

Justice for Women

Justice for women and girls is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda, with its commitment to gender equality (SDG 5) and its promise of peaceful, just and inclusive societies (SDG 16).

The High-level Group on Justice for Women worked to better understand common justice problems for women, make the case for investment and identify strategies that work.

In their report they call to action justice leaders of all countries and sectors, to accelerate implementation of the global goals for gender equality and equal access to justice for all.

Intimate Partner Violence

The vast majority of people affected by intimate partner violence are women. The law does not protect them. Leaving an abusive relationship produces legal needs that have to be met.

More than a billion women do not have legal protection from intimate partner sexual violence. (Source: [World Bank](#))

Discrimination at Work

Labor legislation is often discriminatory and legal barriers to women's entrepreneurship are pervasive, especially for married women. Women working in the informal sector are unable to protect themselves from arbitrary warrants, evictions, and confiscation of goods.

Over 2.7 billion women are legally restricted from having the same choice of jobs as men. (Source: [World Bank](#))

Discriminatory family laws

Discriminatory practices in family life, codified into law are a major obstacle to justice for women. Divorce is one of the most common legal needs, for both women and men.

In 57 countries, women do not have the same rights as men to become the legal guardian of a child after divorce. (Source: [OECD](#))

Unequal access to property

Women's access and control over land is restricted by discriminatory laws and practices, which worsens the risk of poverty.

Women account for about one-eighth of total land ownership in developing countries, while representing about 43 percent of all those working in agriculture. (Source: [FAO](#))

Gaps in legal identity

Women need legal identity documents - relating to property, business, housing, marriage, employment, children or immigration status - to protect their rights and access services, including access to finance and even a mobile phone.

One billion people in the world face challenges in proving who they are. Over 45 percent of women lack an ID, compared to 30 percent of men, in low income countries. (Source: [UNHCR-CEDAW](#))

Exclusion from decision making

Women judges contribute to improved justice for women. Yet women continue to be excluded from public life and senior roles, including the legal system.

In 2017, only 24 percent of the constitutional court justices globally were women. (Source: [UN Women](#))



Common
Justice
Problems
for
Women

Making the Case for Investment

Justice for women is first and foremost a basic human right, reflected in many national constitutions, in global and regional human rights treaties and declarations, UN Security Council Resolutions and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Investing in justice for women is not just the right thing to do, it also makes economic sense. Evidence demonstrates that investing in justice for women produces high returns in human development, national income and economic growth.

There are direct monetary gains from eliminating legal barriers, reducing gender-based violence and child marriage and increasing justice for women.

Gains at the macro-economic level:

- + Costs related to intimate partner violence are estimated to be about **1.5 percent of GDP**. (Source: World Bank)
- + The income gains from lower population growth when ending child marriage are estimated globally at **\$22 billion in 2015, and \$566 billion in 2030**. (Source: World Bank & ICRW)
- + The output losses associated with current levels of gender discrimination are estimated at up to **\$12 trillion, or 16 percent of global GDP**. (Source: OECD)
- + Higher female labor force participation accounted for about **30 percent of the reduction in poverty and income inequality**, in Latin America in 2000-2010. (Source: World Bank)
- + Closing gender gaps in paid work would generate at least a **15 percent gain in national income**. (Source: IMF)
- + Raising women's labor force participation could lead to an estimated **26 percent boost in global output**. (Source: McKinsey Global Institute)

Gains through greater justice in women's lives:

- + In Tanzania, women earned nearly **four times more** in areas where they have control over land. (Source: USAID)
- + In India, women with secure rights to land are **eight times less likely to suffer violence at home**. (Source: Journal of Human Development, 8(5), 359-388)

Investing in justice for women is the smart thing to do:

- ➔ Many of the proven and promising actions – including eliminating discriminatory laws which inhibit women's work and ensuring inclusion of women as decision-makers at all levels – should be cost-effective, relatively easy to implement and produce sizeable gains without major new spending.
- ➔ Additional resources are required to enforce existing and new laws and regulations.
- ➔ Other interventions – including providing affordable access to legal services for disadvantaged groups – likely require larger budgetary commitments.

