowledge of its operation else it lays dormant and useless with the holder. Among the masses in the world, there are still 757 million adults including 115 million youths who cannot read or write a simple sentence.[61] This constitutes a drawback in the development of the country and the world at large.

[57] *Ibid*.

[58] Cullen R., "Winds of change: libraries in the twenty-first century: The digital divide: a global and national call to action" (2003) 21(3) *Electronic Library* 247-257.

[59] World Development Report 2019: The Changing Nature of Work.

[60] The World Bank Country Director for China.

[61] Keller PN, *The pedagogical implications of orality on refugee ESL students. Dialogues: An Interdisciplinary Journal of English Language Teaching and Research* 9 February 2017.

On 5 November 2019, ITU released new data that revealed that in most countries worldwide women are still trailing men in benefiting the transformational power of digital technologies. Overall, the proportion of all women using the internet globally is 48%, against 58% of all men; with the digital gender gap decreasing in Europe and America while it increases in Arab States, Africa and Asia-pacific region.[62]

World Bank Chief Innovation Officer for Global ICT Development, Chris Vein stated that "ICTs are influencing employment both as an industry that creates jobs and as a tool that empowers workers to access new forms of work, in new and more flexible ways". Every nation's government seeks the creation of more jobs for citizen for the betterment of society and ICT is capable of fulfilling such a role.[63] Online employment marketplaces are helping an estimated 12 million people worldwide find work by connecting them with employers globally. Solutions to the digital divide could include universal access, more community access centres in places where it does not exist, well-trained technical staff, positive public attitude regarding technology amongst others.[64] ICT developments in remote areas heighten the people's economic opportunities and provide access to financial resources, allow people to access information on government policies, social services, health care and education; this is a step not only in terms of closing the digital divide but also more importantly, in closing the development divide.

Interdependence and Linking Governance Via ICT

It will be restated that the world has been made a global village courtesy of the ICT. Interdependence between countries could exist in private form or public form. Countries relate in other to resolve problems like poverty and as well as hindrances to the achievement of sustainable development. Political interaction cannot be separated from the development of a country as the role of managing and governance of the country leans directly on people produced through political means. ICT platforms enable participatory urban planning projects where citizens can express their opinions. E-government systems open up the possibility to complete administrative processes from anywhere.[65] Political interactions have been brought to the ICT world where platforms have been established for political aspirants to communicate their goals as well as devised plan for the development of the country when elected into the position of power with the electorate. Also, political issues can be communicated via YouTube channels where people can communicate their opinions while expressing either their commendations or rejection of policies. The ICT is not limited to political interactions; it also cuts across economic and social interactions.

[62] World Development Report 2016: Digital Dividends.

[63] "Beyond today - Inequalities in human development in 21st century".

[64] ITU Report, 2018.

[65] Montagna JM, "A framework for the assessment and analysis of electronic government proposals" (2005) 4(3) *Electronic commerce research and applications*, 204-219.

Google, in April 2019 agreed to train 30,000 Africans on ICT certification as this amplifies the interdependence theory whereby the more developed country has an obligation to assist the underdeveloped country in reducing the margin of the digital divide. The popular applications, Alibaba and AliExpress provide for the meeting of various sellers from across the globe with buyers equally across the globe. This communication technology cuts across different countries providing a conduit for people to grow their businesses and develop international influence with the ultimate effect of reducing poverty.

In the bid to improve the overall usage of ICT countries have gone ahead to form agreements to aid ICT increase. For example, in Africa, Nigeria signed a $328 million agreement with China on the National and Communication Technology Infrastructure Backbone[66] (NICTIB) Phase 11 also addressed as NICTIB 11 project; which is aimed at developing information and communications technology in Nigeria. It was recorded in 2019 that a German Company called SAP donated an ICT hub to schools in Lagos, Nigeria where it was addressed that the next generation of jobs will be ICT-driven and that there is a need for support of indigent persons to become active in the development of the country; such gesture is replicated by different countries around the world.

Due to the level of ICT being on a higher plane in developed countries than in developing countries, it is noticeable that ICT initiatives are always provided by the advanced country while the beneficiaries are the developing countries. Sustainable development strategies of developing countries will continue to give priority to human development, with the eradication of poverty as its central goal; as such the commitment by the advanced country to support the development of ICT in the developing countries is laudable and should be emulated by other countries.

Interdependence of countries is the dependence of countries on one another, this would lead to a better stance and approach to globalisation which is the economic, social and political interaction and integration of people in different areas of the world; the effect of technology on globalisation, knowledge spread, the effect of technology on economic growth in developed and developing countries. Indeed, ICTs can be used in numerous ways to promote a more just, democratic and peaceful world. They can be used by governments, international organisations and NGOs to perform their important work more effectively. They can be used as organisational tools by nonviolent, popular movements to overcome authoritarian regimes. They can be used for economic opportunities and development, in order to improve living conditions and the overall well-being of humans. ICTs also empower individuals all around the world to connect with each other, to engage in dialogue, to learn from each other and about each other, to build peace in the minds of individuals, to overcome cultural differences and to discuss and solve global challenges.[67]

[66] Dauda S, Idagu E, and Nwokedi LO, *Nigeria-China Relations under President Muhammadu Buhari with Particular Reference to "Financial Aids"*.
[67] Wilson J and Wilson H "Digital Divide: Impediment to ICT and Peace Building in Developing Countries" (2009) 11(2) *American Communication Journal*, 1-9.

Improving Agricultural Productivity and Healthcare Access Through ICT

Emerging technologies create new possibilities for agriculture and food security. Precision farming can be supported by information sent to mobile phones that can provide farmers with weather reports, crop prices and new farming techniques. Big data analytics can use data generated from global positioning systems and sensors on fields and farming equipment to improve farmers' activities spanning from crop yields to water utilisation. Analytics and software solutions can also be used for crop management. Satellite imagery can provide decision support to farmers to help ensure crop health. Remote monitoring systems are being used in smart research stations in developing countries to monitor environmental parameters, automatically managing data collection and storage, and transmitting information to the cloud. Smart research stations provide farmers with information to enhance sustainability and the commercial viability of important elements in the crop sector value chain. This involves coupling real-time measurement of environmental factors with scientific observations and manual data collection from trees equipped with near field communication tags. Globally, more than 500 million smallholder farms in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa produce about 80% of the food consumed in these regions today.[68]

Trade regulations and standards, as well as retailers and their consumers, are requiring increasing levels of transparency, and that the production of food and other products be documented and controlled for quality at each step.[69]

With cloud-based mobile solutions, it becomes possible to track produce from farms to factories and connect smallholder farmers and suppliers in rural areas. This enhanced connectivity contributes to improving trade and ensuring food and nutrition coverage. All parties benefit from advanced forecasting and planning as well as full traceability back to the farm. Similarly, technology solutions in developing countries are enabling quality and affordable healthcare. Computer systems are being used to give doctors in rural hospitals warnings if drugs expire, automatically requesting providers to dispose of those drugs immediately. Systems can also track stock and expiry dates through a simple interface accessible from a personal computer. When supplies run low, an alert is launched to make sure more medicine is ordered. This type of ICT solution raises medical quality, which can be one of the most common problems with healthcare providers in low-income countries that do not have the equipment necessary to provide medical care. Clinics can also use mobile broadband so that the system is portable. Staff can send a text message to patients to make sure they take medication or to tell groups of patients that a specialist is visiting. Computers and the Internet can also be used to help local healthcare professionals consult urban experts and share medical records. Doctors can use printers, scanners, and digital cameras to generate and send information to specialists abroad or in capital cities. This

[68] "Farming Systems and Poverty: Improving Farmers' Livelihoods".
[69] ICCBW Report 2018.

saves time and also saves the patient having to travel. ICT can also be used when reliable electricity supply is problematic in rural areas, and supply energy to hospitals. Solar-powered shipping containers can be fitted out as cyber cafes.[70]

ICT can also assist access to healthcare technology for people in isolated areas. For instance, medical advice to women in rural areas is provided, on a confidential basis, by text message or vocal messaging. Mobile-based health programmes can also contribute to preventing diseases and fight against child and infant mortality, helping healthcare specialists gather data for community centre management.

Role of ICT in Education

Education is a key factor to ensure people find or create productive employment and sustainable livelihoods and is inextricably linked to any sustainable development agenda. Increasing access to and attainment of higher levels of education is "key to ensuring more equitable access to better living conditions, increasingly specialized and better-paid jobs, and a more sustainable environment as well as sustainable economic and social development". [71] Without education that can foster human capabilities, access to information and ICT will not have the expected developmental benefits.[72] According to UNESCO, knowledge societies require "the capabilities to identify, produce, process, transform, disseminate and use information to build and apply knowledge for human development".

