



International Women's Day 2015: Background and statistics

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8 March is International Women's Day. This year the global theme is ***Make it Happen***, encouraging effective action for advancing and recognising women. Around the world, organisations, governments and women's groups come together to mark the past, present and future economic, political and social achievements of women. Hundreds of events are held worldwide throughout March, with some under themes that reflect local gender issues.

This briefing gives an introduction to International Women's Day and examines a variety of indicators for women's equality both in the UK and internationally.

For further information on these topics, see the following House of Commons Library publications:

Standard Note 1250

[Women in Parliament and Government](#)

Standard Note 5170

[Women in Public Life, the Professions and the Boardroom](#)

Standard Note 7068

[The gender pay gap](#)

Standard Note 6838

[Women and the economy](#)

Lords Library Note 2014/007

[Debate on 6 March: The Contribution of Women to the Economy of the UK, to Mark International Women's Day](#)

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1 Introduction

1.1 International Women's Day: history and background

International Women's Day (IWD), held on 8 March, marks a celebration of the economic, social, cultural and political achievements for women. The first IWD was held in central Europe in 1911. More than one million women and men attended IWD rallies campaigning for women's rights to work, vote, be trained, to hold public office and end discrimination.



Since 1911, IWD has increased in status. IWD is now an official holiday in 27 countries and organisations and governments around the world hold events in March to inspire women and celebrate achievements. The United States designates the whole month of March as 'Women's History Month'.

Although there have been large changes and attitudinal shifts in society about women's equality and emancipation, significant issues remain. Women's pay is often lower than that of their male counterparts, and women are not present in equal numbers in business or politics. There are still significant inequalities in education, health and violence.

In the UK, a range of events and exhibitions are being held for International Women's Day – a list is available on the [International Women's Day website](#). Since 2008, Parliament has held several debates to recognise IWD. Details about both the House of Commons and House of Lords debates from 2014, which focused on the contribution of women to the economy, are available on the Parliament and Commons Backbench Business Committee news pages.¹

1.2 IWD 2015 themes

The global theme for IWD 2015 is *Make it Happen*, which intends to encourage effective action for advancing and recognising women. Many groups select their own theme based on their local context and focus. The theme for [Manchester International Women's Day 2015](#), for example, is Breaking Through.²

2015 represents 20 years since 189 governments signed the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a comprehensive document on advancing women's rights. In 2015, the UN is refocusing on the calls the Platform for Action made for gender equality as part of their [Beijing +20 campaign](#). The headline of the campaign - *Empowering Women - Empowering Humanity: Picture It!* – is the UN's theme for IWD in 2015.

¹ Backbench Business Committee, 'Debate on the contribution of women to the economy', March 2014; Parliament.uk, 'Lords marks International Women's Day', 7 March 2014

² Manchester City Council, [International Women's Day: our theme for 2015](#)

2 Women around the world: measures of equality

The World Economic Forum produces an annual Gender Gap Index, as summarised in Table 1 below.³ This ranks countries by the extent to which women and men have equal opportunity, with a higher ranking denoting more equality. The index takes into account a broad range of indicators under four headings: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment. The index scores in each area are reached by dividing female participation and/or achievement in each area by male participation and/or achievement, giving a score which represents female opportunity as a proportion of male opportunity.⁴

TABLE I
WEF Gender Gap Index 2014

Rank	Country	Score
1	 Iceland	0.8594
2	 Finland	0.8453
3	 Norway	0.8374
4	 Sweden	0.8165
5	 Denmark	0.8025
6	 Nicaragua	0.7894
7	 Rwanda	0.7854
8	 Ireland	0.7850
9	 Philippines	0.7814
10	 Belgium	0.7809
26	 United Kingdom	0.7383
133	 Morocco	0.5988
134	 Jordan	0.5968
135	 Lebanon	0.5923
136	 Côte d'Ivoire	0.5874
137	 Iran	0.5811
138	 Mali	0.5779
139	 Syria	0.5775
140	 Chad	0.5764
141	 Pakistan	0.5522
142	 Yemen	0.5145

In 2014 the highest-ranked country was Iceland, retaining its position for the sixth year in a row. The lowest ranked country was Yemen. The UK was ranked 26th overall, a fall from 18th last year, although its absolute equality score has stayed about the same for some years.

Rankings differed across the four specific areas. Burundi was scored first for economic participation and opportunity and Iceland scored highest on political empowerment. First place for educational achievement and health and survival were shared by several countries.

The UK's highest specific rankings were 32nd for economic participation and opportunity and 33rd for political empowerment.

Among developing countries, the most equal overall were Nicaragua and Rwanda.

The gender gap is narrowest in terms of health and survival, followed by the educational attainment gap and the gender gap for economic participation and opportunity. The gap for political empowerment remains widest, although this area has seen the most improvement since 2006.

³ World Economic Forum, *Rankings*

⁴ Alternative indices are available. The UN Development Program Gender Inequality Index ranks Norway, Australia and Switzerland among its top nations for gender equality, and DR Congo and Niger as the worst.

