



The revolution for gender equality

One of the defining movements of the 20th century has been the relentless struggle for gender equality, led mostly by women, but supported by growing numbers of men. When this struggle finally succeeds—as it must—it will mark a great milestone in human progress. And along the way it will change most of today's premises for social, economic and political life.

The *Human Development Report* has consistently defined the basic objective of development as enlarging people's choices. At the heart of this concept are three essential components:

- Equality of opportunity for all people in society.
- Sustainability of such opportunities from one generation to the next.
- Empowerment of people so that they participate in—and benefit from—development processes.

Equal enjoyment of human rights by women and men is a universally accepted principle, reaffirmed by the Vienna declaration, adopted by 171 states at the World Conference on Human Rights in June 1993. It has many dimensions:

- Equal access to basic social services, including education and health.
- Equal opportunities for participation in political and economic decision-making.
- Equal reward for equal work.
- Equal protection under the law.
- Elimination of discrimination by gender and violence against women.
- Equal rights of citizens in all areas of life, both public—such as the workplace—and private—such as the home.

The recognition of equal rights for women along with men, and the determination to combat discrimination on the basis of gender, are achievements equal in

importance to the abolition of slavery, the elimination of colonialism and the establishment of equal rights for racial and ethnic minorities.

A full analysis of the historical and political movement for gender equality extends far beyond what can be covered in this Report. No numbers, no indices, no policy packages can capture the true essence of that movement. But they can help propel that movement by providing the background of professional analysis.

Human development, if not engendered, is endangered. That is the simple but far-reaching message of this Report

Human development is a process of enlarging the choices for all people, not just for one part of society. Such a process becomes unjust and discriminatory if most women are excluded from its benefits. And the continuing exclusion of women from many economic and political opportunities is a continuing indictment of modern progress.

For too long, it was assumed that development was a process that lifts all boats, that its benefits trickled down to all income classes—and that it was gender-neutral in its impact. Experience teaches otherwise. Wide income disparities and gender gaps stare us in the face in all societies.

Moving towards gender equality is not a technocratic goal—it is a political process. It requires a new way of thinking—in which the stereotyping of women and men gives way to a new philosophy that regards all people, irrespective of gender, as essential agents of change.

The relentless struggle for gender equality will change most of today's premises for social, economic and political life

The human development paradigm must be fully engendered

The human development paradigm, which puts people at the centre of its concerns, must thus be fully engendered. Any such attempt would embrace at least the following three principles:

■ Equality of rights between women and men must be enshrined as a fundamental principle. Legal, economic, political or cultural barriers that prevent the exercise of equal rights should be identified and removed through comprehensive policy reforms and strong affirmative action.

■ Women must be regarded as agents and beneficiaries of change. Investing in women's capabilities and empowering them to exercise their choices is not only valuable in itself but is also the surest way to contribute to economic growth and overall development.

■ The engendered development model, though aiming to widen choices for both women and men, should not predetermine how different cultures and different societies exercise these choices. What is important is that equal opportunities to make a choice exist for both women and men.

In no society do women enjoy the same opportunities as men

An innovation of this year's Report, the gender-related development index (GDI), reflects gender disparities in basic human capabilities—and ranks 130 countries on a global scale. The four top countries are in the Nordic belt—Sweden, Finland, Norway and Denmark, in that order. This is hardly surprising. These countries, much concerned with ending the relative deprivation of women, have adopted gender equality and women's empowerment as conscious national policies. In these countries, adult literacy rates are similar for women and men, and combined enrolment is higher for females. Life expectancy is, on average, about seven years higher for women (compared with an estimated global biological edge of five years). And women's earned income is around three-fourths of men's income.

Several developing countries and areas also do quite well in the GDI rankings:

Barbados (rank 11), Hong Kong (17), the Bahamas (26), Singapore (28), Uruguay (32) and Thailand (33). These countries have succeeded in building the basic human capabilities of both women and men, without substantial gender disparity.

