

## Women & Decision Making: Meeting Challenges, Creating Change

As women around the world celebrate International Women's Day this year, the theme of women's equal participation in decision-making provides an opportunity to assess how women's voices are being heard in boardrooms, parliaments and courtrooms.



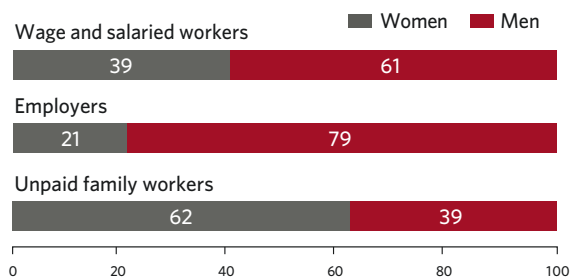
## Women in Business

Progress in professions not matched by executive posts

- » Women's participation in high-level economic decision-making remains low even in the developed countries, despite educational advances for women in many parts of the world.
- » According to ILO research from 2000 to 2002, women's overall share of managerial jobs ranged between only 20 and 40 per cent, in 48 out of the 63 countries for which data were available.
- » Finland, Norway, Denmark, Estonia, Greece and Sweden have implemented quotas to increase the number of women on the boards of directors of companies to 40 per cent (for state and public limited companies in Finland and Norway, and for private sector companies in the others).
- » Even though women are increasingly well represented within professions such as law, medicine and engineering in developed countries, their participation at the decision-making level remains low. According to the World Economic Forum's *Measuring the Global Gender Gap Report* of 2005, a survey of graduates carried out by *Yale Law Women* highlighted that while there was a growing number of women attorneys (25-35 per cent), only a small number of them were partners in firms (5-15 per cent).
- » More women than men work in lower-status jobs worldwide and fewer women than men own businesses and employ others.
- » According to data from the UN Economic Commission for Europe from 2001, even in developed countries such as the Netherlands, Norway, Finland and Canada, women constitute less than one-third of total employers. (See: *UNECE Statistical Database*, <http://w3.unece.org/stat>)



Share of women in total employment by job status, 1990-2002 (Percentage)





## Women in Politics

### Incremental gains in government positions

- » While women's participation in parliaments is now the highest it has ever been — at 16.3 per cent across all parliaments — this represents only a marginal increase since 1975, when the participation rate was 10.9 per cent.
- » While women in Arab countries remain particularly underrepresented in parliaments — the regional average for women's participation in lower houses is 8.2 per cent — their participation has doubled in the last eight years, assisted in large part by the implementation of different types of quotas in countries such as Djibouti, Jordan, Iraq, Morocco and Tunisia.
- » The most significant increases have been seen in Africa and Latin America, where on average there has been a gain of more than five percentage points in the past 10 years, again assisted by the adoption of quotas for women.
- » Female representation in parliaments of at least thirty per cent is widely considered to constitute a "critical mass" necessary to have a meaningful impact on the work of the parliament. (see below)
- » A number of post-conflict countries rank very highly with regard to women's participation in legislative bodies, averaging between 25 and 30 per cent of women legislators. In 2003, Rwanda became the country with the highest percentage of women in parliament at 48.8 per cent.

#### Countries with women representing 30% or more in the lower or single House of parliament, as at 31 Dec. 2005

<b>1</b>	Rwanda	48.8	<b>11</b>	Mozambique	34.8
<b>2</b>	Sweden	45.3	<b>12</b>	Belgium	34.7
<b>3</b>	Norway	37.9	<b>13</b>	Austria	33.9
<b>4</b>	Finland	37.5	<b>14</b>	Iceland	33.3
<b>5</b>	Denmark	36.9	<b>15</b>	South Africa	32.8
<b>6</b>	Netherlands	36.7	<b>16</b>	New Zealand	32.2
<b>7</b>	Argentina	36.2	<b>17</b>	Germany	31.8
<b>8</b>	Cuba	36.0	<b>18</b>	Guyana	30.8
	Spain	36.0	<b>19</b>	Burundi	30.5
<b>10</b>	Costa Rica	35.1	<b>20</b>	United Rep. of Tanzania	30.4

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union, see <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>



## Women in the Media

### Female journalists, male editors

- While in many countries women's share of low and middle-level positions within media organizations has risen over the last decade, the number of women in senior decision-making positions remained very small — in both traditional media institutions of press, radio and television, and the newly emerging sectors of telecommunications, multi-media and e-media.
- » A study published by the International Federation of Journalists found that although a third of journalists today are women, less than 3 per cent of senior media executives and decision-makers are women.
  - » The European Union database on women in decision-making shows that in 2001 only 9 per cent of senior management jobs in the telecommunication industry in Europe were held by women.
  - » According to the *Media Report to Women*, published by Communication Research Associates in the United States, women comprised 17 per cent of executive producers, producers, directors, writers, cinematographers and editors in the US working on the top 250 grossing films of 2003, the same as in 1998. If only the top 100 grossing films are considered, the percentage drops to 15 per cent. Men directed more than 9 out of 10 films in 2003. (see <http://www.media report to women.com/statistics.htm>)

#### Countries with current women Heads of State or Government

Bangladesh	Prime Minister
Chile	President
Finland	President
Germany	Chancellor
Ireland	President
Latvia	President
Liberia	President
Mozambique	Prime Minister
New Zealand	Prime Minister
The Philippines	President
São Tomé and Príncipe	Prime Minister

For further information on International Women's Day, see <http://www.un.org/events/women/iwd/2006/>

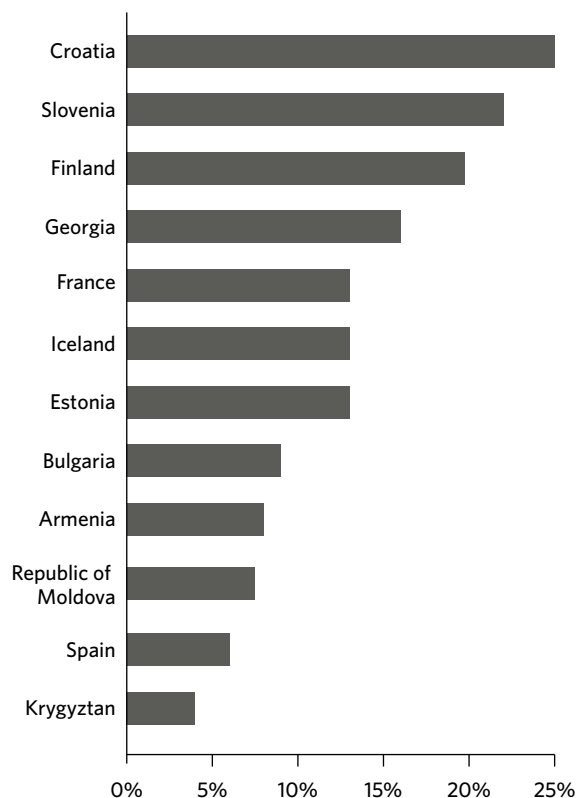


## Women in Academia

Equality far from achieved in university boardrooms

- » While an increasing number of women are graduating from universities and often with better results than men, women are not gaining secure employment in academia or receiving funding for research to the same extent as men.
- » In addition, women are seriously under-represented in higher decision-making positions, including as Chancellors of Universities. Figures from Sweden, for example, indicate a low representation of women as Chancellors, despite the good representation of women in parliament, government and civil service.

Women heads of universities as percentage of women and men\*



\* For selected European countries where recent data is available  
Source: UNECE Statistical Database, see <http://w3.unece.org/stat>