2.1 Millennium Development Goals

The Charter of the United Nations, signed in San Francisco in 1945, was the first international agreement to proclaim gender equality as a fundamental human right. Since then, the United Nations has helped create a historic legacy of internationally agreed strategies, standards, programmes and goals to advance the status of women worldwide.

In September 2000, world leaders adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration, committing their nations to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty and setting out a series of Millennium Development Goals, with a deadline of 2015.

Millennium Development Goal 3 is to **promote gender equality and empower women**. There are three indicators of this:

- Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education
- Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector
- Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament

Millennium Development Goal 5 is to **improve maternal health**. This includes an indicator for maternal mortality.

Ratio of girls to boys in education

Across developing regions there are nearly as many girls as boys in primary and secondary education – the ratio in 2012 was 0.97 to 1 (primary) and 0.96 to 1 (secondary). The picture is quite different at the tertiary level of education. It is at this level that the gender parity index for the whole of the developing world is highest, at 99 girls for every 100 boys. But it is also where the greatest gender disparity is observed. Participation rates are either skewed heavily in favour of boys, as in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia, or in favour of girls, as in the Northern Africa, South-Eastern Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. Chart 1 below shows these differences between regions.⁵

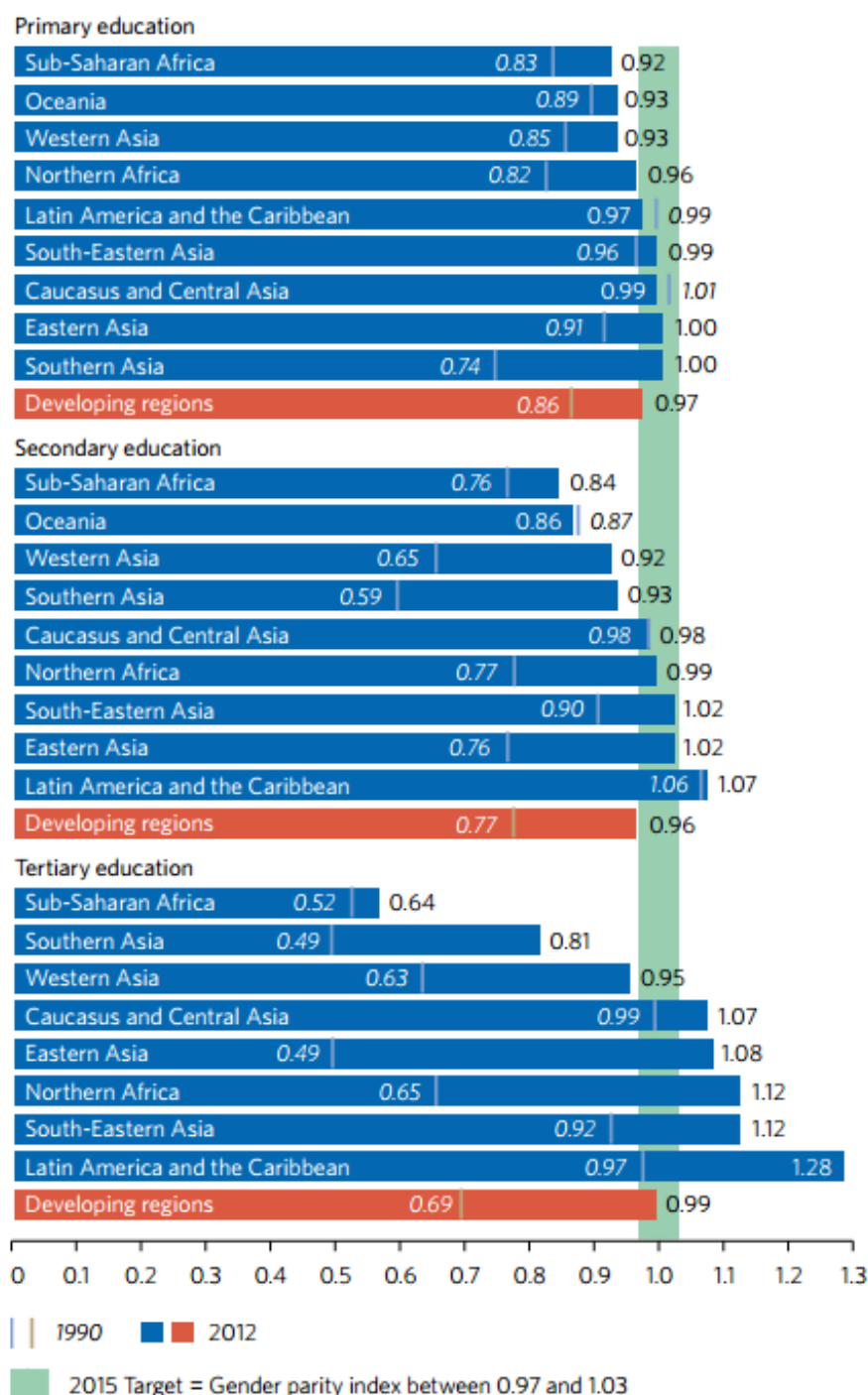
The UN reports that poverty is a major cause of unequal access to education, particularly among girls of secondary-school age. The requirement to spend many hours fetching water and a lack of acceptable sanitation facilities in schools are two important factors. Other obstacles include child marriage, violence against girls, and inadequate support for disability.⁶