But it is clear from the GDI estimates that in no society do women enjoy the same opportunities as men. The top rank is enjoyed by Sweden, with a GDI value of 0.92—compared with a maximum possible value of 1.00 (maximum achievement with perfect equality). After the top 32 countries, the GDI value drops below 0.80—showing how far women still have to travel towards gender equality even in countries that seem to be doing better on this score. More disturbing is that as many as 45 countries in the sample analysis are below a GDI value of 0.5, showing that women suffer the double deprivation of gender disparity and low achievement.

Another interesting comparison is between the overall HDI rank of a country and its gender-adjusted rank for the GDI—since this shows how equitably basic human capabilities are distributed between men and women. The countries showing GDI ranks markedly higher than their HDI ranks are fairly diverse. They include Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland—and the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and Poland—and Barbados, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Jamaica and Cuba.

The countries with GDI ranks markedly below their HDI ranks include Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica and several Arab states. Arab countries face a formidable agenda for equalizing gender opportunities—though they have made the fastest progress in the past two decades in several gender-related indicators, particularly in female education.

Among the countries with sharply lower GDI ranks are four industrial countries—Canada (a drop from HDI rank of 1 to GDI rank of 9), Luxembourg (–12), the Netherlands (–16) and Spain (–26 ranks). The real difference is in women's share of earned income compared with men's share—a reflection of the much lower participation of women in the labour force and their lower average wage.

Removing gender inequality has nothing to do with national income

Income is not the decisive factor. Several of the world's poor nations have been able to raise female literacy rates. With limited resources but a strong political commitment, China, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe raised adult women's literacy to 70% or more. By contrast, several richer countries lag behind.

The decision to invest in the education and health of people, irrespective of gender, seems to cut across income levels, political ideologies, cultures and stages of development. In many cases, a strong political commitment has driven efforts to improve women's human development despite a shortage of resources. Countries applying socialist models, for example, used social and political mobilization to achieve rapid—and equal—progress in education and health for men and women and to engineer social transformations to expand opportunities for women.

Comparing GDI ranks with the income levels of countries confirms that removing gender inequalities is not dependent on having a high income. China is ten GDI ranks above Saudi Arabia, even though its real per capita income is a fifth as high. Thailand outranks Spain in the GDI, even though Thailand's real per capita income is less than half of Spain's. Poland's GDI rank is 50 places higher than Syria's, even though the two countries have about the same real income. So, gender equality can be pursued—and it has been—at all levels of income. What it requires is a firm political commitment, not enormous financial wealth.

Every country has made progress in developing women's capabilities, but women and men still live in an unequal world

Gender gaps in education and health have narrowed rapidly in the past two decades, although the pace of this progress has been uneven between regions and countries:

- Female life expectancy has increased

20% faster than male life expectancy over the past two decades.

■ High fertility rates, which severely restrict the freedom of choice for women, have fallen by a third—from 4.7 live births per woman in 1970–75 to 3.0 in 1990–95. Life choices are expanding as women are progressively liberated from the burden of frequent child-bearing and from the risk of dying in childbirth. Maternal mortality rates have been nearly halved in the past two decades.

■ More than half the married women of reproductive age in the developing world, or their partners, used modern contraceptives in 1990, compared with less than a quarter in 1980. This planned parenthood has brought women much greater control over their lives.

In adult literacy and school enrolment, the gaps between women and men were halved between 1970 and 1990 in developing countries. Women's literacy increased from 54% of the male rate in 1970 to 74% in 1990—and combined female primary and secondary enrolment increased from 67% of the male rate to 86%. Female rates of adult literacy and combined school enrolment in the developing world increased twice as fast as male rates between 1970 and 1990.

The Arab States have led the advance in women's education, more than doubling female literacy rates. Indeed, the fastest improvement in women's literacy rates—68 percentage points between 1970 and 1990—took place in the United Arab Emirates.

Overall, female primary enrolment in developing countries increased 1.7% a year during 1970–90, compared with 1.2% for male enrolment. Girls' combined primary and secondary enrolment in the developing world jumped dramatically, from 38% in 1970 to 68% in 1992. East Asia (83%) and Latin America (87%) are already approaching the high levels in industrial countries (97%).

Also remarkable is the rapid closing of the gap in higher education. In developing countries, female enrolment at the tertiary level was less than half the male rate in 1970, but by 1990 it had reached 70%. In

It is still an unequal world

The doors to economic and political opportunities are barely ajar

32 countries, more women than men are now enrolled at the tertiary level.

