
The World's Women 1995

Trends
and
Statistics



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The World's Women 1995

Trends and Statistics



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The term country as used in this publication also refers, as appropriate, to territories or areas.

The designations "developed regions" and "developing regions" are intended for statistical convenience and do not necessarily express a judgement about the stage reached by a particular country or area in the development process.

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures.

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Division for the Advancement of Women
World Food Programme



unicef
United Nations Children's Fund



United Nations Population Fund



United Nations Development Programme



UNIFEM
United Nations Development Fund for Women



INSTRAW
International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women



United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization



WHO
World Health Organization

Message from the Secretary-General

In recent years, the United Nations has convened a series of global conferences—on environment, human rights, population and social development. Within each, women's advancement has been a major concern. The Fourth World Conference on Women will provide an opportunity for a further examination of issues relating to women in the light of the new thinking that has emerged from the preceding conferences.

The first edition of this publication in 1991 represented an initial step in compiling data on women worldwide. A lack of concrete knowledge about the activities of women has been a major impediment to the formulation of policies and programmes, at both the national and international levels, to achieve equality. As part of the effort to fill this gap, *The World's Women 1995* presents new data, while also underlining the work that still must be done to develop gender statistics of the quality and completeness that are required.

This book will be an official document of the Fourth World Conference on Women and should serve as a basis for governments to take action so that the principle of equality—as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations—becomes more than an ideal.



Boutros Boutros-Ghali
Secretary-General

Foreword

The second edition of *The World's Women: Trends and Statistics* is co-sponsored by 11 United Nations partners, an indication of the importance of data on women for United Nations system initiatives. In addition to being an official document for the Fourth World Conference on Women, this edition is an independent United Nations publication. Its six chapters cover and update areas previously analysed on education, population and public life. It also expands the sections on health, child-bearing and work. These topics—along with such new topics as media, violence against women, poverty, the environment, refugees and displaced

persons, and 50 years of women in the United Nations and in peace-keeping—reflect the main areas of activity of the co-sponsoring programmes and departments and organizations of the United Nations system.

This is a substantive report specifically tailored to its target audiences of people in the media and policy-making, Governments and NGOs, and academic and research institutions. It has been a major collaborative effort of many individual consultants and other organizations and units of the United Nations to bring together our expertise in policy, programming, data and analysis.

United Nations

Department for Economic and Social
Information and Policy Analysis,
Statistical Division

Department of Public Information

Secretariat of the Fourth World
Conference on Women

World Food Programme

UNICEF

United Nations Children's Fund

UNFPA

United Nations Population Fund

UNDP

United Nations Development
Programme

UNIFEM

United Nations Development Fund
for Women

INSTRAW

International Research and Training
Institute for the Advancement of
Women

UNESCO

United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization

WHO

World Health Organization

Preface

This second edition of *The World's Women: Trends and Statistics* is intended, like the first, to provide the numbers and analysis needed to understand how conditions are changing or not changing for women—and to do it in a way that will reach decision makers, the media and women and men everywhere. It provides concerned women and men with information about how much women contribute to economic life, political life and family life. Information can support appeals to persuade public and private decision makers to change policies that are unfair to women.

The World's Women 1995 presents and interprets statistics on women and men in the light of issues and objectives raised in global forums organized by the United Nations. These include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (1985), Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992), the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Conference on Human Rights (1994), the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (1994) and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development (1995).

The World's Women 1995 uses basic statistics compiled on women and men in the global statistical system, supplemented by special studies. Most of the basic data are contained in much greater detail in the *Women's Indicators and Statistics Database (Wistat), Version 3, CD-ROM* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XVII.6), prepared by the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat.

The World's Women is a statistical source book which provides the most complete presentation so far of how women fare in different parts of the world. Country and area indicators are provided that capture the situation of women, and country data are also used to calculate regional averages that are analysed and interpreted for presentation in text and charts. A wide range of general and ad hoc statistics was assembled for *The World's Women 1995* but many gaps remain—gaps in coverage of important topics, in timeliness, in comparisons with men, in comparisons over time and in country coverage. The publication nevertheless provides a guide for accumulating

and interpreting more information in the coming years.

The World's Women 1995 is a collaborative effort of the many United Nations bodies concerned with promoting women's equality and participation in development. This effort has been led by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), and the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat, all of which provided both significant substantive and financial support for this volume. Additional support was provided by the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Food Programme and the World Health Organization (WHO). Representatives of the sponsoring agencies and offices provided advice on organizing the project, planning the publication and reviewing the analysis through a monitoring group.