⁵ UN Millennium Development Goals Report, 2014

⁶ UN, Goal 3 Fact Sheet 2013

CHART 1

Gender parity index for gross enrolment ratios in primary, secondary and tertiary education in developing regions, 1990 and 2012



Note: In secondary and tertiary education, 1990 data for Caucasus and Central Asia refer to 1993.
In tertiary education, 2012 data for Oceania are not available.

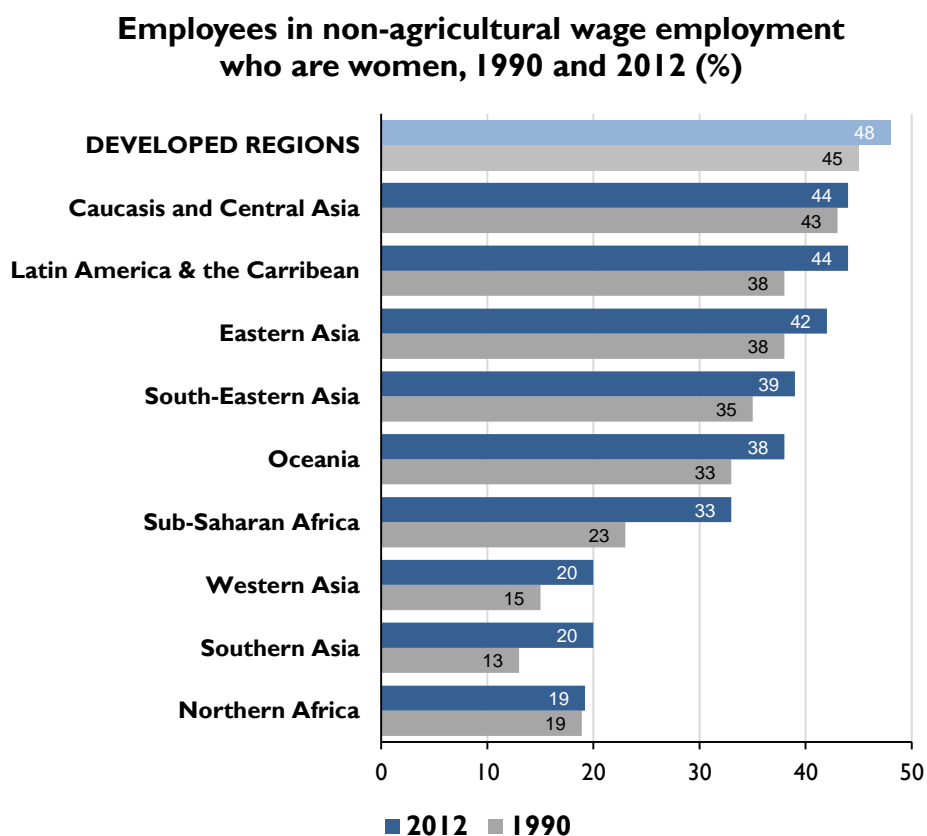
Source: UN Millennium Development Goals Report, 2014

Women in wage employment

Chart 2 shows the percentage of employees outside of the agricultural sector who are women. The lowest percentage of women in non-agricultural wage employment in 2012 is in Northern Africa (19%), Southern Asia (20%) and Western Asia (20%). In developed regions the non-agricultural workforce is more evenly spread, with women making up 48% of employees.

Women's employment in non-agricultural sectors has been increasing slowly over the past twenty years or so. Women's share increased globally from 35% in 1990 to 40% in 2012, with increases observed in most world regions.⁷