But it is still an unequal world. Among the developing world's 900 million illiterate people, women outnumber men two to one. And girls constitute 60% of the 130 million children without access to primary school. Because population has grown faster than women's education has expanded in some developing regions, the number of women who are illiterate has increased.

During the 20 years from 1970 to 1990, only half the educational gap between men and women was closed. Another 20 years is too long to wait to close the remaining half.

Women's special health needs also suffer considerable neglect. Many developing countries do not provide qualified birth attendants, good prenatal or postnatal care or emergency care during deliveries. In most poor countries, pregnancy complications are the largest single cause of death among women in their reproductive years. Nearly half a million maternal deaths occur each year in developing countries. Too often, the miracle of life becomes a nightmare of death.

While doors to education and health opportunities have opened rapidly for women, the doors to economic and political opportunities are barely ajar

Major forces in closing the gender gaps over the past two decades are higher female enrolments at all levels in developing countries—and rising women's paid employment in industrial countries. But the opportunities open to women have remained limited. The Report marshals detailed evidence of the unequal access to opportunities. Some telling examples:

■ Poverty has a woman's face—of 1.3 billion people in poverty, 70% are women. The increasing poverty among women has been linked to their unequal situation in the labour market, their treatment under social welfare systems and their status and power in the family.

■ Women's labour force participation has risen by only four percentage points in 20 years—from 36% in 1970 to 40% in

1990. Compare that with a two-thirds increase in female adult literacy and school enrolment.

■ Women receive a disproportionately small share of credit from formal banking institutions. They are assumed to have no collateral to offer—despite working much harder than men. For example, in Latin America and the Caribbean, women constitute only 7–11% of the beneficiaries of credit programmes.

■ Women normally receive a much lower average wage than men, because they hold low-paying jobs or work in the informal sector and because they are sometimes paid less than men for equal work. The average female wage is only three-fourths of the male wage in the non-agricultural sector in 55 countries that have comparable data.

■ All regions record a higher rate of unemployment among women than men.

■ In developing countries, women still constitute less than a seventh of administrators and managers.

■ Women still occupy only 10% of the parliamentary seats and only 6% of the cabinet positions.

■ In 55 countries, there are either no women in parliament or fewer than 5%. These countries range from very poor (Bhutan and Ethiopia) to reasonably affluent (Greece, Kuwait, the Republic of Korea and Singapore).

Despite considerable progress in developing women's capabilities, their participation in economic and political decision-making remains very limited.

Another innovation of this year's Report, the gender empowerment measure (GEM), looks at women's representation in parliaments, women's share of positions classified as managerial and professional, women's participation in the active labour force and their share of national income. It ranks 116 countries with comparable data.

Once again, the Nordic countries lead the world, with Sweden and Norway on top. These countries are not only good at strengthening female capabilities but have also opened many opportunities in economic and political fields. The Nordic countries have crossed the critical 30%