The Statistical Division, Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis of the United Nations Secretariat, compiled and organized the statistical material for *The World's Women 1995*, implemented the programme of analysis and prepared the publication.

Other United Nations offices and organizations provided statistics, special studies and substantive guidance in their own fields of expertise, including the Population Division of the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees of the United Nations Secretariat, the International Labour Office (ILO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Bank. The Inter-Parliamentary Union and The Population Council, non-governmental organizations, and Women's World Banking, a not-for-profit organization, also provided information.

The following individuals and organizations assisted in the preparation of *The World's Women 1995* as consultants to the Secretariat: Richard Bilsborrow, assisted by Keshari Thapa, Robert Blackburn, assisted by Jennifer Jarman and Janet Siltanen,

Mercedes Concepción, Jane Connors, Lynn Freedman, Margaret Gallagher, Catherine de Guibert-Lantoin, Lawrence Haddad and Christine Peña of the International Food Policy Research Institute, Andrew Harvey, Lori Heise, Elise Jones, Ann Hibner Koblitz, Kathleen Kurz of the International Center for Research on Women, Carmen McFarlane, Mary Powers, Rafael Roncagliolo, Nahid Toubia, Lourdes Urdanetta-Ferrán and Marilyn Waring. Additional research support was provided to the Secretariat by Ann Blanc, Marty Chen, Niev Duffy and Cynthia Lloyd. Andrea Brunholzl, Heather Cochran and Bruce Ross-Larson of the American Writing Corporation assisted in drafting parts of sev-

eral chapters and in editing the final manuscript as consultants to the United Nations Secretariat.

The project manager for preparation of *The World's Women 1995* was Francesca Perucci and the database manager was Erlinda Go. The work was undertaken under the direction of Robert Johnston and Joann Vanek. An advisory panel consisted of Richard Jolly and Gareth Jones (UNICEF), Catherine Pierce (UNFPA), Sharon Capeling-Alakija (UNDP), Linda Miranda (UNIFEM), John Mathiason (Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat) and Tina Jorgensen (Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat).

About the chapters

The World's Women 1995 is an innovative international statistical publication that presents statistics and analyses in formats and non-technical language that non-specialists can readily understand. It highlights the main findings on women's situation worldwide in a broad range of fields.

Each chapter is organized around several topics. Each topic proceeds with modules of text, figures and small tables to present regional and topical analyses drawn from the country tables at the back of the chapter and from specialized studies. The intention is not to produce a linear narrative. It is to assemble, for each indicator, some descriptive text and illustrative charts to convey what is generalizable from the data.

The text and tables are accompanied in annex I by statements of how the indicators are defined, where the data are from and how they can be interpreted.

Statistical sources and reliability and timeliness of data

Statistics and indicators have been compiled for *The World's Women 1995* mainly from official national and international sources, as these are more authoritative and comprehensive, more generally available as time series and more comparable among countries than other sources. Most of the official national and international sources use data directly from national population and housing censuses and household sample surveys, or are estimates based on these. Official sources are supplemented by other sources and estimates, where these have been subjected to professional scrutiny and debate and are consistent with other independent sources.

The World's Women 1995 is not intended for use as a definitive source of the data presented, but every effort has been made to fully cite and document the sources drawn on. For specialized research and analysis in the fields covered, the reader should consult the original sources. Statistical concepts and sources are highlighted at numerous points in the text and described for each country table in the accompanying technical notes in annex I.

The comprehensive international data sources used for most of the country tables and many of the charts are presented in the list "Statistical sources" at the end of the book. Most of these data are also

contained in more detail in the United Nations *Women's Indicators and Statistics Database (Wis-tat)*, Version 3, CD-ROM (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XVII.6). The charts, graphs and small tables in *The World's Women 1995* also draw on a wide variety of more specialized studies, several of them undertaken especially for this publication. These are cited in the source notes to each chart. In general, the discussion of each chart in the text does not repeat the source note to the chart, but where additional sources are used in the text, they are cited in the end notes to each chapter.

Users of international statistics are often concerned about the apparent lack of timeliness in the available data. Unfortunately, most international data are only available with a delay of at least one to three years after the latest year to which they refer. The reasons for the delay are that the data must first be processed by the national statistical services at the country level, then forwarded to the international statistical services and processed again to ensure as much consistency across countries and over time as possible.