CHART 2



Source: UN Millennium Development Goals Report, 2014

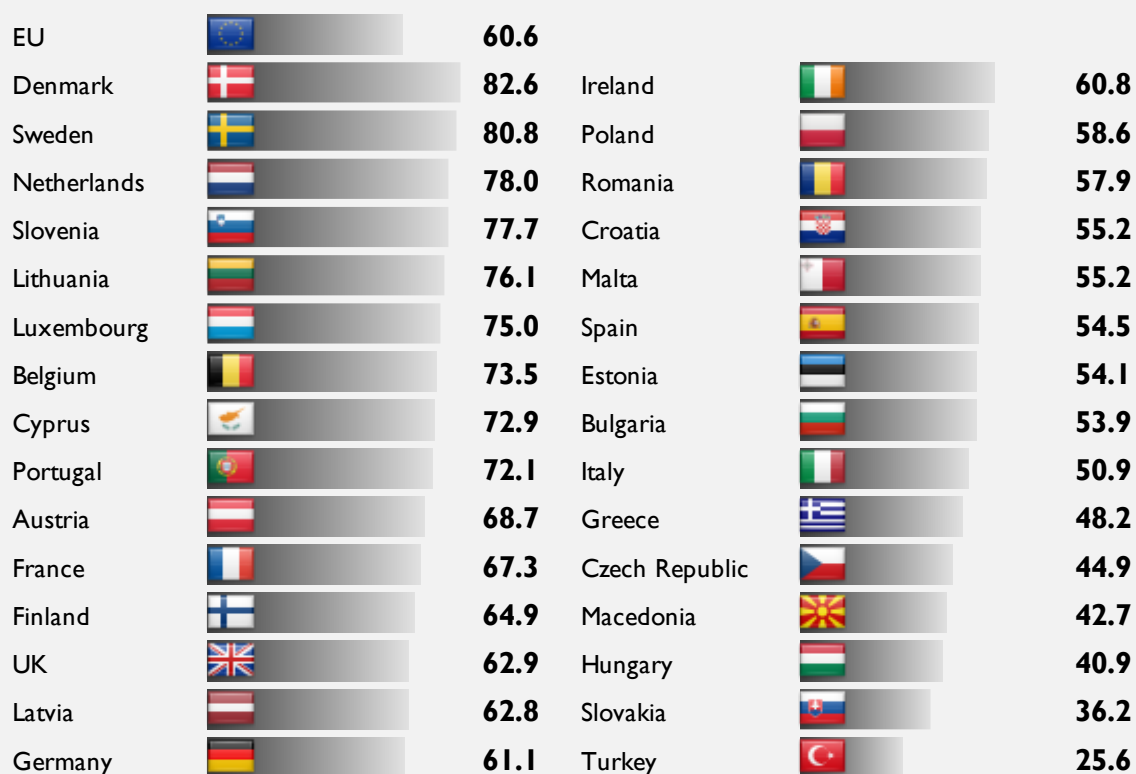
Employment among women with children

Chart 3 shows European variation in the employment rate of women with two children whose youngest child is less than six years old. The UK's employment rate for this category is 63%, marginally higher than the EU average, and relatively unchanged since 2010. The highest rates are in Denmark (83%) and Sweden (81%) and the lowest are in Slovakia (36%) and Turkey (26%). Note that not all countries hold data for this category.

⁷ UN, *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2014*, 2014

CHART 3

Employment rate of women with two children (%), where youngest child is less than six years old



Source: Eurostat

Women in Parliament

Despite growing numbers of female parliamentarians, the target of equal participation of women and men in politics remains distant. Data from the Inter-Parliamentary Union's annual survey highlights that 22% of representatives across upper and lower houses were women at the end of 2013.⁸ This was an increase of nearly 2 percentage points from 2012 – double the average rate of increase in recent years. Women accounted for 26% of all members elected or appointed to parliament in 2013 and the proportion of women holding seats in parliament increased in 42 of the 64 chambers renewed in 2013 worldwide.⁹ The proportion of women rose fastest, by more than 20 percentage points, in two chambers— Grenada's lower house (to 33%) and Zimbabwe's upper house (to 48%).¹⁰

Table 2 (below) shows the ranks of countries based on the proportion of women in the lower or single house of their legislature. The UK is ranked 57th. Rwanda, Bolivia and Andorra are the only countries that have Parliaments where at least 50% of the seats are held by women. Five countries listed do not have any women in their lower house or single chamber.

⁸ IPU, *Women in Parliament in 2013*, 2014






















⁹ IPU, *Women in Parliament in 2013*, 2014; UN, *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2014*, 2014

¹⁰ UN, *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2014*, 2014

TABLE 2

WOMEN IN NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS

as of 1 January 2015

RANK	COUNTRY	Lower or single House				
		ELECTIONS*	SEATS	WOMEN	% WOMEN	
HIGHEST						
1	Rwanda		Sep-13	80	51	63.8%
2	Bolivia		Oct-14	130	69	53.1%
3	Andorra		Apr-11	28	14	50.0%
4	Cuba		Feb-13	612	299	48.9%
5	Seychelles		Sep-11	32	14	43.8%
6	Sweden		Sep-14	349	152	43.6%
7	Senegal		Jul-12	150	64	42.7%
8	Finland		Apr-11	200	85	42.5%
9	Ecuador		Feb-13	137	57	41.6%
10	South Africa		May-14	400	166	41.5%
57	United Kingdom		May-10	650	148	22.8%
LOWEST						
133	Papua New Guinea		Jun-12	111	3	2.7%
134	Solomon Islands		Nov-14	50	1	2.0%
135	Kuwait		Jul-13	65	1	1.5%
136	Oman		Oct-11	84	1	1.2%
137	Yemen		Apr-03	301	1	0.3%
138	Micronesia		Mar-13	14	0	0.0%
=	Palau		Nov-12	16	0	0.0%
=	Qatar		Jun-13	35	0	0.0%
=	Tonga		Nov-14	26	0	0.0%
=	Vanuatu		Oct-12	52	0	0.0%