ICT presents a plethora of possible delivery systems that can increase not only access to education across the continents but also the quality thereof: using online, particularly mobile, platforms for learning, also for flexible lifelong learning opportunities, expanding access to libraries' resources and increasing regional and international knowledge sharing, teaching ICT skills for employment and connecting to continents worldwide for educational content and research support. For example, in South Africa, a greater emphasis on the exploitation of ICT for "quality expansion of teaching and learning"[73] was outlined in the Draft Policy Framework for the Provision of Distance Education in South African Universities of 2012 including e-learning, m-learning and a move to open learning using open educational resources

A combination of education and ICT can be a powerful driver for growth on the developing continent. Improving higher education systems should be high on all developing countries development agendas. Higher education institutions and policy-makers in developing countries must ensure that their citizens acquire the skills to compete, innovate and respond to complex social, environmental and economical situations. Governments in partnership with the private sector and civil society need to ensure that they create the

[70] UN ICT Task force, report 2018.
[71] United Nations General Assembly 2013, p. 5.
[72] Britz, Hoffmann, Ponelis, Zimmer &Lor 2013.
[73] Department of Higher Education and Training [DHET] 2012, p. 8.

necessary physical and ICT infrastructure that can support an educated and skilled population, an efficient innovation system that allows enterprises to create and exploit knowledge to establish a competitive advantage in the marketplace.

Conclusion

The impact of ICT is evident in every aspect of our lives, it has its shortcomings but has majorly gone the mile in assisting the development of the nation with the use growing every day, and the attainment of alleviating the nation from poverty is closer. The ICT has provided outstanding effects in the health sector, finance sector, agricultural sector and youth empowerment. The United Nations has also shown its interest in ensuring that ICT receives an increased utilisation with the assurance from the Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development in the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Lenni Montiel for a significant increase in the access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in the least developed countries by 2020. The revolution powered by ICT eases development and countries seeking a permanent break from poverty have to be swept with the tide.

Annotated Bibliography

"ICT for Education and Development", available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228368270_ICT_for_education_and_development (accessed 25 January 2020)

> *The purpose of this paper is to assess the contribution that information communication technology (ICT) can make in development and education, covering different application fields. This work looks into the practical application of ICTs covering the application possibilities, the limitations and the methodological application. Information has been taken from multiple real experiences. The paper finds that there are significant opportunities for improving the benefits of integrating ICTs within development programs. Limitations should be accepted at present while a holistic approach should be taken to consider the real local needs. ICTs should be taken into account within multiple development programs as a tool to improve their efficiency. Limitations are covered in the paper, as well as recommendations about the deployment of ICT infrastructures with other development targets*

Hakikur Rahman, "Utilizing ICT for Sustainable Development in Developing Countries", available at: https://www.academia.edu/1637293/Utilizing_ICT_for_Sustainable_Development_in_Developing_Countries (accessed 25 January 2020)

> *This policy statement illustrates how ICT is equipping populations with tools to relieve poverty, access education, provide healthcare and reduce CO2 emissions. To sustain*

opportunities in the long run and ensure efforts are impactful across geographies and cultures, the statement explains how the ICT ecosystem works and the contributions business and other relevant stakeholders bring to policy-making efforts

International Chamber of Commerce, "ICT, Policy and Sustainable Economic Development", available at: https://iccwbo.org/publication/ict-policy-sustainable-economic-development/ (accessed 25 January 2020)

This policy statement illustrates how ICT is equipping populations with tools to relieve poverty, access education, provide healthcare and reduce CO2 emissions. To sustain opportunities in the long run and ensure efforts are impactful across geographies and cultures, the statement explains how the ICT ecosystem works and the contributions business and other relevant stakeholders bring to policy-making efforts

International Telecommunication Union, "ICTs to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals", available at: https://www.itu.int/web/pp-18/en/backgrounder/6050-icts-to-achieve-the-united-nations-sustainable-development-goals (accessed 25 January 2020)

This document is the version of the backgrounder prepared for the Plenipotentiary 2018 Conference in October/November 2018 to help delegates understand how technology can be used to achieve sustainable development.

The African Information Society Initiative (AISI), available at: https://www.uneca.org/publications/african-information-society-initiative-aisi-decade%E2%80%99s-perspective (accessed 25 January 2020)

This publication explains how the AISI is perhaps one of the most comprehensive regional ICT-for-development frameworks of its kind. Preceding the Geneva Action Plan of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) of 2003 and the WSIS Tunis Commitments, 2005, AISI can be credited for being a reference point for an African digital vision and agenda in a globalized world. The AISI originated from a 1996 resolution (812–XXXI) adopted by the ECA Conference of Ministers requesting the Commission to "constitute a high-level workgroup to develop an action plan on ICTs to accelerate socio-economic development in Africa". The Ministers were convinced that building Africa's Information Society would help the continent to "accelerate its development plans, stimulate growth and provide new opportunities in education, trade, health care, job creation and food security, helping African countries to leapfrog stages of development and raise their standards of living

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II. Combating Gender Income Inequality

"Gender equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance" – **Kofi Atta Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations**

Introduction

Gender is a primary marker of social and economic stratification and, as a result, of exclusion. Regardless of one's socio-economic class, there are systematic gender differences in material well-being, although the degree of inequality varies across countries and over time.[74] These differences arise from distinctions in biology, psychology, and cultural norms. Some of these distinctions are empirically grounded while others appear to be socially constructed. Studies show the different experiences of genders across many domains including education, life expectancy, personality, interests, family life, careers, and political affiliations.[75] Gender inequality is experienced differently across different cultures. Gender norms and stereotypes reinforce gendered identities and constrain the behaviour of women and men in ways that lead to inequality.[76]

The global trend towards extreme wealth and income concentration has dramatically strengthened the economic and political power of those individuals at the top, being male-dominated. Around the world, women continue to be underrepresented in high-level, highly paid positions and overrepresented in low-paying jobs.[77] Women of colour experience particularly high levels of poverty, unemployment, and other economic hardships. Gender discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace contribute significantly to these persistent economic divides. Men particularly dominate highly lucrative financial industry jobs.[78]

Women's work is under-valued. Women tend to be concentrated in different jobs than men. Even though the work itself may require equal or more effort and skills, it is valued and remunerated less. For women of colour, immigrant women and mothers, the gap widens. The concept of the "motherhood penalty" coerces women into the informal economy, casual and part-time work, and tends to increase the gender pay gap. In line with the mandate of the GA2, an issue of enormous economic and developmental importance is at the core of our debate and achievement of the SDGs.

The International Labour Organisation recognizes that more work needs to be done to develop more accurate global gender gap analyses.[79] One factor skewing the numbers is that women do considerably more unpaid work, from housekeeping to caring for children

[74] UNDP, *Gender Inequality*.
[75] *Ibid.*
[76] *Ibid.*
[77] Inequality.org, *Gender Economic Inequality*.
[78] *Ibid.*
[79] World Economic Forum, *Global Gender Gap Report* 2020.

and the elderly. Among the 21 countries reporting data for at least one year during the 2013-2015 period, the West Bank and Gaza had the greatest imbalance, with men devoting just 16% as much time to unpaid domestic and caregiving work as women.[80] Belgium, where men spend 63% as much time on these activities as women, ranked at the top.[81]

Gender inequalities may take on new forms; women moving from unpaid care work into formal employment, only for new gender divisions to emerge within formal employment; or women entering high level and hitherto male-dominated occupations, only for gender divisions within the occupation to intensify.[82]

International and Regional Framework

The Charter of the United Nations states that women should be "equal actors, partners and beneficiaries of sustainable development, human rights, peace, and security." This solidifies the right of women to equal pay. Additionally, the United Nations, adopted the Sustainable Development Goals[83] in 2015, by unanimous decision. Amongst the 17 goals, Goal 5 provides for gender equality in all forms, including in the workplace and to equal pay.

The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women was adopted without a vote by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 48/104 of 20 December 1993.[84] Contained within it is the recognition of "the urgent need for the universal application to women of the rights and principles concerning equality, security, liberty, integrity and dignity of all human beings". The resolution is often seen as complementary to, and strengthening of, the work of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.[85]

The convention also requires ratifying states to take measures to ensure that a pregnant woman or nursing mother is not obliged to perform work which has been determined to be harmful to her health or that of her child and provides for protection from discrimination based on maternity.