In *The World's Women 1995* some current-year population estimates are available but most series are based on population census data, which are often more than a decade old, or survey data, which may become available at the international level only with a delay of five years or more from the reference year. Surveys in specialized fields may also be undertaken infrequently. Users should be aware of two common limitations in particular: even "current" data are often based on extrapolations from trends observed five to ten years or more previously and so cannot be used as reliable indicators of current trends; and many "estimates" in specialized fields are based on limited data coverage and may therefore be subject to a considerable range of uncertainty.

Countries, areas and geographical groupings

The basic grouping of countries is by continental region. Because there is no generally accepted standard in the United Nations system for considering a country or area as either developed or developing, these terms are applied only at regional and subregional levels. They are intended for statistical and analytical convenience and do not express a judgement about the stage a country or area has reached in the development process.

For the statistical analysis in this publication, the developed regions consist of Europe (including the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), northern America (United States of America and Canada) and Australia, Japan and New Zealand. The remaining major regions are Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia and the Pacific. In Africa and in Asia and the Pacific, subregional averages are used where possible and necessary to identify more homogeneous groups of countries or areas. The subregional groupings are based on the classification developed by the Population Division of the United Nations Secretariat for demographic analysis. In most cases, Africa is divided into northern and sub-Saharan subregions, and Asia and the Pacific into western, eastern, central, southern and south-eastern sub-regions and Oceania. In all cases Australia, Japan and New Zealand are excluded from Asia and the Pacific calculations because they are included in the developed regions. The regional and subregional groupings used are shown in the annex II.

In general the countries and areas covered are the same as those in the Women's Indicators and Statistics Database (Wistat). Included are all members of the United Nations plus non-member States and other entities over 100,000 population in 1985. These are listed by geographical grouping in the annex.

If data are provided for specific countries in text tables (for example, the listing of countries with high maternal mortality), the countries shown are those for which data are available. Such listings in text tables cannot therefore be considered exhaustive. If data are not available for a country in the country tables of indicators at the end of each chapter, two periods (..) indicate the missing data.

The designations employed and the form of presentation of material in *The World's Women 1995* do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or that of its authorities or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

Presentation of data for regions and subregions

With few exceptions (each noted) regional and subregional averages are based on unweighted data for the countries and areas for which data are available. The purpose is to show the general picture in the region or subregion, with the country as

the unit of analysis, against which the situation of each country or area can be assessed. If country data were weighted by the population in each country, regional and subregional averages would mainly reflect the situation in one or two large countries.

Subregional rather than regional averages are shown wherever possible if the basic data show that regional averages would conceal wide differences among countries and that subregional experience is more homogeneous. If series are heterogeneous even at the subregional level (for example, gross domestic product per capita), country data or small groups of comparable countries are used as the basis of calculation and analysis. If the number of countries or areas for which data are available in a region or subregion is very small, the countries are indicated or the number of countries having data is given.

Statistical symbols and conventions

The following symbols are used to indicate reference periods of more than one year:

- A dash (–) between two consecutive years, for example, 1992–1993, indicates coverage of the full period of two years;
- A slash (/) between two consecutive years indicates a financial year, school year or crop year, for example 1991/92;
- A dash between two years which are not consecutive; for example, 1985–1990 indicates an average over the full period. This convention is used for many demographic indicators;
- A slash between two years which are not consecutive indicates a period within which data are available for one year only for the countries listed; for example, a listing of countries containing data for one year in the period 1985/90 for each country.

The following symbols are used in the tables:

- A point (.) indicates decimals;
- A minus sign (-) before a number indicates a deficit or decrease, except as indicated;
- 0 or 0.0 indicates magnitude zero or less than half of unit employed;
- Two dots (..) indicate that data are not available or are not separately reported;
- Reference to dollars (\$) indicates United States dollars, unless otherwise stated.

Details and percentages in tables do not necessarily add to totals because of rounding.

List of abbreviations and acronyms

DHS	Demographic and Health Surveys	NGO	non-governmental organization
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	SNA	System of National Accounts
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute	STDs	sexually transmitted diseases
ILO	International Labour Office	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
ISCO	International Standard Classification of Occupations	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
ISIC	International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
IUSSP	International Union for the Scientific Study of Population	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
		UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
		WHO	World Health Organization

Overview of the world's women in 1995

Issues of gender equality are moving to the top of the global agenda but better understanding of women's and men's contributions to society is essential to speed the shift from agenda to policy to practice. Too often, women and men live in different worlds—worlds that differ in access to education and work opportunities, and in health, personal security and leisure time. *The World's Women 1995* provides information and analyses to highlight the economic, political and social differences that still separate women's and men's lives and how these differences are changing.