* date of last General Election; figures take account of subsequent changes to 1 Jan 2015

Source: IPU www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm

According to the UN, affirmative action is the key component in progress for women in parliamentary activity across the globe. In 39 elections in 2013, legislated or voluntary gender quotas were used. The UN comments that these types of measures impact positively on women's access to parliament, but are not enough on their own: political parties need to field more female candidates.¹¹

¹¹ UN, *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2014*, 2014

Maternal mortality

Nearly 300,000 women died globally in 2013 from causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. In 2012, 40 million births in developing regions were not attended by skilled health personnel (mostly in rural areas).

Maternal mortality has declined markedly over the last two decades. It is highest in sub-Saharan Africa (where there were 510 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 2013).¹² Table 3 shows the countries with the highest and lowest maternal mortality across the world.¹³

TABLE 3

MATERNAL MORTALITY

Pregnancy related deaths per 100,000 live births

HIGHEST		
Chad		1100
Somalia		1000
Central African Republic		890
Sierra Leone		890
Burundi		800
Guinea-Bissau		790
Liberia		770
Sudan		730
Cameroon		690
Nigeria		630
LOWEST		
Iceland		5
Japan		5
Poland		5
Austria		4
Belarus		4
Italy		4
Sweden		4
Greece		3
Singapore		3
Estonia		2
UNITED KINGDOM		12

¹² UN, *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2014*, 2014

¹³ Data from the UN's *Social Indicators* publications

2.2 Population and fertility

Tables 4-6 show a number of statistics about population and fertility: the countries with the highest and lowest life expectancy among women; the ratio of men to women; and the total fertility rate.¹⁴

Life expectancy

Japan has the highest life expectancy among women, at 87 years, followed by China (86) and France (85). Lesotho has the lowest life expectancy for women (48), followed by Swaziland and Sierra Leone (both 49). Table 4 shows the gap between life expectancy at birth for females and males by country. In general, women have a higher life expectancy than men – with Russia recording the highest gap at almost twelve years. In six countries, however – four of them in sub-Saharan Africa – men are expected to live longer than women.

TABLE 4					TABLE 5		
LIFE EXPECTANCY					GENDER RATIO		
and gender gap (years)					Number of women per 100 men		
HIGHEST		F	M	GAP	HIGHEST		
Russia		75.0	63.3	11.7	Ukraine		117
Belarus		76.4	65.2	11.2	Latvia		117
Lithuania		78.3	67.2	11.1	Estonia		117
Ukraine		74.6	63.5	11.1	Russian Federation		116
Kazakhstan		72.8	62.3	10.5	Netherlands Antilles		116
Seychelles		78.1	67.7	10.4	Lithuania		115
Estonia		80.0	69.8	10.2	Belarus		115
Latvia		78.5	68.8	9.7	Armenia		115
El Salvador		77.1	67.7	9.4	Martinique		114
Niue		76.0	67.0	9.0	Antigua and Barbuda		113
LOWEST					LOWEST		
South Africa		54.1	53.1	1.0	Falkland Islands		88
Zambia		50.0	49.2	0.9	Palau		87
Afghanistan		49.5	49.2	0.3	Montserrat		86
Malawi		55.2	54.9	0.3	Saudi Arabia		81
Qatar		78.2	78.7	-0.4	Oman		69
Swaziland		48.5	49.7	-1.2	Kuwait		68
Zimbabwe		52.7	54.0	-1.3	Bahrain		60
Lesotho		48.1	49.7	-1.6	Vatican City		46
Turks & Caicos Is.		77.4	79.0	-1.6	United Arab Emirates		44
Botswana		51.3	53.7	-2.3	Qatar		32
UNITED KINGDOM		82.4	78.3	4.2	UNITED KINGDOM		103















¹⁴ Life expectancy and gender ratio statistics are taken from the UN's Social Indicators publications. The fertility rate statistics are from the World Bank's World Development Indicators.

Gender ratio

Table 5 shows gender ratios in terms of the number of women per 100 men. Qatar has the lowest ratio, with 32 women per 100 men. This striking figure is largely due to the high number of immigrant men whose families do not accompany them – immigrants make up 94% of Qatar’s workforce and 70% of its total population.¹⁵ Ukraine, Latvia and Estonia have the most women, each with 117 for every 100 men. These figures are largely accounted for by a large gap between male and female life expectancy: in all three countries, the ratio of females to males at age 65 or above is more than 2:1.