CEDAW is one of the most ratified conventions of the United Nations, signifying a greater need on the part of Member States to adequately address gender issues, including inequality in pay. Article 17 of the CEDAW, established the rules, purpose, and operating procedures of the committee. Throughout its years of operation, the committee has held multiple sessions to ensure the rules outlined in the CEDAW are being followed. Over time the practices of the committee have evolved due to an increased focus on women's rights

[80] Inequality.org, *Gender Economic Inequality*.
[81] *Ibid.*
[82] UN-Women Policy Brief No. 6: *Tackling the Gender Pay Gap from Individual Choices to Institutional Change*.
[83] GA Resolution A/RES/70/1.
[84] Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women Proclaimed by *General Assembly resolution 48/104*.
[85] Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.

issues.[86] Article 11 outlines the right to work for women as "an inalienable right of all human beings". It requires equal pay for equal work, the right to social security, paid leave and maternity leave "with pay or with comparable social benefits without loss of former employment, seniority or social allowances". Dismissal on the grounds of maternity, pregnancy or status of marriage shall be prohibited with a sanction. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) is a multilateral treaty adopted by the General Assembly on 16 December 1966 through the General Assembly. The Covenant is monitored by the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR).

In 1995 in Beijing, the United Nations held its fourth annual World Conference on Women, and one of the outcomes of the conference was the creation of the "Platform for Action," a document and action plan promoting women's equality around the world. The Platform defined the "12 Areas of Concern," areas that most need reform in order to promote women's rights and equality: poverty, education, health, violence, armed conflict, decision making, laws and regulations, human rights, media. At the end of the Conference, 189 member states voted to adopt the Platform for Action. Thus, the aim was to promote equality of women, including in terms of financial capacity, equivalent to their counterparts performing the same work. However, at follow-up conferences, Beijing+5 in 2000 and Beijing+10 in 2005, analyses show that not enough progress had been made to reform the 12 Areas of Concern and promote women's equality.

The ILO General Conference created the Convention concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value,[87] or Equal Remuneration Convention which is the principal one aimed at equal remuneration for work of equal value for men and women.

Intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations, including the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) regularly adopt resolutions dedicated to gender equality issues. UN Women supports these bodies by providing expert advice, information and policy recommendations on gender equality issues.[88] In 2019, the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) approved 12 draft resolution. Among them, The Committee took up the draft resolution titled "International Equal Pay Day"[89] The draft resolution proposes that 18 September be established as International Equal Pay Day, beginning in 2020, to celebrate progress achieved and support the fight for equal pay.

[86] Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 34/180 of 18 December 1979.
[87] C100 - Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100)
[88] UN Women, Major Resolutions
[89] Document A/C.3/74/L.49

The Role of International System

Many international commitments support women's economic empowerment, including the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and a series of International Labour Organisation conventions on gender equality. UN-Women supports women's economic empowerment in line with these, and with the growing body of evidence that shows that gender equality significantly contributes to advancing economies and sustainable development.

UN-Women works with a variety of partners. Their programmes promote women's ability to secure decent jobs, accumulate assets, and influence institutions and public policies to determine growth and development. One critical area of focus involves advocacy to measure women's unpaid care work and to take actions so women and men can more readily combine it with paid employment.[90]

In all economic empowerment programmes, UN-Women reaches out to women most in need, often by engaging with grassroots and civil society organisations. Particularly marginalized groups include rural women, domestic workers, some migrants and low-skilled women. Our aims are higher incomes, better access to and control over resources, and greater security, including protection from violence.[91]

One of the primary goals of the ILO is to promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity.[92] Gender equality is a key element in reaching this goal and is a cross-cutting policy driver for all ILO policy outcomes. The ILO Policy on Gender Equality and Mainstreaming supports a two-pronged approach of gender mainstreaming: analysing and addressing in all ILO initiatives the specific needs of both women and men, and targeted interventions to enable women and men to participate in, and benefit equally from development efforts

Balancing Productivity, Gender Discrimination and Bias

It is often stated that it is difficult to accurately measure labour inputs on the intensive margin in data, however, preferred estimates suggest that women are statistically indistinguishable from men in terms of productivity, but have 18% lower relative wages.[93]

Gender discrimination may exist in various dimensions which include hiring discrimination, differences in salary and wages, discrimination/differences in promotion and inequity related to different goods and facilities provided to different genders.[94] This greatly affects employee productivity.

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[90] UN-Women, "Benefits of Partnering with UN-Women".
[91] *Ibid*.
[92] ILO, 87th Session Geneva, June 1999; *Report of the Director-General: Decent Work.*
[93] IZA Institute of Labour Economics; Initiated by Deutsche Post Foundation; Discussion paper series; *What drives the Gender Wage Gap? Examining the Roles of Sorting, Productivity Differences, and Discrimination.*
[94] Professor Dr. Qaisar Abbas, *Gender Discrimination & Its Effect on Employee Performance* 2011.

A primary cause of gender discrimination in the workplace is that women are under-represented in many industries, especially in male-dominated ones such as the auto industry. As a result, men in authority in these industries do not always have an open, progressive view about welcoming women and that can create conflict, tension, and a negative work environment. Discrimination, however, does not exist solely in male-dominated industries; it also crops up in diverse industries in which male executives and male staff employees view women as less capable or less able to perform work tasks at an acceptable level.[95]

Independent of the exact origin of the unequal distribution of gender roles, it is clear that our recent and even current practices show that these roles persist with the help of institutional enforcement. Goldin, for instance, examines past prohibitions against the training and employment of married women in the US.[96]

Biases also operate in other spheres of life with strong knock-on effects on labour market outcomes, as many other studies have shown. For example, at the end of World War II, only 18% of people in the US thought that a wife should work if her husband was able to support her, and it was estimated that 87% of all school boards would not hire a married woman and 70% would not retain an unmarried woman who married.[97]

Gender differences in laws affect both developing and developed economies, and women in all regions. Globally, over 2.7 billion women are legally restricted from having the same choice of jobs as men. Of 189 economies assessed in 2018, 104 economies still have laws preventing women from working in specific jobs, 59 economies have no laws on sexual harassment in the workplace, and in 18 economies, husbands can legally prevent their wives from working.[98]

The gender pay gap is a metric that tells us the difference in pay (or wages, or income) between women and men. It is a measure of inequality and captures a concept that is broader than the concept of equal pay for equal work.[99] Differences in pay between men and women capture differences among many possible dimensions, including worker education, experience and occupation.[100] In many countries, wage inequality between men and women can be reduced by improving the education of women. However, in many countries, gender gaps in education have been closed and there are still large gender inequalities in the workforce.[101]

Additionally, the experience of women's historical advance in specific professions (e.g. pharmacists in the US), suggests that the gender pay gap could also be considerably

[95] Sampson Quain, *"The Causes, Effects & Remedies for Gender Discrimination",* 2019.
[96] A Pollution Theory of Discrimination: Male and Female Differences in Occupations and Earnings, Goldin C, 2015.
[97] Esteban Ortiz-Ospina and Max Roser, *Economic inequality by gender* (2020).
[98] World Bank, *Women, Business and the Law* 2018.
[99] International Labour Organisation (ILO), *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends for Women* 2018.
[100] Esteban Ortiz-Ospina, *Key Facts about the Gender Pay Gap.* 2018.
[101] ILO, *Monitoring Progress in Reducing the Gender Gap in Labour Force Participation,* 2015.

reduced if firms did not have the incentive to disproportionately reward workers who work long hours with fixed and non-flexible schedules. Changing these incentives is, of course, difficult because it requires reorganizing the workplace. But it is likely to have a large impact on gender inequality, particularly in countries where other measures are already in place.[102] Social norms and culture remain at the heart of family choices and the gender distribution of labour. Achieving equality in opportunities requires ensuring that we change the norms and stereotypes that limit the set of choices available both to men and women.

Gender discrimination has a direct relationship on employee productivity which reduces organisational productivity.[103] Facilities and goods should be provided according to the ratio of men and women. In the interim, the promotion of employees should be based solely on merit and seniority. Inclusion of women will build a positive and loyal culture, which will in turn increase the productivity and profitability of the organisation.[104]

Women Empowerment and Education

The Education 2030 agenda recognizes that gender equality requires an approach that ensures that girls and boys, women and men not only gain access to and complete education cycles but are empowered equally in and through education. Educating a woman brings about self-esteem and confidence. It also promotes active participation in her society. Women need to be more involved in the educational policy decision-making process. Women reinvest 90% of their income into the family, compared to 30 to 40% by men. This means women spend more on their children- food, shelter, and education- which creates long-term social and economic gains for their communities. This makes them an integral part of ending the cycle of poverty. In fact, if women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20 to 30%.[105]

Progress in educational access has yielded improvements in adult literacy and educational attainment. Illiteracy among youths has been eradicated in many regions of the world, and the vast majority of young women and men presently have basic reading and writing skills. However, an estimated 781 million people aged 15 and over remain illiterate.[106] Nearly two-thirds of them are women, a proportion that has remained unchanged for two decades. Illiteracy rates are highest among older people and are higher among women than men. At age 65 and over, 30% of women and 19% of men are illiterate.[107] The vast majority of older persons are illiterate in Northern Africa, sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia, where gender gaps are also noted. As societies experience population ageing, it becomes increasingly important that literacy and other lifelong learning programmes