Costs of Women's Unresolved Justice Problems

- **Costs to people and communities include:** social exclusion, decrease of public confidence in the justice system, increased stress and health consequences, strain on family relationships, increased unemployment, and contribution to the 'cycle of decline'.
- **Costs to economies and societies include:** lower economic productivity, higher public spending in other areas such as: disability, unemployment benefits, social assistance, and health, increase of poverty, loss of competitiveness, and limit to women's economic opportunities.

Source: OECD 2016

Call to Action



Eliminate

legal discrimination against women

Repeal discriminatory laws which limit justice for women.



Include

women as decision-makers

Ensure equal representation of women in decision making at all levels in the justice sector.



Prevent and Respond

to intimate partner violence

Adopt legal reforms and provide tailored support from the justice system as part of a broader multi-sectoral response.



Empower Women

economically and as rights holders

Provide equal access to legal identity, strengthen women's land rights, and use collective action as a catalyst for change.



Overcome

disadvantage for poor and marginalized women

Provide access to legal aid and paralegal services, promote legal literacy and overcome barriers to justice caused by poverty.



Work with

customary, informal and religious leaders to advance justice

Respond to the reality of legal pluralism, focus on the women who seek justice and uphold international human rights standards.



Invest in

data and evidence

on legal needs of women
Effective decision-making should rely on high quality, comparable, timely, and gender-disaggregated data, which captures empowerment and links to other SDGs, such as: health, education, access to land.



Develop

new partnerships

Governments, multilaterals, businesses, civil society, independent monitoring bodies, and thought leaders should partner to realize justice for all women by 2030.

Co-conveners of the High-level group on Justice for Women

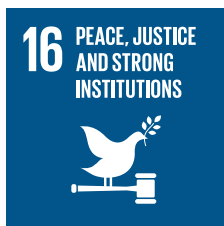
Phumzile Nguka-Mlambo, Executive Director, UN Women; **Irene Khan**, Director-General, International Development Law Organization (IDLO); and **Sandie Okoro**, Senior Vice President and Group General Counsel, World Bank Group.

Members

Abubacarr Marie Tamberdou, Minister of Justice, the Gambia; **Catherine Harrington**, Campaign Manager, Global Campaign for Equal Nationality Rights; **Dubravka Simonovic**, UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its causes and consequences; **Frida Angelica Gomez Perez**, Director-General, Noticias Tiemposmodernos, and National Councilor for the Evaluation and Monitoring of Public Policies on Youth, Mexican Youth Institute, Mexico; **Hilary Gbedemah**, Chair, CEDAW Committee; **Maria Fernanda Rodriguez**, Under-Secretary, Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, Argentina; **Nana Darkoa Sekyiamah**, Director of Information, Communications and Media, AWID; **Nathalie G. Drouin**, Deputy Minister of Justice and Deputy Attorney General, Canada; **Nursyahbani Katjasungkana**, Head, Association of Indonesian Women for Justice, Indonesia; **Patricia Scotland**, Commonwealth Secretary General; and **Rangita de Silva de Alwis**, Associate Dean, University of Pennsylvania.

Secretariat

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The High-level Group on Justice for Women was convened by **UN Women, International Development Law Organization and the World Bank**, to inform and enrich the work of the Task Force on Justice. The group is composed of top government officials, academics, civil society actors, and international organization leaders. It has developed recommendations, at the intersection of SDG 16.3 on equal access to justice for all and SDG 5 on gender equality.

The **Task Force on Justice** aims to contribute to better justice outcomes for people and communities who are outside the protection of the law, in line with SDG16.3 and related targets on justice. The Task Force on Justice is an initiative of the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies. It is co-chaired by ministers from Argentina, the Netherlands, and Sierra Leone, and the Elders.

The **Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies** is convened by the governments of Brazil, Sierra Leone, and Switzerland, with the NYU Center on International Cooperation (CIC). It brings together member states and other partners to accelerate delivery of the SDG targets for peace, justice and inclusion (SDG16+).

What you can do...



Ensure your country or organization is represented at events for justice leaders



Propose launch events in your region or country, or support planned justice events



Contribute your ideas, evidence and research on what works to deliver justice for women



Work with us to explore implementation and financing commitments