TABLE 6

FERTILITY RATE
Children per woman 2011 (World Bank)

HIGHEST		
Niger		7.6
Mali		6.9
Somalia		6.8
Chad		6.5
Burundi		6.2
DR Congo		6.1
Angola		6.1
Uganda		6.1
Nigeria		6.0
The Gambia		5.8
LOWEST		
Portugal		1.4
Latvia		1.3
Poland		1.3
Bosnia and Herzegovina		1.3
Romania		1.3
South Korea		1.2
Hungary		1.2
Hong Kong		1.2
Singapore		1.2
Macao		1.0
UNITED KINGDOM		2.0

Fertility rate

Table 6 shows countries ranked by the fertility rate. The highest total fertility rate is in Niger, with 7.6 children born on average per women who lives through her entire child-bearing years. All ten countries with the highest fertility rates are in Africa; indeed, eighteen of the top twenty are in Africa. The highest non-African country is Timor-Leste, in 14th, with 5.5 births. According to current projections of fertility rate changes, half of the world’s population growth between 2012 and 2050 will be in Sub-Saharan Africa.¹⁶ The World Resources Institute argues that reducing the fertility rate in Sub-Saharan Africa is crucial to the region’s future food security, and suggests that a lack of educational opportunities, reproductive health facilities and high child mortality rates contribute to the region’s high fertility rates.¹⁷

The lowest rate is in Macao SAR (China), with 1 child per woman on average. The list of countries with the lowest birth rates is dominated by Eastern European and East Asian nations. Research from the East-West Center suggests that the causes of low fertility in East Asia include a rise in education, employment and prosperity, leading women to postpone or cancel plans to have children.¹⁸

¹⁵ ‘Qatar’s migrants: how have they changed the country?’, *The Guardian*, 26 September 2013

¹⁶ World Resources Institute, *Achieving Replacement Level Fertility*, July 2013

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Westley, Choe and Retherford, ‘Very low fertility in Asia: Is there a problem? Can it be solved?’ *AsiaPacific Issues*, no.94. 2010.

2.3 Violence against women

Gender-based violence is present in every society in the world. Violence against women and girls encompasses violence by an intimate partner, sexual violence and rape, female genital mutilation, honour killings and trafficking.

Globally, more than one third of women (35%) have experienced either physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner or non-partner sexual violence.¹⁹ The most common form of violence is intimate partner violence. Nearly 30% of women have experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner in the course of their lifetime. In some areas, this increases to up to 38% of women.²⁰

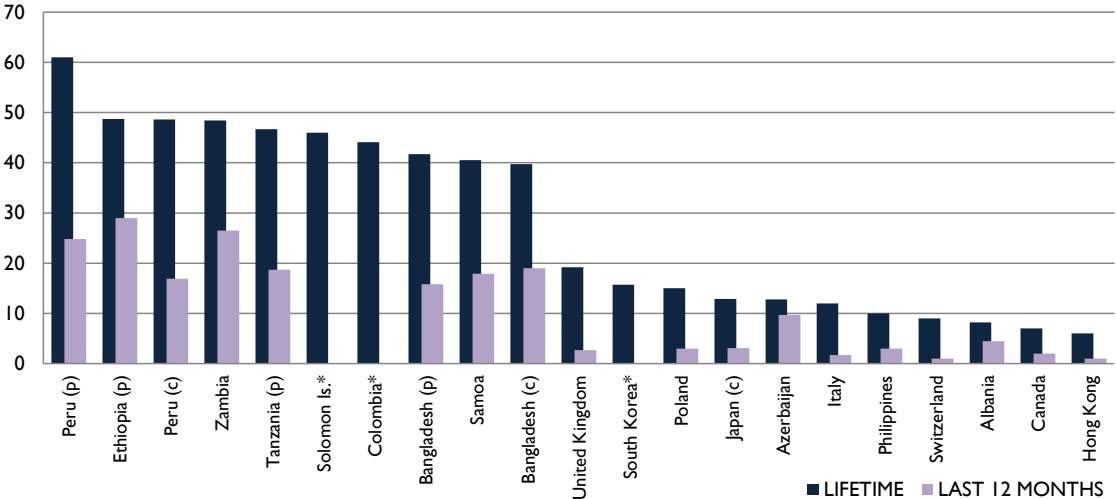
The World Health Organisation highlights that as well as being a violation of women’s human rights, violence against women is a major public health problem. Women who have experienced violence are more likely to have babies with low birth weights, are twice as likely to experience depression and, in some regions, are 1.5 times more likely to acquire HIV.²¹

There are also social and economic costs of violence against women. Women may be unable to work, participate in regular activities or care for themselves or their children.²²

Chart 4 shows the rates of violence against women inflicted by an intimate partner in a number of countries. It gives the ten countries with the highest rate, the ten countries with the lowest rate, and data from the UK for comparison. The data was collated by the UN from surveys on violence against women, conducted by a wide range of countries over a number of years.²³

CHART 4

Prevalence of Violence Against Women by Intimate Partner (%)



Notes

* No data available for last 12 months for Solomon Islands, Colombia, Peru, or South Korea, (p) = province, (c) = city

¹⁹ WHO, LSHTM, SAMRC, *Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence*, 2013

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Ibid

²² World Health Organisation, *Violence against women*, Fact sheet 239, November 2014

²³ The UN notes that these surveys were conducted with varying methodologies so caution should be taken when comparing results.