[102] *Ibid.*
[103] Professor Dr. Qaisar Abbas, Abdul Hameed and Aamer Waheed, *Gender Discrimination and Its Effect on Employee Performance/Productivity*, 2011.
[104] *Ibid.*
[105] Self Help International, "Empowering Women and Girls".
[106] United Nations, "*The Worlds Women,* Chapter 3 '*Education'*", 2015.
[107] *Ibid.*

enable women and men to become more self-reliant, work as long as desired and remain socially engaged at older ages.[108]

Access to higher education remains a significant barrier to women's full participation in the workforce in developing countries. Even where access to higher education is formally available, women's access to the full range of occupational choices is significantly limited where access to primary education is limited through social custom.[109] It takes the collective effort of the government and society in creating equal opportunities for education and increasing the enrolment of the girl-child into schools. This in itself reduces poverty. In the long run, an educated woman will actively play a better role in directing her child(ren) through life's journey.[110]

Though the representation of women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields has increased over the years, there remains significant drop-offs at every stage, particularly during the years between postdoctoral and tenure-track positions.[111] L'Oréal USA's For Women in Science (FWIS) fellowship program, which annually awards five women postdoctoral scientists with grants of $60,000, has represented a unique group of women who have demonstrated uncommon staying power in science. L'Oréal USA and the Heising-Simons Foundation commissioned a study of the fellows for their perspectives on what is needed for women to succeed in science.[112]

Education is the key to women's empowerment. Through it, women have better access and opportunities in the workforce, leading to increased income and less isolation at home or exclusion from financial decisions. With education, women can live their dreams by pursuing their own goals and values. Education empowers women to make choices that can improve their welfare, including marrying beyond childhood and having fewer children, as well as the welfare of their children and others that depend on them Crucially, education can increase women's awareness of their rights, boost their self-esteem, and provide them with the opportunity to assert their rights.

Despite significant improvements in recent decades, education is not universally available and gender inequalities persist. A major concern in many countries is not only the limited numbers of girls going to school but also the limited educational pathways for those that step into the classroom. More specifically, there should be more efforts to address the lower participation and learning achievement of girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) Education.[113] Women's economic equality is good for business. Companies greatly benefit from increased employment and leadership

[108] *Ibid.*
[109] UNICEF, *A Human Rights-Based Approach to Education for All* 2007.
[110] Tinuola Aina, *Role of Education in Women Empowerment*, 2016.
[111] Christine Lindquist; Tasseli McKay; Amanda Witwer, *Staying Power: Women in Science on What it Takes to Succeed,* 2019.
[112] *Ibid.*
[113] UNESCO, *Cracking the code: girls' and women's education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM),* 2017.

opportunities for women, which is shown to increase organisational effectiveness and growth.[114] Therefore, empowering women to participate fully in economic life across all sectors is essential to build stronger economies, achieve internationally agreed goals for development and sustainability, and improve the quality of life for women, men, families and communities.[115]

The Gender Pay Gap

The gender pay gap or gender wage gap is the average difference between the remuneration for men and women who are working. Women are generally considered to be paid less than men. There are two distinct numbers regarding the pay gap: unadjusted versus adjusted pay gap.[116] The latter typically takes into account differences in hours worked, occupations chosen, education and job experience. For example, someone who takes time off (e.g. A pregnant woman who gets maternity leave from work during her pregnancy) will likely not earn as much as someone who does not take time off from work. In the United States, for example, the non-adjusted average female's annual salary has commonly been cited as being 78% of the average male salary, compared to 80–98% for the adjusted average salary.[117]

The reasons link to legal, social and economic factors, and extend beyond the "equal pay for equal work" (The two terms, gender pay gap, and equal pay are not the same). The gender pay gap can be a problem from a public policy perspective even when the reason for the gap is entirely voluntary because it reduces economic output and means that women are more likely to be dependent upon welfare payments, especially in old age. At the recently concluded Davos 2020, It was stated that it will take 257 years, (the year 2277) for the economic gender gap to close at the current rate of progress, according to the Global Gender Gap Report 2020.[118]

The "gender pay gap" comes up often in political debates, policy reports, and everyday news.[119] But what is it? What does it tell us? Is it different from country to country? How does it change over time? Here we try to answer these questions, providing an empirical overview of the gender pay gap across countries and over time. The gender pay gap measures inequality but not necessarily discrimination. The gender pay gap (or the gender wage gap) is a metric that tells us the difference in pay (or wages, or income) between women and men. It is a measure of inequality and captures a concept that is broader than the concept of equal pay for equal work.

[114] UN-Women, *Facts and Figures: Economic Empowerment Benefits of Economic Empowerment.*
[115] United Nations Global Compact; UN-Women, *Women's Empowerment Principles: Equality Means Business,* 2011.
[116] Francine D. Blau & Lawrence M. Kahn, "The Gender Wage Gap: Extent, Trends, and Explanations" (2016) IZA Discussion Papers No. 9656, *Institute for the Study of Labour (IZA)* Bonn.
[117] Elise Gould, Jessica Scheider, and Kathleen Geier, *What is the gender pay gap and is it real? The complete guide to how women are paid less than men and why it can't be explained away*, 2016.
[118] News on the recently concluded Davos, 2020.
[119] The Guardian Newspaper.

Differences in pay between men and women capture differences among many possible dimensions, including worker education, experience and occupation. When the gender pay gap is calculated by comparing all male workers to all female workers – irrespective of differences along these additional dimensions – the result is the "raw" or "unadjusted" pay gap. On the contrary, when the gap is calculated after accounting for underlying differences in education, experience, etc., then the result is the "adjusted" pay gap.

Discrimination in hiring practices can exist in the absence of pay gaps – for example, if women know they will be treated unfairly and hence choose not to participate in the labour market. Similarly, it is possible to observe large pay gaps in the absence of discrimination in hiring practices – for example, if women get fair treatment but apply for lower-paid jobs. The implication is that observing differences in pay between men and women is neither necessary nor sufficient to prove discrimination in the workplace. Both discrimination and inequality are important. But they are not the same. Sexism is prejudice or discrimination based on a person's sex or gender. (Gender discrimination or sexism can affect anyone, but it primarily affects women and girls. It has been linked to stereotypes and gender roles and may include the belief that one sex or gender is intrinsically superior to another, while gender inequality acknowledges that men and women are not equal and that gender affects an individual's living experience. These differences arise from distinctions in biology, psychology, and cultural norms). Cross-country data on the gender pay gap is patchy, but the most complete source in terms of coverage is the United Nation's International Labour Organisation (ILO).

The gender gap varies greatly according to regions – while it will take 54 years for western Europe to close the gap at its current pace, parity in North America is still 151 years away. For the eleventh consecutive year, Iceland has topped the list as the country closest to gender parity, followed by Norway and Finland. At the other end of the scale, Yemen was found to have the worst rates of gender parity, with Iraq second-last and Pakistan third from bottom.[120]

Factors Affecting the Gender Pay Gap

The non-adjusted gender pay gap is not a measure of discrimination, rather it shows differences in the average pay of women and men to serve as a means of comparison. Differences in pay are caused by two forms of segregation occupational segregation (with more men in higher-paid industries and women in lower-paid industries), vertical segregation (too few women in senior and better-paying positions), ineffective equal pay legislation, women's overall paid working hours, barriers to entry to the labour market, (such as education level and single parenting)[121]

[120] Our World Data, *Statistics for the Gender pay gap across the world*.
[121] Francine D. Blau & Lawrence M. Kahn, "The Gender Wage Gap: Extent, Trends, and Explanations" (2016) IZA Discussion Papers No. 9656, *Institute for the Study of Labour (IZA)* Bonn.