How different are these worlds? Anecdote and misperception abound, in large part because good information has been lacking. As a result, policy has been ill-informed, strategy unfounded and practice unquestioned. Fortunately, this is beginning to change. It is changing because advocates of women's interests have done much in the past 20 years to sharpen people's awareness of the importance of gender concerns. It is changing because this growing awareness has, by raising new questions and rephrasing old, greatly increased the demand for better statistics to inform and focus the debate. And it is changing because women's contributions—and women's rights—have moved to the centre of social and economic change.

The International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo in 1994, was a breakthrough. It established a new consensus on two fundamental points:

—Empowering women and improving their status are essential to realizing the full potential of economic, political and social development.

—Empowering women is an important end in itself. And as women acquire the same status, opportunities and social, economic and legal rights as men, as they acquire the right to reproductive health and the right to protection against gender-based violence, human well-being will be enhanced.

The International Conference on Population and Development drew together the many strands of thought and action initiated by two decades of women's conferences. It was also the culmination of an active effort by women's groups to lobby international forums for women's issues. At the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, non-governmental organizations pushed for understanding the link between women's issues and sustain-

able development. At the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993, women's rights were finally accepted as issues of international human rights.

At the Population Conference and later at the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen in 1995, the terms of discourse shifted. Not only were women on the agenda—women helped set the agenda. The empowerment of women was not merely the subject of special sessions about women's issues. It was accepted as a crucial element in any strategy seeking to solve social, economic and environmental problems. And building on the advances made in the recognition of women's human rights at the World Conference in Vienna, women's human rights became a focus of the debate in Cairo. The rights approach, advanced by women's groups, was added to the core objectives of development policy and the movement for women's equality.

To promote action on the new consensus, this second edition of *The World's Women* builds on the first, presenting statistical summaries of health, schooling, family life, work and public life. Each has to be seen in proper context, however. Yes, there have been important changes in the past 25 years and women have generally made steady progress, but it is impossible to make sweeping global statements. Women's labour force participation rates are up in much of the world, but down in countries wracked by war and economic decline. Girls' education is improving, but there are hundreds of millions of illiterate women and girls who do not complete primary schooling, especially in Africa and southern Asia.

It is also important to look at a range of indicators. Women's political participation may be high in the Nordic countries, but in employment Nordic women still face considerable job segregation and wage discrimination. Women's higher education may be widespread in western Asia, but in many of those countries there are few or no women in important political positions and work opportunities are largely limited to unpaid family labour.

The World's Women presents few global figures, focusing instead on country data and regional averages (see the box on regional trends). There are myriad differences among countries in every field and *The World's Women* tries to find a meaningful balance between detailed country statements and

broad generalization. Generalizations are primarily drawn at the regional and subregional levels where there is a high degree of uniformity among countries. For all the topics covered, *The World's Women* has tapped as many statistical sources as possible, with detailed references as a basis for further study. Specialized studies are used when they encompass several countries, preferably in more than one region, so as to avoid presenting conclusions relevant in only one country.

Indicators relevant to specific age groups are crucial to understanding women's situation. The Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development identified equality for the girl-child as a necessary first step

in ensuring that women realize their full potential and become equal partners with men. This edition of *The World's Women* responds to this concern by highlighting the experience of the girl-child. Evidence of prenatal sex selection and differences in mortality, health, school enrolment and even work indicates that girls and boys are not treated equally.

The experience of the elderly is more difficult to describe from the few available data. Although elderly people constitute a valuable component of societies' human resources, data on the elderly are insufficient for regional generalizations. Considering that the numbers of elderly are growing rapidly in all regions, this gap needs to be addressed.