FIGURE 1

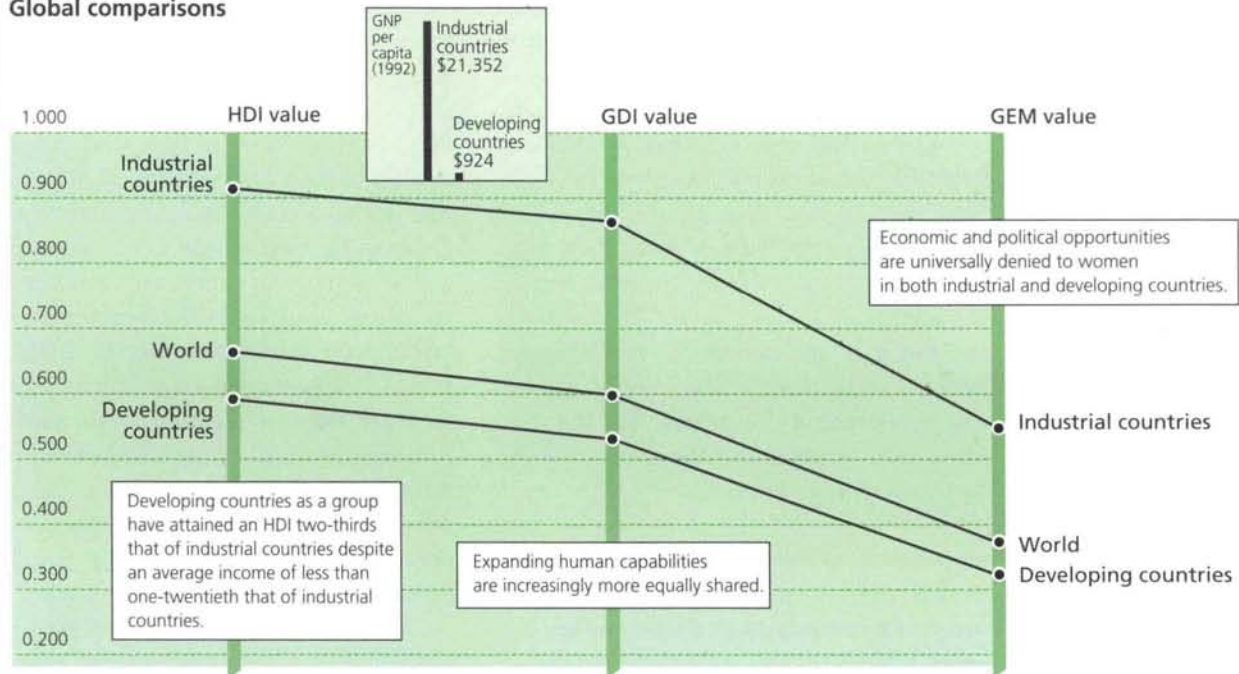
Expanding capabilities, limited opportunities

The human development index (HDI) measures the average achievement of a country in basic human capabilities. The HDI indicates whether people lead a long and healthy life, are educated and knowledgeable and enjoy a decent standard of living.

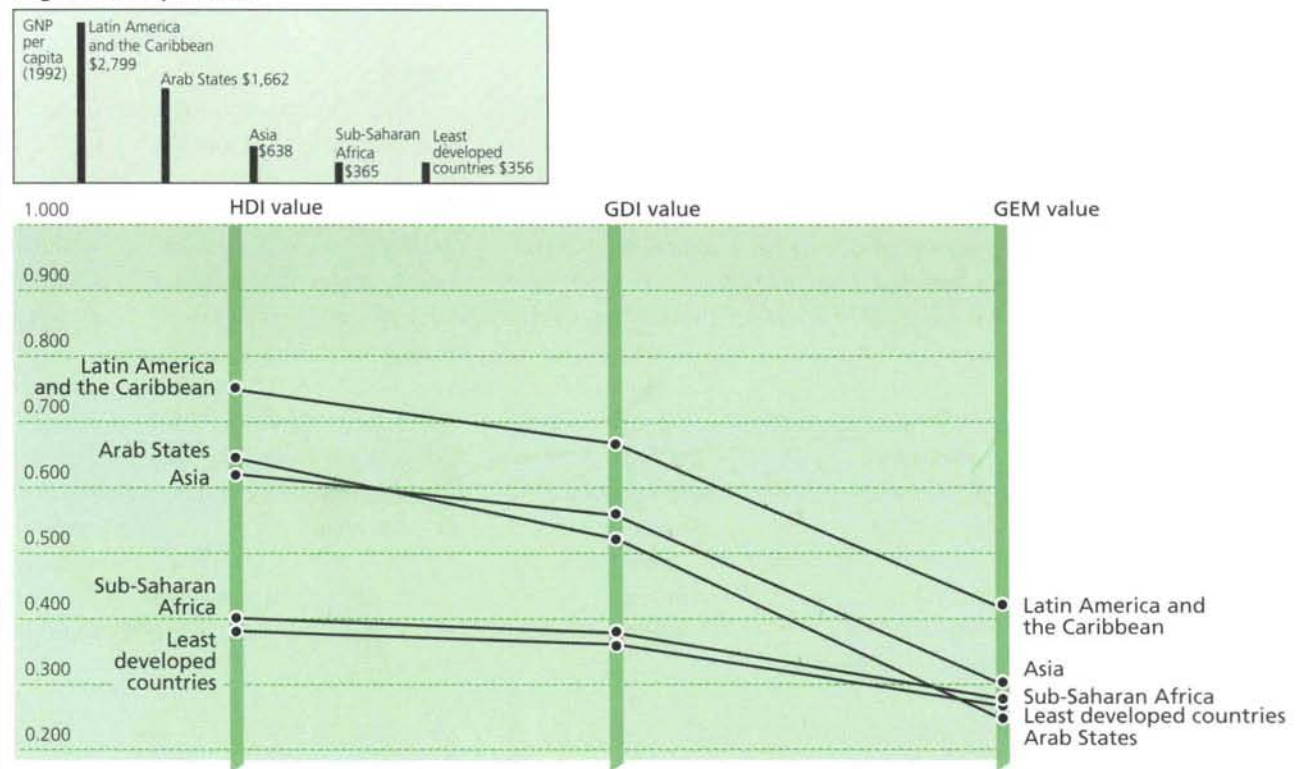
The gender-related development index (GDI) measures achievement in the same basic capabilities as the HDI does, but takes note of inequality in achievement between women and men.