These variables help explain the non-adjusted gender pay gap include economic activity, working time and job tenure. Gender-specific factors, including gender differences in qualifications and discrimination, and overall wage structure, the rewards for skills and employment in particular industry sectors, importantly influence the gender pay gap. Eurostat estimated in 2018 that after allowing for average characteristics of men and women, women still earn 16% less than men on an average.[122]

Occupational segregation or horizontal segregation is defined as inequality in pay associated with occupational earnings. It is also known as the horizontal division of labour which is termed as "high-tech" (predominantly men) versus "high-touch" (predominantly women) with high tech being more financially rewarding. Men are more likely to be in relatively high-paying, dangerous industries such as mining, construction, or manufacturing and to be represented by a union.[123] Women, in contrast, are more likely to be in clerical jobs and to work in the service industry. In Sciences, a 2017 study by the US National Science Foundation's annual census revealed pay gaps in different areas of science: there is a larger proportion of men in higher-paying fields such as mathematics and computer science, the two highest-paying scientific fields.[124] Men accounted for about 75% of doctoral degrees in those fields (a proportion that has barely changed since 2007) and expected to earn $113,000 compared with $99,000 for women. In the social sciences, the difference between men and women with PhDs was significantly smaller, with men earning more than women. However, in some field's women earn more: women in chemistry earn more than their male colleagues. A 2015 meta-analysis of studies of experimental studies of gender in hiring found that "men were preferred for male-dominated jobs (i.e., gender-role congruity bias), whereas no strong preference for either gender was found for female-dominated or integrated jobs". A 2018 audit study found that high-achieving men are called back more frequently by employers than equally high-achieving women (at a rate of nearly 2-to-1).[125]

Independently of the exact origin of the unequal distribution of gender roles, it is clear that our recent and even current practices show that these roles persist with the help of institutional enforcement.[126] For instance, examining past prohibitions against the training and employment of married women in the US. It touches on some well-known restrictions, such as those against the training and employment of women as doctors and lawyers, before focusing on the lesser-known but even more impactful "marriage bars" which arose in the late 1800s and early 1900s. These work prohibitions are important because they applied to teaching and clerical jobs occupations that would become the most commonly held among married women after 1950. Around the time the US entered World War II, it is

[122] Eurostat: International Women's Day Renata Palen and Piotr Ronkowski 8 March 2018.
[123] Francine D. Blau & Lawrence M. Kahn, "The Gender Wage Gap: Extent, Trends, and Explanations" (2016) IZA Discussion Papers No. 9656, *Institute for the Study of Labour (IZA)* Bonn.
[124] Census Bureau Announces New 2017 Annual Business Survey June 19, 2018
[125] Natasha Quadlin, "The Mark of a Woman's Record: Gender and Academic Performance in Hiring" (2018) 83(2) American Sociological Review.
[126] Ourworldindata, *Why is there a Gender Pay Gap?* Esteban Ortiz-Ospina, 2018.

estimated that 87% of all school boards would not hire a married woman and 70% would not retain an unmarried woman who married.[127]

Majorly in continents like Africa, Asia and South America most parts do not allow non-pregnant and non-nursing women to do the same jobs as men, North America, Europe and Australia have made good developments in this aspect.

Studies have shown that an increasing share of the gender pay gap over time is due to children. The phenomenon of lower wages due to childbearing has been termed the motherhood penalty. A 2019 study found that women with children are discriminated against in the job market, whereas men with children are not.[128]

Motherhood affects job choices as well. In a traditional role, women leave the workforce temporarily to care of their children. As a result, women tend to take lower-paying jobs because they are more likely to have more flexible timings compared to higher-paying jobs and men most likely settle for higher paying jobs because they are unlikely to leave the workforce to take care of their children. Women are more likely to work fewer hours than men because they have less experience, which will cause women to be behind in the workforce. A good explanation of such a gender pay gap is the distribution of housework. Couples who raise a child tend to designate the mother to do the larger share of housework and takes on the main responsibility of child care, and hence, tend to have less time available for wage-earning. This reinforces the pay gap between male and female in the labour market, and now people are trapped in this self-reinforcing cycle.

Most women choose to work part-time when full-time employment is available resulting in lower pay for those part-time workers.[129] The choice may be limited by factors such as access to higher education resulting in low-skill, low paid job. But concerning women, it is mostly attributable to motherhood gender norms and job flexibility (both discussed below) which constrain choice. For example, the Centre or Creative Leadership found that 47% of respondents agreed "women face social pressure to shoulder more family responsibility as mothers" meaning they are more likely to focus more on family-related issues just because they are mothers. According to statistics compiled by the ILO, women tend to receive negative earnings impact after giving birth, that is, women's salaries tend to decline after subsequent childbirth.

A big social factor, which is related to the aforementioned one, is the fact that individuals are accustomed to adopt specific gender roles. Job choices influenced by this factor are often slotted into "demand-side" decisions in frameworks of wage discrimination, rather

[127] United Nations Global Compact & UN-Women, *Women's Empowerment Principles: Equality Means Business,* 2011.
[128] Francine D. Blau & Lawrence M. Kahn, "The Gender Wage Gap: Extent, Trends, and Explanations" (2016) IZA Discussion Papers No. 9656, *Institute for the Study of Labour (IZA)* Bonn.
[129] Jessica Schieder and Elise Gould, *Women's work and the gender pay gap How discrimination, societal norms, and other forces affect women's occupational choices and their pay*, 2016.

than a result of extant labour market discrimination influencing job choice.[130] Men that are in non-traditional job roles or jobs that are primarily seen as women-focused jobs, such as nursing, have high enough job satisfaction that motivates the men to continue in these job fields despite criticisms they may receive.[131]

Additionally, in the eyes of some employees, women in middle management are perceived to lack the courage, leadership, and drive that male managers seem to have, despite female middle managers achieving results on par with their male counterparts in terms of successful projects and achieving results for their employing companies. These perceptions, along with the factors previously described in the article, contribute to the difficulty of women to ascend to the executive ranks when compared to men in similar positions.

Societal ideas of gender roles stem somewhat from media influences.[132] Media portrays ideals of gender-specific roles off of which gender stereotypes are built. These stereotypes then translate to what types of work men and women can or should do. In this way, gender plays a mediating role in workplace discrimination, and women find themselves in positions that do not allow for the same advancement as males.

Some research suggests that women are more likely to volunteer for tasks that are less likely to help earn promotions and that they are more likely to be asked to volunteer and more likely to say yes to such requests. All over the world, women tend to do more unpaid care work at home than men and women tend to be overrepresented in low paying jobs where they have the flexibility required to attend to these additional responsibilities. The most important evidence regarding this link between the gender pay gap and job flexibility is presented and discussed by Claudia Goldin in the article "A Grand Gender Convergence".[133]

The importance of job flexibility in this context is very clearly illustrated by the fact that, over the last couple of decades, women in the US increased their participation and remuneration in only some fields. In a recent paper,[134]A 2016 study shows that pharmacy became a highly remunerated female-majority profession with a small gender earnings gap in the US, at the same time as pharmacies went through substantial technological changes that made flexible jobs in the field more productive (e.g. computer systems that increased the substitutability among pharmacists).[135]

[130] Consultation of the U.S, commission of civil rights, Volume 1, Commission Civil Rights,1954.
[131] Men in Non-traditional occupations: Career Entry, Career Orientation and Experience of Role Strain, Ruth Simpson of Business and Management Brunel University.
[132] Naomi Ellemers, *Gender Stereotypes* 2017.
[133] Claudia Goldin, *A Grand Gender Convergence*.
[134] Esteban Ortiz-Ospina, *Why is there a gender pay gap?* 2018.
[135] Claudia Goldin; Lawrence F Katz; Harvard University; National Bureau of Economic Research, *A most Egalitarian Profession: Pharmacy and The Evolution of a Family-Friendly Occupation*.

Strategies for Reducing the Gender Pay Gap

In many countries, wage inequality between men and women can be reduced by improving the education of women.[136] However, in many countries, gender gaps in education have been closed and we still have large gender inequalities in the workforce. What else can be done?

Implementing these strategies can have a positive self-reinforcing effect. For example, family-friendly labour-market policies that lead to higher labour-force attachment and salaries for women will raise the returns to women's investment in education – so women in future generations will be more likely to invest in education, which will also help narrow gender gaps in labour market outcomes down the line. Nevertheless, powerful as these strategies may be, they are only part of the solution. Social norms and culture remain at the heart of family choices and the gender distribution of labour. Achieving equality in opportunities requires ensuring that we change the norms and stereotypes that limit the set of choices available both to men and women. It is difficult, but the evidence shows that social norms, too, can be changed.

Fairer Economies is one of the seven themes of this year's Davos annual gathering of global leaders. At this 50th meeting, the Forum is committing to doubling female participation in the event by 2030, by improving women's representation in the various stakeholder groups. It has also implemented "Closing the Gender Gap Accelerators", a programme encouraging co-ordinated action between relevant ministries and employers. The World Economic Forum aims to give women access to more leadership positions, to close the wage gap and to give them the skills they need for the jobs of the future. The Forum is currently working with nine economies to create such accelerators and expects to have 15 by the end of this year.[137]

Gender Income Distribution

You would be hard-pressed to find someone who has not seen the famous statistic that women earn 79 cents to every man's dollar. It has been topical for a long time, yet very little traction has been made in changing it. According to the most recent statistics from a report by the Joint Economic Committee Democratic Staff, the current figure hovers at around 80% in both the US and the UK. The inequality goes beyond pay too, with just 6% of CEOs in the S&P 500 being female.[138] A highly contentious and often controversial issue, the reasons offered for the disparity are wide-ranging, from family commitments and varying job aspirations to unconscious bias in the workplace. Various solutions have also been offered to deal with the sensitive issue, but an idea that many companies today find themselves returning to is introducing pay transparency across the board.