Regional trends

Latin America and the Caribbean

- Fertility has declined significantly—dropping 40 per cent or more over the past two decades in 13 of the region's 33 countries. The total fertility rate has fallen from 4.8 to 3.2. But adolescent fertility remains high—13 per cent of all births are to mothers below age 20. In Central America, 18 per cent are.
- Maternal mortality has declined in most countries of Latin America but the incidence of unsafe abortion in South America is the highest in the world.
- Literacy has reached 85 per cent or more across most of the region, and girls outnumber boys at both secondary and tertiary levels of education.
- Latin America's recorded labour force participation rate for women (34 per cent) is low, but in the Caribbean it is much higher (49 per cent).
- Latin America and the Caribbean are as urbanized as the developed regions, with 74 per cent of the population in urban areas. But the rate of growth is much higher—2.5 per cent a year compared with 0.9 per cent—which strains housing, water and sanitation and other infrastructure.

Sub-Saharan Africa

- Minimal progress is seen in the basic social and economic indicators. Health and education gains have faltered in the face of economic crises and civil strife. Literacy remains the lowest in the world, 43 per cent of adult women and 67 per cent of adult men, and the difference between women's and men's literacy rates is the highest.
- Fertility is the highest in the world at about six children per woman.
- Women's labour force participation has dropped throughout the past two decades—the only region where this occurred.
- Urban areas are growing at a rate of 5 per cent a year, but with new housing and economic growth at a standstill, many live in poverty and squalor. Africa's urban migrants are predominantly male, shifting the sex ratio in rural areas to 106 women per 100 men.

- Estimated HIV infection rates continue to soar, and unlike any other region, the percentage of women infected with HIV is estimated to be as high if not higher than the percentage of men. In Uganda and in Zambia, the life expectancy of both women and men has already declined because of the disease, and eight other countries are beginning to see similar effects.

Northern Africa and western Asia

- In the past two decades, many countries in the region have invested in girls' education—bringing the primary-secondary enrolment ratio for girls to 67 in northern Africa (from 50 in 1970) and 84 in western Asia, and raising women's literacy to 44 per cent in the region. But women's illiteracy in northern Africa remains high, and girls' enrolment still lags behind boys'.
- Women are entering the labour force in increasing numbers—up from 8 per cent in 1970 to 21 in 1990 in northern Africa and from 22 to 30 per cent in western Asia. Still, these numbers are the lowest in the world. Also low is women's share of decision-making positions in government and business.
- Marriage among girls aged 15–19 has declined significantly in northern Africa and to a lesser degree in western Asia—from 38 per cent to 10 per cent in northern Africa and from 24 per cent to 17 per cent in western Asia. Teenage fertility, however, remains fairly high.
- Fertility—which was traditionally high—has declined significantly in the past 20 years, especially in northern Africa. It remains high (with total fertility rates over 5) in several countries in western Asia. These countries also have low female literacy.

Southern Asia

- Many health and education indicators remain low. Although it has risen by 10 years in the past two decades, life expectancy remains lower in southern Asia than in any other region but sub-Saharan Africa—58 for both women and men. Equal life expectancies are also exceptional—in

Education for empowerment

In the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, education is considered one of the most important means to empower women with the knowledge, skills and self-confidence necessary to participate fully in development processes. Educated women marry later, want fewer children, are more likely to use effective methods of contraception and have greater means to improve their economic livelihood.

Through widespread promotion of universal primary education, literacy rates for women have increased over the past few decades—to at least 75 per cent in most countries of Latin America and the

Caribbean and eastern and south-eastern Asia. But high rates of illiteracy among women still prevail in much of Africa and in parts of Asia. And when illiteracy is high it almost always is accompanied by large differences in rates between women and men.

At intermediate levels of education, girls have made progress in their enrolment in school through the second level. The primary-secondary enrolment ratio is now about equal for girls and boys in the developed regions and Latin America and the Caribbean and is approaching near equality in eastern, south-eastern and western Asia. But progress in many countries was reversed in the 1980s, particularly among those experiencing problems of

Education is one of the most important means to empower women with the knowledge, skills and self-confidence necessary to participate fully in development processes.

Regional trends (*cont.*)

all other regions, women have an advantage of several years.

- One in 35 women dies of pregnancy-related complications. Maternal mortality has declined but still remains high.
- Nearly two thirds of adult women are illiterate—and the percentage of girls enrolled in primary and secondary levels of schooling is far below all other regions except sub-Saharan Africa.
- Women continue to marry early—41 per cent of girls aged 15–19 are already married—and adolescent fertility remains high.
- More women are counted in the labour force but most are still relegated to unpaid family labour or low-paying jobs. Although women's representation at the highest levels of government is generally weakest in Asia, four of the world's 10 current women heads of state or government hold office in this region.