Female Genital Mutilation

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) refers to procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.²⁴

It is estimated that more than 125 million girls and women alive today have undergone FGM in the 29 countries in Africa and the Middle East where the practice is concentrated. In Somalia, Guinea, Djibouti and Egypt it is estimated that over 90% of women and girls aged 15 to 49 have undergone some form of FGM.²⁵ FGM is mostly carried out on young girls sometime between infancy and the age of 15.²⁶ FGM carries immediate and long-term health risks, including haemorrhage, infection, infertility and an increased risk of childbirth complications.²⁷

An estimated 137,000 women and girls with FGM, born in countries where FGM is practised, were permanently resident in England and Wales in 2011. Each year since 2008, women with FGM have made up around 1.5 per cent of all women delivering in England and Wales.²⁸

3 Women in the UK: measures of equality

3.1 Pay

In 2014, median hourly earnings (excluding overtime) for full-time male employees were £13.59 compared to £12.31 for women. The gap is narrower than the previous year, but on average women working full time earn 9.5% less than men. On average, women working part-time earn 5.5% more than men working part-time – in October to December 2014, 11.7% of male employees worked part-time compared to 41.0% of female employees.

Table 7 gives information about earnings for men and women. More information can also be found in the Library briefing on the [gender pay gap](#).

TABLE 7
MEDIAN HOURLY EARNINGS EXCLUDING OVERTIME
with gender pay differences

	Men		Women		% pay difference	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
2011	13.12	7.64	11.75	8.03	10.4%	-5.1%
2012	13.27	7.72	12.01	8.14	9.5%	-5.4%
2013	13.60	7.91	12.24	8.37	10.0%	-5.8%
2014	13.59	8.00	12.31	8.44	9.4%	-5.5%

Source: ONS, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2014, 1997-2014 selected estimates table 2 & 3
Data for 2014 is provisional

²⁴ World Health Organisation, [Female Genital Mutilation](#), Fact sheet 231, November 2014

²⁵ UNICEF, [Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: A statistical overview and exploration of the dynamics of change](#), July 2013

²⁶ World Health Organisation, [Female Genital Mutilation](#), Fact sheet 231, November 2014

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ Macfarlane & Dorkenoo, [Female Genital Mutilation in England and Wales: Updated statistical estimates of the numbers of affected women living in England and Wales and girls at risk Interim report on provisional estimates](#), July 2014

3.2 Women in business and the boardroom

21% of FTSE 100 company directors in March 2014 were women (up from 13% in 2011); for FTSE 250 companies 16% of directors were women (up from 8% in 2011).²⁹ More recent data from Boardwatch suggests that 23% of FTSE 100 directors were women in December 2014, while 18% of FTSE 250 directors were women.³⁰

Since June 2014, and for the first time, there are no all-male FTSE 100 boards. There were 24 all-male FTSE 250 boards in December 2014.³¹

3.3 Women in elected bodies and public life

Parliaments

143 female MPs were elected at the 2010 General Election. As a result of subsequent by-elections, the current number of female MPs is 148 – 23% of the total, compared with 3% in 1951. 23% of Cabinet Ministers are female (5 of 22) and 23% of members of the House of Lords are women (182 of 775).

35% of the members of the Scottish Parliament and 40% of those in the National Assembly for Wales are women. 19% of the members of the Northern Ireland Assembly are women.

Table 8 shows the gender breakdown by party in the House of Commons and other UK elected bodies as of August 2014. For the House of Commons, MPs have been assigned to parties for which they contested the 2010 election.

Public appointments

- In 2013/14, women made up 39% of public appointments and reappointments. This is up from 36% last year, and is the highest figure since the data series began in 2010.³²
- At 31 March 2014, women comprised 38% of the Senior Civil Service and 53% of civil servants as a whole. In 1950, 33% of civil servants were women.³³
- The first female judge was appointed in England and Wales in 1945. Currently, 25% of judges England and Wales are women (April 2014).³⁴ In 2012, 21% of Scotland's professional judges and 43% of Northern Ireland's judicial office holders were women.³⁵ England, Wales and Scotland's figures are among the lowest in Europe in terms of representation of women among the professional judiciary.
- 33% of local councillors in England were women in 2013, compared with 28% in 1997.³⁶

²⁹ Vinnicombe et al., *The Female FTSE Board Report 2014*

³⁰ Boardwatch, [Tracking appointments of women directors to FTSE 100 and FTSE 250 companies](#), Dec 2014

³¹ *Ibid*

³² Commissioner for Public Appointments, *Annual report 2013-14*, October 2014

³³ ONS, *Civil service statistics 2014*

³⁴ Courts and Tribunals Judiciary, *Judicial Diversity Statistics 2014*

³⁵ Council of Europe, *Report on European Judiciaries*; Northern Ireland Assembly Research and Library Service, *Judicial Appointments in Northern Ireland*, January 2012