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[136] *Ibid.*
[137] Euronews, Davos 2020 Conference.
[138] Innovation Enterprise, *Is Pay Transparency the Best Way to Tackle Gender Inequality in the Workplace?* 2020.

Men dominate the top of the economic summit while women are saddled with debt and poverty. The global trend towards extreme wealth and income concentration has dramatically strengthened the economic and political power of those individuals - overwhelmingly male at the top. In the United States and around the world, women continue to be underrepresented in high-level, highly paid positions and overrepresented in low-paying jobs. Women of colour and transgender individuals experience particularly high levels of poverty, unemployment, and other economic hardships. Gender discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace contribute significantly to these persistent economic divides.[139]

Gender Income Gaps

Female-dominated occupations such as childcare and restaurant service continue to occupy the lower rungs of the U.S. wage ladder. Women make up 63% of workers earning the federal minimum wage, a wage rate stuck at $7.25 since 2009. By contrast, women represent only 5% of CEOs at Fortune 500 firms. CEOs took home $13.1 million on average in 2016.[140]

According to the U.S. Department of Labour and Fortune statistics in 2016, Women represent (8-11%) of the Fortune 500 CEOs and represent (60-67%) of minimum wage workers. Indicating that women are scarce at the top and over-represented at the bottom.[141]

White males particularly dominate very lucrative financial industry jobs. At the top five U.S. investment banks (JPMorgan Chase, Goldman Sachs, Bank of America, Merrill Lynch, Morgan Stanley, and Citigroup), males make up from 69 to 82% executives and top managers. The share who are white ranges from 78 to 87%. More than two-thirds of all New York City securities industry employees were male in 2016, and nearly two-thirds were white.[142] Statistics show that men dominate in Wall street upper echelons. Also, top executives in five largest US investment banks are men in 2016, i.e. Morgan Stanley- 82%, Goldman Sachs - 78%, Citi - 76%, JPMorgan - 75%, Bank of America - 68.5%.[143]

Men make up a majority of top earners across the U.S. economy, even though women now represent almost half of the country's workforce. Women comprise just 27% of the top 10%, and their share of higher-income groups runs even smaller. Among the top 1%, women make up slightly less than 17% of workers, while at the top 0.1% level, they make up only 11%. Women make up a small percentage of Top U.S. earners. Throughout the U.S. workforce, women remain vastly underpaid. Among full-time workers, women earned less than 81 cents for every dollar a man earned in 2016. If part-time workers were included,

[139] Gender Economic Gaps, Gender Wealth Gaps, Gender Poverty gaps and Gender Income Distribution.
[140] Inequality.org, *Gender Economic Inequality men dominate the top of the economic summit while women are saddled with debt and poverty*.
[141] Occupational Employment Statistics US department of Labour and Fortune Statistics.
[142] Inequality.org, *Company sustainability reports*.
[143] Inequality.org, *UK government*.

the gap would be even wider, since women are more likely to work reduced schedules, often to manage childrearing and other caregiving work.

Within racial groups, the largest pay gaps between men and women appear among whites and Asians not because Latinas and black women have made faster progress towards equity but because average pay for men in these groups falls far below the compensation of white and Asian men, according to the Bureau of Labour Statistics.[144] American women earn less than men, on average, in all industries e.g. Company management, Construction, Finance and Insurance, Healthcare, Manufacturing and Retail. The largest pay gaps exist in management positions, where men make $88,000 on average, compared to just $55,000 for women. The smallest gap appears in the construction sector, but women make up only 9% of workers in this industry.[145]

The U.S. gender pay gap, while still large, is not the world's widest. But accurately measuring these gaps across countries is difficult. Within the OECD group of higher-income nations, South Korea holds the widest gap, with men earning 37% more than women, on average. The country with the narrowest gap: Luxembourg, where men make just 3.4% more than women. Gaps have been smallest in OECD countries where the share of workers covered by collective bargaining agreements hits at least 80% and widest in countries with weak collective bargaining and no or very low minimum wages.

The ILO agrees that more work needs to be done to develop a more accurate global gender gap. One factor skewing the numbers is Women do considerably more unpaid work, from housekeeping to caring for children and the elderly. Among the 21 countries reporting data for at least one year during the 2013-2015 period, the West Bank and Gaza had the greatest imbalance, with men devoting just 16% as much time to unpaid domestic and caregiving work as women. Belgium, where men spend 63% as much time on these activities as women, ranked at the top.[146]

In the UK, a new regulation requires corporations to disclose the pay gaps between their male and female employees. Financial firms have among the largest divides because of the scarcity of women in top positions. In 2018, HSBC reported the biggest gap, with the bank's female employees averaging just 41% as much as UK male employees. For all 10,000 firms in the survey, the median-paid male employee received 9.7% more in pay than the median female. New UK data shows huge gender pay gaps, particularly at big banks. Female employee's average hourly earnings as a share of men's in 2018. HSBC Bank – 41%, Goldman Sachs – 42.2%, N.M. Rothschild & Sons – 42.7%, JPMorgan Securities - 45%, Credit Suisse International- 45.3%, Morgan Stanley Employment- 46.8%, Barclays - 48.1%, Citigroup Global- 47.7.[147]

[144] Bureau of Labour Statistics.
[145] US Census Bureau.
[146] Institute for Policy Studies analysis of world bank, world development indicators.
[147] Emma Newburger, *The Gender Pay Gap In the UK*, 2019.

Most inequality analysis focuses on income (the wages earned from a job or capital gains) rather than wealth (the sum of one's assets minus debts). Income inequality, while stark, pales in comparison to wealth inequality. The divides become even more dramatic when viewed through a gender lens. At the top end, we have no more striking sign of increasing global wealth concentration than the rise of the billionaire class. The number of individuals with fortunes worth at least $1 billion more than doubled between 2010 and 2018 while remaining overwhelmingly male. In 2018, only 256 women ranked among the world's 2,208 billionaires. Seventy-seven hail from the United States, more than double the number in any other country.[148] Women make up a small fraction (15%) of global billionaires, a statistic of men and women with more than $1 billion in assets gathered in 2018.

U.S. Men have three times more median retirement savings than women and have similar average annual social security benefits in 2017. Debt also significantly impacts wealth. Crushing student loan burdens drag many young Americans far into the negative side of the wealth line, with the heaviest for female students. Women comprise 56% of college students but hold nearly two-thirds of outstanding student loan debt.[149] According to the American Association of University Women, black women graduate with the most debt — $30,400, on average — compared to $22,000 for white women and $19,500 for white men. U.S. college debt burden is greater for women in all racial groups.[150]

The gender poverty gap widened over the past 50 years. In 1968, 10.8% of women aged 18-64 (6.1 million women) and 7.2% of men (3.7 million) in this age group lived below the poverty line. In 2016, 13.4% of women in this age group (13.4 million women) were living in poverty, compared to 9.7% of adult men (9.4 million men). The poverty threshold for a single person in 2016: $11,880 in annual income. Households led by single women with children had a poverty rate of 35.6%, more than twice the 17.3% rate for households led by single men with children, according to the National Women's Law Centre. According to the U.S. Census Bureau U.S. women have faced significantly higher poverty rates than having (10-15%) against men (6-10%), from 1968-2016.[151]

Poverty is a particularly acute problem for women of colour, affecting 21.4% of Black women, 18.7% of Latinas, and 22.8% of Native American women, compared to the national poverty rate for white men of 7.0%. Women of colour are hit hard by poverty a statistics of U.S. women poverty rates in 2016 have Asian- 11%, Black- 22%, Latino- 18%, Native American- 24% and White- 9.5% against the 7% for white men recorded by National Women Law Centre.[152]

Above we show that women all over the world are underrepresented in high-profile jobs, which tend to be better paid. As it turns out in many countries, women are at the same

[148] Forbes.
[149] Transamerica Centre for Retirement Studies and Social Security Administration.
[150] American Association of University Women.
[151] US census Bureau, National Women Law Centre.
[152] Transamerica Centre for Retirement Studies and Social Security Administration.

time overrepresented in low-paying jobs. A share above 50% implies that women are "overrepresented", in the sense that among those with low wages, there are more women than men.[153] The fact that women in rich countries are overrepresented at the bottom of the income distribution goes together with the fact that working women in these countries are overrepresented in low-paying occupations. The statistics shows this in the US. Despite having fallen in recent decades, there remains a substantial pay gap between the average wages of men and women, as we have shown before. In addition to wages, they also take into account income from investments and self-employment.