The gender empowerment measure (GEM) examines whether women and men are able to actively participate in economic and political life and take part in decision-making.

Global comparisons



Regional comparisons



Note: All figures are calculated for the 104 countries for which estimates of HDI, GDI and GEM are available. The graphs include 27 countries in Africa, 11 Arab States, 17 countries in Asia, 25 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean and 28 of the least developed countries.

The non-monetized, invisible contribution of women is \$11 trillion a year

threshold for women's participation in these spheres of life.

Only nine countries have GEM values above 0.6, compared with 66 countries with a GDI value above 0.6. On the other hand, 39 countries have a GEM value below 0.3, compared with only 13 countries with a GDI value below 0.3. Since the GDI measures gender equality in basic human capabilities and the GEM gender equality in economic and political opportunities, this comparison makes it clear that many countries have a longer distance to travel in extending broad economic and political opportunities to women than they have already traveled in building basic female capabilities.

But it is precisely the participation of women at the highest decision-making levels in political and economic life that can drive the change for greater equality between men and women.

A major index of neglect is that many of women's economic contributions are grossly undervalued or not valued at all—on the order of \$11 trillion a year

The undervaluation of women is reflected in the undervaluation of their work and in the absence of recognition of the contribution that they make. The debate therefore must cover equality of rewards as well as equality of opportunity. Data on time use by women and men for a sample of 31 countries tell a dramatic story:

- Women work longer hours than men in nearly every country. Of the total burden of work, women carry on average 53% in developing countries and 51% in industrial countries.
- On average, about half of this total work time of both men and women is spent in economic activities in the market or in the subsistence sector. The other half is normally devoted to unpaid household or community activities.
- Of men's total work time in industrial countries, roughly two-thirds is spent in paid activities and one-third in unpaid activities. For women, the situation is the reverse. In developing countries, more than

three-quarters of men's work is in market activities. So, men receive the lion's share of income and recognition for their economic contribution—while most of women's work remains unpaid, unrecognized and undervalued.

With no economic value given to these activities, the contribution of women is seriously underestimated, and there is no adequate reward or recognition for the burden of work that women carry. In fact, the failure to value most of their work reduces women to virtual non-entities in most economic transactions—such as property ownership or offering collateral for bank loans.

Since status in contemporary society is so often equated with income-earning power, women suffer a major undervaluation of their economic status. But they carry a higher share of the total work burden. And men's work in the market-place is often the result of "joint production", not a solo effort, since much of it might not be possible if women did not stay at home looking after the children and household.

If women's unpaid work were properly valued, it is quite possible that women would emerge in most societies as the major breadwinners—or at least equal breadwinners—since they put in longer hours of work than men.

The monetization of the non-market work of women is more than a question of justice. It concerns the economic status of women in society. If more human activities were seen as market transactions at the prevailing wages, they would yield gigantically large monetary valuations. A rough order of magnitude comes to a staggering \$16 trillion—or about 70% more than the officially estimated \$23 trillion of global output. This estimate includes the value of the *unpaid* work performed by women and men as well as the value of the *underpayment* of women's work in the market at prevailing wages. Of this \$16 trillion, \$11 trillion is the non-monetized, invisible contribution of women.