Eastern and south-eastern Asia

- Development indicators continue to improve. Infant mortality has declined significantly in south-eastern Asia in the past two decades.
- Literacy is nearly universal in most countries for men but not for women. However, girls and boys now have nearly equal access to primary and secondary education.
- Adolescent marriage rates in eastern Asia are the lowest in the world—only 2 per cent of women and less than 1 per cent of men aged 15–19 are married—and household size is shrinking.
- Eastern Asia reports the largest average decline in fertility, from 4.7 to 2.3, and its contraceptive use now exceeds that of developed regions. Fertility has also declined in south-eastern Asia, but is still generally higher than in eastern Asia.
- Women's participation in the labour force is as high as in developed regions—approximately 55 per cent.

Developed regions

- Basic health and education indicators generally indicate high levels of well-being but in eastern Europe some show signs of deterioration.

Currently, women in 13 countries have a life expectancy of 80 years or more and 11 more countries are expected to reach that level after the year 2000. Men's life expectancy has increased little during the past two decades in eastern Europe, however, partly due to a rise in death rates for middle-aged men. Women's life expectancy in eastern Europe has increased much less than in other regions.

- Fertility continues to fall—from 2.3 in 1975 to 1.9 in 1995. But teenage pregnancy is relatively high in some countries—Bulgaria, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and the United States.
- Traditional family structure and size are changing. People are marrying later or not at all, and marriages are less stable. Remarriage rates have dropped—especially for women—and single parent families now make up 10–25 per cent of all families. The population is ageing and becoming increasingly female as it does.
- Women's labour force participation increased significantly for regions outside of eastern Europe from 38 per cent in 1970 to 52 per cent in 1990. In eastern Europe, where women's labour force participation was already 56 per cent in 1970, the increase was small (to 58 per cent).
- Women continue to earn less than men—in manufacturing, women's average wage is three quarters that of men's. And women and men tend to work in different jobs—women in clerical, sales and service, and men in production and transport. And men commonly do work which is accorded higher pay and status. For example, the majority of school administrators are men while most teachers are women, and the majority of hospital consultants are men while most nurses are women.
- Women work longer hours than men in the majority of these countries—at least 2 hours longer than men do in 13 out of 21 countries studied. Much of the unpaid work is done by women—for example, women contribute roughly three quarters of total child care at home.

war, economic adjustment and declining international assistance—as in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and eastern Europe.

In higher education enrolments, women equal or exceed men in many regions. They outnumber men in the developed regions outside western Europe, in Latin America and the Caribbean and western Asia. Women are not as well represented in other regions, and in sub-Saharan Africa and southern Asia they are far behind—30 and 38 women per 100 men.

The Framework for Action to implement the World Declaration on Education for All states that it is urgent to improve access to education for girls and women—and to remove every obstacle that hampers their active participation. Priority actions include eliminating the social and cultural barriers that discourage—or even exclude—girls and women from the benefits of regular education programmes.

Seeking influence

Despite progress in women's higher education, major obstacles still arise when women strive to translate their high-level education into social and economic advancement. In the world of business, for example, women rarely account for more than 1 or 2 per cent of top executive positions. In the more general category of administration and management including middle levels, women's share rose in every region but one between 1980 and 1990. Women's participation jumped from 16 to 33 per cent in developed regions outside Europe. In Latin America, it rose from 18 to 25 per cent.

In the health and teaching professions—two of the largest occupational fields requiring advanced training—women are well represented in many countries but usually at the bottom levels of the status and wage hierarchy. Similarly, among the staff of an international group of agriculture research institutes, women's participation at the non-scientific and trainee levels is moderate, but there are few women at management and senior scientific levels.

The information people receive through newspapers, radio and television shapes their opinions about the world. And the more decision-making positions women hold in the media, the more they can influence output—breaking stereotypes that hurt women, attracting greater attention to issues of equality in the home and in public life, and providing young women with new images, ideas and ideals. Women now make up more than half of the communications students in a large number of countries and are increasingly visible as presenters, announcers and reporters, but they remain poorly represented in the more influential media occu-

pations such as programme managers and senior editors.

In the top levels of government, women's participation remains the exception. At the end of 1994 only 10 women were heads of state or government; of these 10 countries only Norway had as many as one third women ministers or subministers. Some progress has been made in the appointment of women to ministerial or subministerial positions but these positions are usually tenuous for them. Most countries with women in top ministerial positions do not have comparable representation at the subministerial level. And in other countries, where significant numbers of women have reached the subministerial levels, very few have reached the top. Progress for women in parliaments has also been mixed and varies widely among regions. It is strongest in northern Europe, where it appears to be rising steadily.