The proportion of women is lower the higher you look up the income distribution. In the top 10% up to every third income-earner is a woman; in the top 0.1%, only every fifth or tenth person is a woman.[154] The trend is the same in all countries of this study: Women are now better represented in all top income groups than they were in 2000. Overall, despite recent inroads, we continue to see remarkably few women making it to the top of the income distribution today.

Proper Income Distribution is a major debate in the world today which led to the development of the Pay Transparency Act. Pay Transparency refers to the context of employee-led transparency, or employees being free to discuss their compensation with one another without fear of retaliation. This definition of pay transparency is guaranteed under federal law.[155] "The Pay Transparency Act, 2018 is enacted. The Act establishes requirements relating to the disclosure of information about the compensation of employees and prospective employees. Section 5 prohibits employers from seeking compensation history information about an applicant for a position." Yet it is something that leaves many managers nervous. The concern is that if everybody was openly aware of their colleagues' salaries, chaos would ensue - leadership would be inundated with raise demands, tensions would run high among colleagues, and disgruntled employees would commit a mass exodus. In an effort to increase pay transparency, in July 2017 the BBC - arguably very tactlessly - released the salaries of its top presenters. There has been an uproar of controversy over the disparity this has uncovered, with Chris Evans as the highest earner with between £2,200,000-2,249,999 while the highest-paid woman, Claudia Winkleman, was earning £450,000-£500,000.[156] Resentment between colleagues and the general public has been well-documented in its wake, suggesting that an attitude of "measured transparency" would have been much more effective.

Sweden is a nation that has taken great strides towards increasing pay transparency. Each year, they publish everyone's tax returns, and you can find out anyone's salary with just a quick phone call to the tax authorities. It is not a perfect system - the gender pay gap has

[153] *Ibid.*
[154] Susan Harkness, *The Contribution of Women's Employment and Earnings to Household Income Inequality: A Cross Country Analysis* 2010.
[155] Brian Westfall, *Pay Transparency*, 2019.
[156] Sam Rigby, *Quartz: The BBC's top male star is paid four times as much as it's top female star*, 2017.

shrunk since it was introduced in 2014 but is still at 15%[157] - however, this is largely down to the segregated nature of the labour market. A large proportion of women work in the public sector, where pay is generally low. But if you only measure men and women doing the same jobs, the pay gap is just 6%, according to the Financial Times.[158]

Pay transparency can do a lot of good at evening out the playing field for women in business. But that doesn't mean it isn't problematic. Pay transparency seems to function most effectively when it is treated with sensitivity and understanding when these measured conversations take place. This would go a long way in solving the big issue of the gender divide.

Unequal compensation and biased incentive pay structures should bring significant financial costs through lawsuits and settlements. Pay and incentive schemes that are convoluted to the point of obscuring exactly how employees qualify for merit raises, bonuses or promotions may be deemed discriminatory. Serious financial consequences may also stem from lost opportunities. Rather than fight for equality internally, many women may leave an organisation to work at one that appreciates their efforts. This, of course, means higher turnover. And when performance level does not appear to matter, there is less incentive against mediocrity, resulting not only in general lower levels of performance but also in difficulty recruiting new high performers. As "Rethinking Gender Pay Inequity" asks, "Who would want to work for an organisation that does not objectively identify and reward its best contributors?"[159]

Just as the wage gap wasn't created in a day, it won't disappear overnight. That said, earnest, targeted action can help the wage gap between men and women can shrink faster in the next 20 years than it has over the previous 60.[160]

Gender Accommodating Environment

Gendered work refers to the outcome of processes whereby "work" is defined, organized, divided, and valued in ways that reflect the patterns of relations (including those marked by advantage/disadvantage) that exist between men and women (and between groups of men and women differentiated based on class, racialisation, nationality, age, sexual orientation, etc.) and the meanings and identifications attached to "masculinity" and "femininity" in a particular socio-economic context at a particular period in time.[161]

This cross-sectional study of nonfaculty university employees examined associations among gendered work conditions (e.g., sexism and discrimination), job demands, and employee job satisfaction and health. Organisational responsiveness and social support

[157] Katrine Marcai, *Sweden shows that Pay Transparency works*, 2017.
[158] Financial Times: Gender Pay Gap, Aleksandra Wisniewska; Billy Ehrenberg-Shannon; Cale Tifford and Croline Nevitt, 2019.
[159] Tiffany C. Wright, Strategies for Reducing the Wage Gap Between Men and Women.
[160] *Ibid.*
[161] *Gender inequalities in the workplace: the effects of organisational structures, processes, practices, and decision makers' sexism.*

were examined as effect modifiers.[162] Comparisons were made by gender and by the male-female ratio in each job category. The relationship of gendered conditions of work to outcomes differed based on respondents' sex and the job sex ratio. Although the same predictors were hypothesized for job satisfaction, physical health, and psychological distress, there were some differing results. The strongest correlate of job satisfaction was social support; perceived sexism in the workplace also contributed to both men and women. Organisational factors associated with psychological distress differed between female- and male-dominated jobs.[163]

The study of women's workplace activism advances the evolving inclusive and conceptually innovative historiography on women, gender, and labour. It focuses on a large group of workers who have often laboured under precarious conditions and without adequate compensation, as day labourers or occasional workers from the 19th century onward, or as unskilled "mass workers" in the period of Fordism and state-socialism in the second half of the 20th century.[164] Also, working women across time and space have continuously juggled multiple types of labour and combined paid and unpaid labour in varying arrangements over their life-course.

Working women thus epitomize a group of workers that the new global labour history has identified as the majority of the global workforce. Their lives and struggles have been visibly shaped by their involvement in overlapping cycles of social reproduction, a defining feature of labour activism, which neither the classical history of the labour movement nor the new global labour history has systematically addressed.[165] These women, when engaging in social and political struggle and working to stabilize and improve their place in the factory, home, work-shop or other workplaces, faced multiple political marginalisation even amongst potential allies. They encountered male-dominated trade unions and social milieus when collaborating with the workers' movement and faced disinterest about and containment of working women's class- and labour-related interests and activism when cooperating with women's groups and women's organisations.

The new transnational and intersectional history of women's movements and women's activisms has highlighted the tension of gender and race, especially in the imperial dimensions of this history, and concerning some world regions.[166] It has not so far systematically explored the consequences of putting gender first (and over class) for the involvement of working-class women in women's activism and the history of women's. This specialized theme puts the agency and sometimes radicalism of the working women centre

[162] Meg A. Bond, Laura Punnett, Jean L. Pyle, Dianne Cazeca and Manuela Cooperman, "Gendered Work Conditions, Health and Work Outcomes" (2004) 9(1) Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 28-45.
[163] *Ibid.*
[164] International Federation for Research in Women's History by Susan Zimmermann, 2018.
[165] LAWCHA: Gendered work, gendered struggles in women's activism at the work place in long term and comparative perspective by Eileen Boris, 2018.
[166] Theoretical Perspectives on Gender and Development Edited by Jane L. Parpart, M. Patricia Connelly, and V. Eudine Barriteau.

stage. It moves beyond the marginalisation of these struggles by both male-dominated labour movements and elite and middle-class women's organisations, which, subsequently, has been reproduced by some of the related historiographies on working-class struggles and women's movements. It highlights the concepts and practices of livelihood of working women, who both accommodated and challenged the logic of modern economic life at the point of

We seek papers that span the period of the 19th and 20th centuries. The session invites research on the history of women's organizing, resistance and radicalism at the workplace and beyond, including involvement in trade unions, strikes and everyday politics, and agency and self-identification on the shop-floor and beyond the work-place, such as "just price" riots, protests over housing evictions, or activism aimed at securing protection at the workplace or the implementation of gendered welfare measures.[167] The session will trace continuity and change over place and time, focusing, for example, on the interaction of women workers of different generations, or women workers labouring during their life-course under radically different economic and political circumstances. It seeks research on the interaction between labouring women participating in various activist traditions and from different ethnic and religious backgrounds, including both migrants and citizens. Particularly welcome is research that explores working women's activism in the context of unequal social and economic development, which at times generated collaboration yet in other circumstances generated conflict amongst working women, both locally and across borders. It compares working women's activism and organizing centred at the work-place in divergent political systems. While it may appear that some of these systems resolved class differences, although with ambiguous consequences of how the gender of class could be addressed, others compelled working-class men and women to forge solidarity against class oppression. But this was done without resolving the gender struggle within working-class activism.

Maternity leave covers the periods before, during and after childbirth. Its purpose is to safeguard the health of a woman and her child during the perinatal period, given the particular psychological and physiological demands associated with pregnancy and childbirth.[168] It is a core element in the protection of women workers over the perinatal period. This role is universally acknowledged and firmly established as the vast majority of countries have adopted statutory (or legislative) provisions for maternity leave, even those countries where other types of leave and conditions of employment are normally negotiated by the social partners. It should be highlighted that maternity leave is not sick leave and should not, under any circumstance, reduce sick leave entitlements, either before or after childbirth.