Such a revaluation of women's work will thoroughly challenge the present conventions. For husbands to share income with their wives will become an act of entitlement rather than benevolence. The basis of

property rights, divorce settlements, collateral for bank credit—to name only a few areas—will have to change completely. Men will also have to share more of the burden of household and community work.

If national statistics fully reflect the “invisible” contribution of women, it will become impossible for policy-makers to ignore them in national decisions. Nor will women continue to be regarded as economic non-entities in market transactions.

Another major element of discrimination is the unacceptably low status of women in society, with continuing legal discrimination and violence against women

The starkest reflection of the low status accorded to women is the discrimination against them in the law. In many countries, women still are not treated as equal to men—whether in property rights, rights of inheritance, laws related to marriage and divorce, or the rights to acquire nationality, manage property or seek employment.

In 1979, the United Nations approved the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), a path-breaking charter of the legal and human rights of women. But 41 UN member states still have not signed the convention, 6 have signed without ratification, and 43 have ratified the convention with reservations about some of its provisions. In other words, 90 countries have not yet accepted all the tenets of legal equality for women and men. Even in some countries ratifying CEDAW, the implementation of the convention has remained half-hearted and incomplete. So, even under law, the equality of women is not yet assured in many societies—let alone in practice.

The most painful devaluation of women is the physical and psychological violence that stalks them from cradle to grave. For too many women, life is shadowed by a threat of violence.

■ *The devaluation begins even before life begins.* In some countries, testing is used to determine the sex of the fetus, which may be aborted if it is female.

■ *It scars early life.* A third of the women in Barbados, Canada, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway and the United States report sexual abuse during childhood or adolescence. An estimated one million children, mostly girls in Asia, are forced into prostitution annually. And an estimated 100 million girls suffer genital mutilation.

■ *It becomes a part of marriage.* Studies in Chile, Mexico, Papua New Guinea and the Republic of Korea indicate that two-thirds or more of married women have experienced domestic violence. In Germany, it is estimated that up to four million women a year suffer from domestic violence.

■ *It is sometimes manifested in rape.* Studies from Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States suggest that about one woman in six is raped in her lifetime.

■ *It may end in murder.* More than half of all murders of women in Bangladesh, Brazil, Kenya, Papua New Guinea and Thailand are committed by present or former partners.

■ *Or in suicide.* Cross-cultural evidence from Africa, South America, several Melanesian islands and the United States established marital violence as a leading cause of female suicide.

Although violence stalks women's lives, laws can do little unless present cultural and social values change.

The revolution towards gender equality must be propelled by a concrete strategy for accelerating progress

Engendering the development paradigm involves radical change in the long-standing premises for social, economic and political life. And the free workings of economic and political processes are unlikely to deliver equality of opportunity, because of the prevailing inequities in power structures. When such structural barriers exist, government intervention is necessary—both through comprehensive policy reforms and through a series of affirmative actions.

Each nation will need to adopt its own agenda for overcoming obstacles to equal

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rights. This Report identifies a five-point strategy for accelerating progress.

1. *National and international efforts must be mobilized to win legal equality within a defined period—say, the next ten years.* To achieve this objective, the international community will need to move on several fronts:

■ A campaign should be launched for unconditional ratification of CEDAW by the 90 UN member states that have not yet signed or ratified it or that have entered reservations. Public pressure should be mobilized for this purpose.

■ The monitoring of CEDAW's implementation should be strengthened within the UN system, and regular, candid reports should be published on legal discrimination in countries.

■ An international non-governmental organization—World Women's Watch—should be set up to prepare country-by-country reports on key aspects of legal discrimination and on progress towards gender-related targets fixed by national governments and international forums. It could base its reports on information from national NGOs and mobilize pressure groups and political lobbies in alliances for change.

■ Pools of legal professionals should be organized to offer legal advice for winning equality before the law.

■ Legal literacy campaigns could be organized to make women aware of their legal rights and to encourage more women to study law through the generous provision of scholarships.

■ To facilitate women's access to legal systems, it may be desirable to set up legal ombudswomen at national and global levels.