Missing from this summary is women's remarkable advance in less traditional paths to power and influence. The importance of the United Nations Decade for Women and international women's conferences should not be underestimated, for these forums enabled women to develop the skills required for exercising power and influence, to mobilize resources and articulate issues and to practise organizing, lobbying and legislating. Excluded from most political offices, many women have found a voice in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) at the grass roots, national and international levels. NGOs have taken issues previously ignored—such as violence against women and rights to reproductive health—and brought them into the mainstream policy debate.

Since the women's conference in Nairobi in 1985, many grass-roots groups have been working to create new awareness of women's rights, including their rights within the family, and to help women achieve those rights. They have set agendas and carved out a space for women's issues. And as seen in recent United Nations conferences, NGOs as a group can wield influence broad enough to be active partners with governments in deciding national policies and programmes.

Reproductive health—reproductive freedom

With greater access to education, employment and contraception, many women are choosing to marry later and have fewer children. Those who wait to marry and begin child-bearing have better access to education and greater opportunities to improve their lives. Women's increased access to education, to employment and to contraception, coupled with declining rates of infant mortality, have contributed to the worldwide decline in fertility.

The number of children women bear in developed regions is now below replacement levels at

Excluded from most political offices, many women have found a voice in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) at the grass roots, national and international levels.

1.9 per woman. In Latin America and in most parts of Asia it has also dropped significantly. But in Africa women still have an average of six children and in many sub-Saharan African countries women have as many or more children now than they did 20 years ago.

Adolescent fertility has declined in many developing and developed countries over the past 20 years. In Central America and sub-Saharan Africa, however, rates are five to seven times higher than in developed regions. Inadequate nutrition, anaemia and early pregnancies threaten the health and life of young girls and adolescents.

Too many women lack access to reproductive health services. In developing countries maternal mortality is a leading cause of death for women of reproductive age. WHO estimates that more than half a million women die each year in childbirth and millions more develop pregnancy-related health complications. The deteriorating economic and health conditions in sub-Saharan Africa led to an increase in maternal mortality during the 1980s, where it remains the highest in the world. An African woman's lifetime risk of dying from pregnancy-related causes is 1 in 23, while a North American woman's is 1 in 4,000. Maternal mortality also increased in some countries of eastern Europe.

Pregnancy and childbirth have become safer for women in most of Asia and in parts of Latin America. In developed countries attended delivery is almost universal, but in developing countries only 55 per cent of births take place with a trained attendant and only 37 per cent in hospitals or clinics. Today new importance is being placed on women's reproductive health and safe motherhood as advocates work to redefine reproductive health as an issue of human rights.

The Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development set forth a new framework to guide government actions in population, development and reproductive health—and to measure and evaluate programmes designed to realize these objectives. Instead of the traditional approach centred on family planning and population policy objectives, governments are encouraged to develop client-centred management information systems in population and development and particularly reproductive health, including family planning and sexual health programmes.

Fewer marriages—smaller households

Rapid population changes, combined with many other social and economic changes, are being accompanied by considerable changes in women's

household and family status. Most people still marry but they marry later in life, especially women. In developing regions, consensual unions and other non-formal unions remain prevalent, especially in rural areas.

As a result of these changes, many women—many more women than men—spend a significant part of their life without a partner, with important consequences for their economic welfare and their children's.

In developed regions, marriage has become both less frequent and less stable, and cohabitation is on the rise. Marriages preceded by a period of cohabitation have clearly increased in many countries of northern Europe. And where divorce once led quickly to remarriage, many postpone marriage or never remarry.

Since men have higher rates of remarriage, marry at an older age, and have a shorter life expectancy, most older men are married, while many older women are widows. Among women 60 and older, widowhood is significant everywhere—from 40 per cent in the developed regions and Latin America to 50 per cent in Africa and Asia. Moreover, in Asia and Africa, widowhood also affects many women at younger ages.

Between 1970 and 1990 household size decreased significantly in the developed regions, in Latin America and the Caribbean and in eastern and south-eastern Asia. Households are the smallest in developed regions, having declined to an average of 2.8 persons per household in 1990. In eastern Asia the average household size has declined to 3.7, in south-eastern Asia to 4.9. In Latin American countries the average fell to 4.7 persons per household, and in the Caribbean to 4.1. In northern African countries household size increased on average from 5.4 to 5.7.