[167] Women's Rights Breaking the Gender Barrier: A woman's place in her union.
[168] Essential Antenatal, Perinatal and Postpartum Care Training modules by WHO.

Among 50 African countries, almost half (48%) provide 14 weeks of leave or more and 34% provide 12 to 13 weeks. One in five African countries (18%) provide less than 12 weeks of leave.[169] In Asia and the Pacific region, very few countries meet the standard set out by Convention No. 183, with just four countries providing at least 14 weeks of leave. In the Developed Economies and European Union (EU) countries, nearly all (92%) meet or exceed this standard, and 46% meet the 18-week standard.[170] The Labour Act requires the signature of 51% of workers/employees for submitting written demand relating to collective issues of rights, interests and facilities of workers and employees.[171] This is the mechanism to submit collective demands to the management. In most enterprises, the number of female workers/employees is less than 51%. This mechanism neglects the need for women workers/employees to raise their special concerns such as maternity leave, special consideration during menstruation periods, breastfeeding times and places because male workers/employees may not be aware of such concerns of women workers/employees.

Gaps in the Existing Laws

Gaps in existing laws include the following:

- Law on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace
- No Institutional Representation of Women
- Gender issues not being a matter of concern for Inspection
- Non-implementation of the Apprentice Act
- Status of Implementation of International Obligations Not Publicized
- Special Arrangements of Security
- Breast Feeding and Child Care
- Equal Remuneration

Sexual harassment in the workplace is a form of sex discrimination which negatively affects the working environment, undermines gender equality at work[172], creates unfair practices in employment, and adversely impacts the dignity and well-being of workers. It creates psychological anxiety and stress for victims and if ignored, can result in high costs for companies through the loss of productivity, low worker morale, absenteeism, and staff turnover.

[169] Maternity at Work, A review of national legislation findings from the ILO Database of Conditions of work and Employment Laws.
[170] *Ibid.*
[171] Labour Act 2003.
[172] Adeyinka Adejugbe, "Women and Discrimination in the Workplace: A Nigerian Perspective".

More importantly countries e.g. in Africa and the Middle East have no special provision providing for representation of women in the Central Labour Advisory Board, which is a key advisory body of the government to make recommendations on policy matters.[173] Similarly, no such provision is there to represent women workers in the Labour Relations Committee, which is an important mechanism for the social dialogue process within enterprises. Because of these gaps in the institutional representation of women, so many concerns of working women could not have been addressed.[174]

Furthermore the Apprentice Act 1982 has been enacted to conduct trainings relating to industrial skills so that more people may be involved in industrial activities.[175] The Act provides that the enterprises prescribed in a gazette notification by the government have to conduct training programs and the trainees have to fulfil certain conditions for taking part in trainings. The industrial apprentice is especially important where there are no appropriate provisions of giving trainings for producing competent human resources. Industrial apprentice activities could be an effective mechanism to promote and ensure women's employment in industrial enterprises. However, Most Nations have never published a gazette notification to that effect, have not even formed the training council, which has to be formed for operations of trainings. Due to a lack of government initiatives, many women are deprived of training activities, which is instrumental in enhancing their participation in the industrial sector.[176] Most countries have a poor rating of compliance with international obligations. The government either does not send reports or it submits reports late. There is no system of dissemination of information on government obligation under the treaties amongst the general public.

Employers are liable to arrange special security measures to women workers/employees while engaging them in tasks normally from 6 a.m. till 6 p.m. An employer may recruit women workers/employees in a hotel or travel agency in work at any time by making a special arrangement of security according to the nature of work. Also, the Labour Act provides that employers must provide time for breastfeeding as per requirements to women workers/employees with suckling babies. Labour law requires employers hiring more than fifty women to arrange a healthy room for children. Moreover, are obliged to arrange for a trained nurse and necessary toys for children. But this is not so in most countries around the world.

The ILO guarantees that there shall be no discrimination in remuneration between men and women for the same work. In the same line, the Labour Rules provide that equal pay must be provided to men and women in work of the same nature in an enterprise.[177]

[173] Anne Trebilcock, "Labour Relations and Human Resources Management: An Overview".
[174] Linda Briskin Angellika Muller, "Promoting gender equality through social dialogue: Global Trends and Persistent Obstacles", 2011.
[175] ILO, "A comparative Analysis of National Apprenticeship Systems", 2013.
[176] OECD, *Strengthening Women's Entrepreneurship in ASEAN: Towards increasing women's participation in economic activity*.
[177] Equal Remuneration Convention (ILO No. 100), 165 U.N.T.S. 303, entered into force May 23, 1953.

Conclusion

Women and girls everywhere should have equal rights. Gender income equality will require multifaceted solutions that together help ensure that the work women perform is valued fairly and that there is greater transparency in workplace pay practices.

In achieving a better future, steps should be made towards introducing appropriate information into the school curriculum and higher education institutions. Young women must be aware of the potential opportunities and relevant career information to be able to make an informed decision and to help further the cultural and structural change that will bring us closer to making the 22% wage gap a thing of the past.

Further Research

How can the gender pay gap be closed in accordance with the respective labour legislation, the role of gender inequality and discrimination in gender pay gaps, gender income distribution and gender work? What role can individuals in society take in closing the gender pay gap? What is the effect of girl child education in gender economic inequality?

Role of Women and Girl Empowerment in Gender Economic Inequality? Gender Income distribution in Africa and the Middle East?

Annotated Bibliography

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> *This research report explores the gender pay gap, as well as looking at basic differences in pay, the research identifies the characteristics that explain those differences such as age, occupation and level of education. This report further debates and highlights areas where intervention is needed.*

Esteban Ortiz-Ospina and Max Roser, "Economic inequality by gender", available at: http://www.ourworldindata.org/economic-inequality-by-gender#in-most-countries-there-is-a-substantial-gender-pay-gap (accessed 25 January 2020)

> *This shows statistics and records of various countries on the gender pay gap, income distribution, gender wealth and poverty gaps, etc., with the aid of charts, diagrams and illustrations of various countries, showing their efforts and declines in Gender Economic Inequality.*

Gil Rubery, Aristea Koukiadaki; International Labour Office-Geneva; International Labour Organisation, "Closing the gender pay gap", available at: https://www.ilo.org//wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/publication/wcms_540889.pdf (accessed 25 January 2020)

This report aims to review the key issues, policy mechanisms and international evidence concerning closing the gender gap. The core focus of this report is on wage-setting institutions and their impact on inclusive and gender-equitable labour markets

International Labour Organisation (ILO), *Women and men in the informal economy: A statistical picture, third edition* (Geneva, 2018), available at: http://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_626831/lang--en/index.htm (accessed 25 January 2020)

This report provides comparable estimates on the size of the informal economy and a statistical profile of informality in all its diversity at the global and regional levels

International Monetary Fund (2018), *Pursuing Women's Economic Empowerment,* available at: https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/Policy-Papers/Issues/2018/05/31/pp053118pursuing-womens-economic-empowerment (accessed 25 January 2020)

This paper emphasizes the importance of reducing gender inequality and examines the importance of gender inclusiveness, analyses trends, and offers policy lessons for greater gender equality at a global level, drawing on recent analytical, policy and operational work conducted at the IMF.

International Labour Organisation (ILO), *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends for Women 2018: Global Snapshot* (Geneva, 2018), available at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_619577.pdf (accessed 25 January 2020)

This report looks at the progress or lack thereof made during the past decade and assesses women's labour market prospects by examining the gaps between men and women according to a selection of ILO statistical indicators namely; labour force participation, unemployment, informal employment and working poverty.

United Nations Secretary General's High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment, *Leave No One Behind: A Call to Action for Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment*, available at: https://www.empowerwomen.org/-/media/files/un%20women/empowerwomen/resources/hlp%20briefs/unhlp%20full%20report.pdf?la=en (accessed 25 January 2020)

This report draws on the substantial and robust evidence about key issues, identifying the fundamental drivers and principle, and delivers a call to action on Women's economic empowerment. This report focuses on the world of work, underlining how economic and social inequalities are deeply related. It seeks to draw attention to the challenges faced by the most disadvantage women, bring informal work from the margin to the mainstream and highlight how discriminatory laws limit choice

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This report lays the basis for robust, gender-responsive monitoring of the 2010 Agenda for Sustainable developments.

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Empowering women to participate fully in economic life across all sectors is essential to build stronger economies, achieve internationally agreed goals for development and sustainability, and improve the quality of life for women, men, families and communities. The private sector is a key partner in efforts to advance gender equality and empower women

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