³⁶ Local Government Association, *Census of Local Authority Councillors 2013*, May 2014

TABLE 8

WOMEN IN UK PARLIAMENT AND DEVOLVED LEGISLATURES

	CON	LAB	LD	OTHER	TOTAL
Male					
House of Commons	256	171	48	28	503
House of Lords	178	153	67	195	593
National Assembly for Wales	10	15	4	7	36
Scottish Parliament	9	20	4	51	84
N. Ireland Assembly				88	88
London Assembly	8	7	1	1	17
European Parliament	13	9	0	21	43
Female					
House of Commons	48	86	7	6	147
House of Lords	41	65	33	43	182
National Assembly for Wales	4	15	1	4	24
Scottish Parliament	6	17	1	21	45
N. Ireland Assembly				20	20
London Assembly	1	5	1	1	8
European Parliament	6	11	1	12	30
% Female					
House of Commons	16%	33%	13%	18%	23%
House of Lords	19%	30%	33%	18%	23%
National Assembly for Wales	29%	50%	20%	36%	40%
Scottish Parliament	40%	46%	20%	29%	35%
N. Ireland Assembly				19%	19%
London Assembly	11%	42%	50%	50%	32%
European Parliament	32%	55%	100%	36%	41%

Firsts for women in UK public life

The last 100 years have seen various firsts for women in public life:^{37,38,39,40}

1907 First female **mayor** in England (Elizabeth Garrett Anderson) holding office in Aldeburgh in Suffolk for two terms (1907-1909)

37COI *Women in Britain* 2nd edition 1996

38 Queen's University of Belfast, *Centre for Advancement of Women in Politics*

39 Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *Women In Diplomacy: The FCO, 1782-1999*, May 1999

40 BBC Radio 4, *Women's history timeline*

1913 Britain's first official female **professor** Caroline Spurgeon appointed Professor of English Literature at London University

1919 Nancy Astor, first **Member of Parliament** to take seat in House of Commons

1929 **Cabinet Minister** (Margaret Bondfield)

1943 **President of the Trades Union Congress** (Anne Loughlin)

1945 **Prison Governer** (Charity Taylor)

1945 **Stipendiary magistrate** (Sybill Campbell)

1948 **University Vice Chancellor** (Prof Lillian Penson)

1949 **King's Counsel** (Rose Heilbron and Helena Normanton)

1955 **Civil Service Permanent Secretary** (Dame Evelyn Sharp)

1958 **Life Peer** (Baroness Wootton of Abinger)

1963 First **Hereditary Peer** to take seat in House of Lords (Baroness Strange of Knokin)

1964 **Parliamentary Whip** (Commons) (Harriet Slater)

1965 **High Court Judge** (Dame Elizabeth Lane)

1970 **Deputy Speaker** (Betty Harvie Anderson)

1973 First female **Head of Mission** in the British Diplomatic Service (Eleanor Emery)

1973 **Director of a national museum** (the Science Museum)

1975 **Leader of the Opposition** (Margaret Thatcher)

1979 **Prime Minister** (Margaret Thatcher)

1981 **Leader of the House of Lords** (Baroness Young)

1984 **TUC General Secretary** (Brenda Dean)

1987 **Court of Appeal Judge** (Dame Elizabeth Butler-Sloss)

1991 **Head of MI5** (Stella Rimmington)

1992 **Speaker of the House of Commons** (Betty Boothroyd)

1992 **Minister with special responsibility for women's issues** (Gillian Shephard)

1994 **Church of England priest** ordained (Angela Berners-Wilson)

1995 **Chief constable** (Pauline Clare)

1997 First full-time **Minister for Women** (Joan Ruddock)

1997 **Secretary of State for Northern Ireland** (Mo Mowlam)

1998 **Chief Whip** (Ann Taylor)

2001 **Secretary of State for Scotland** (Helen Liddell)

2004 **Lord of Appeal in Ordinary** (Dame Brenda Hale)

2005 **National Statistician & Registrar General** for England & Wales (Karen Dunnell)

2006 **Foreign Secretary** (Rt Hon Margaret Beckett)

2006 **House of Lords' Lord Speaker** (Baroness Hayman)

2007 **Home Secretary** (Jacqui Smith)

2007 **Attorney-General** (Baroness Scotland)

2008 **Chief Secretary to the Treasury** (Yvette Cooper)

2009 **EU High Representative** for Foreign Affairs & Security Policy (Baroness Ashton)

2009 **Poet Laureate** (Carol Ann Duffy)

2010 **Secretary of State for Wales** (Cheryl Gillan)

2011 **Chief Medical Officer** for England (Professor Dame Sally Davies)

2011 **Royal Navy Warship Commander** (Lieutenant Commander Sarah West)

2013 **RAF Air Vice-Marshal** (Elaine West)

2014 **Dean of Norwich** (Canon Jane Barbara Hedges)

2015 **Church of England Bishop** (The Right Reverend Libby Lane)