In developed countries the decline in the average household size reflects an increase in the number of one-person households, especially among unmarried adults and the elderly. In developing regions the size of the household is more affected by the number of children, although a shift from extended households to nuclear households also has some effect. Household size remains high in countries where fertility has not yet fallen significantly—for instance, in some of the African and western Asian countries.

Work—paid and unpaid

Women's access to paid work is crucial to their self-reliance and the economic well-being of dependent family members. But access to such work is unequal between women and men. Women work in different occupations than men, almost always with lower status and pay.

Too many women lack access to reproductive health services.

In developing countries many women work as unpaid family labourers in subsistence agriculture and household enterprises. Many women also work in the informal sector, where their remuneration is unstable, and their access to funds to improve their productivity is limited at best. And whatever other work women do, they also have the major responsibility for most household work, including the care of children and other family members.

The work women do contributes substantially to the well-being of families, communities and nations. But work in the household—even when it is economic—is inadequately measured, and this subverts policies for the credit, income and security of women and their families.

Over the past two decades, women's reported economic activity rates increased in all regions except sub-Saharan Africa and eastern Asia, and all of these increases are large except in eastern Europe, central Asia and Oceania. In fact, women's labour force participation increased more in the 1980s than in the 1970s in many regions. In contrast, men's economic activity rates have declined everywhere except central Asia.

The decline in women's reported labour force participation in sub-Saharan Africa stands out as an exception—dropping from a high of 57 per cent in 1970 to 54 per cent in 1980 to 53 per cent in 1990.

In 1990 the average labour force participation rate among women aged 15 and over ranged from a high of 56–58 per cent in eastern and central Asia and eastern Europe to a low in northern Africa of 21 per cent. The participation rates of men vary within a more limited range of 72–83 per cent. Because so many women in developing countries work in agriculture and informal household enterprises where their contributions are underreported, their recorded rates of economic activity should be higher in many cases. The estimated increase in southern Asia—from 25 per cent of women economically active in 1970 to 44 per cent in 1990—may be due largely to changes in the statistical methods used rather than to significant changes in work patterns.

Although work in subsistence production is crucial to survival, it goes largely underreported in population and agricultural surveys and censuses. Most of the food eaten in agricultural households in developing countries is produced within the family holding, much of it by women. Some data show the extent of women's unreported work in agriculture. In Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, government surveys using methods to improve the measurement of subsistence work, report that more than half of rural women engage in such activities as tending poultry or cattle, planting rice, drying seeds, collecting water and preparing dung

cakes for fuel. Direct observation of women's activities suggests that almost all women in rural areas contribute economically in one way or another.

The informal sector—working on own-account and in small family enterprises—also provides women with important opportunities in areas where salaried employment is closed or inadequate. In five of the six African countries studied by the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat, more than one third of women economically active outside agriculture work in the informal sector, and in seven countries of Latin America 15–20 per cent. In nine countries in Asia the numbers vary—from less than 10 per cent of economically active women in western Asia to 41 per cent in the Republic of Korea and 65 per cent in Indonesia.

Although fewer women than men participate in the labour force, in some countries—including Honduras, Jamaica and Zambia—more women than men make up the informal sector labour force. In several other countries, women make up 40 per cent or more of the informal sector.

In addition to the invisibility of many of women's economic activities, women remain responsible for most housework, which also goes unmeasured by the System of National Accounts. But time-use data for many developed countries show almost everywhere that women work at least as many hours each week as men, and in a large number of countries they work at least two hours more than men. Further, the daily time a man spends on work tends to be the same throughout his working life. But a woman's working time fluctuates widely and at times is extremely heavy—the result of combining paid work, household and child-care responsibilities.

Two thirds to three quarters of household work in developed regions is performed by women. In most countries studied, women spend 30 hours or more on housework each week while men spend around 10 hours. Among household tasks, the division of labour remains clear and definite in most countries. Few men do the laundry, clean the house, make the beds, iron the clothes. And most women do little household repair and maintenance. Even when employed outside the home, women do most of the housework.

Efforts to generate better statistics

The first world conference on women in Mexico in 1975 recognized the importance of improving statistics on women. Until the early 1980s women's advocates and women's offices were the main forces behind this work. Big efforts had not yet been launched in statistical offices—either nationally or internationally.