■ Violence against women as a weapon of war should be declared a war crime, punishable by an international tribunal.

2. *Many economic and institutional arrangements may need revamping to extend more choices to women and men in the workplace.* For example:

ENCOURAGING MEN TO PARTICIPATE IN FAMILY CARE. In the 1980s, in most industrial coun-

tries, maternity leave was changed from protecting mothers' health after birth to providing parents with legal rights for parental care. The concept of paternity leave supplemented maternity leave. Japan introduced parental leave in 1992—for both mother and father. The United States in 1994 endorsed limited parental leave, but without pay.

The Nordic countries have perhaps traveled furthest. In Finland starting in 1990, parents could choose between two alternatives: after a 12-month maternity leave, either parent can stay at home until the child is three years old, with monetary compensation and job guarantees. Or the community must arrange for child care while parents work outside the home. Some Nordic countries have legislation that allows parents to reduce their daily working hours to take care of family commitments: since 1976, Finland has allowed parents of children under age four—and Sweden parents of children under age ten—the right to shorten their workday by two hours.

FLEXIBLE WORK SCHEDULES. If workers were to have the opportunity to stagger their working hours, they would be in a better position to combine paid work with other responsibilities, such as child care. Sweden already allows interim part-time work, with the option to return to full-time hours, so that women and men can combine a career with family commitments. Germany and Japan have devised "flextime" practices to enable their workers to combine their family needs with production schedules. And increasingly, employers are allowing workers to work out of the home or to bring their home to work (by providing child care at the workplace).

EXPANDING THE CONCEPT OF PUBLIC SERVICES. Some countries have expanded public services beyond education and health to child care, including public day-care centres and school lunches. The private sector could also provide such services, helping women and men to pursue careers.

CHANGING TAX AND SOCIAL SECURITY INCENTIVES. Some countries have revised their tax and social security systems to accommodate family structures different from the one-breadwinner, two-adult fam-

ily norm. Sweden has separate taxation for part-time and full-time work to increase after-tax earnings for part-time work. In Zambia, an income tax amendment was introduced in 1987 allowing women to claim child allowances and deductions on their insurance contributions—and removing some tax discrimination against women.

CHANGING LAWS ON PROPERTY, INHERITANCE AND DIVORCE. Once women are recognized as the main or equal “breadwinners” in most families, a convincing basis exists for a more equitable sharing of rights in property, inheritance and divorce. The distribution of land during agrarian reform would require joint landholding, with women having equal access to assets. Current restrictions on women’s collateral for bank loans would no longer hold.

These changes cannot all originate from the state. Many will start from movements in civil society. And some must come from changes in the business community.

3. *A critical 30% threshold should be regarded as a minimum share of decision-making positions held by women at the national level.* Few countries have reached or even approached this target, recommended in 1990 by the UN Commission on the Status of Women. In parliamentary or cabinet representation, only Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, Seychelles and Sweden have crossed the 30% threshold. Progress is somewhat better in administrative and managerial positions (15 countries have crossed the 30% threshold) and in municipalities (8 countries). But most countries are still far from this 30% threshold in many of the key decision-making fields.

The Report recommends that each nation identify a firm timetable for crossing the 30% threshold in some key areas of decision-making. The 30% threshold should be regarded as a minimum target, not as the ultimate goal. But achieving this threshold would build considerable momentum for attaining complete equality.

4. *Key programmes should embrace universal female education, improved reproductive health and more credit for women.* These programmes can make a decisive

difference in enabling women to gain more equitable access to economic and political opportunities.

Analysis of experience shows that in three critical areas—access to education, reproductive health and credit resources—women face barriers that can be overcome only through determined policy action. As long as these barriers persist, women will not have equal access to opportunities and to the benefits of development.

The returns from educating girls have few parallels in any other type of social investment. There are measurable benefits for women, for their families and for the community. If universal girls’ enrolment is to be ensured at primary and secondary levels over the next 15 years, an additional investment of \$5–6 billion a year is required.

The International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in September 1994 underlined the principle “that advancing gender equality and equity and the empowerment of women, and the elimination of all kinds of violence against women, and ensuring women’s ability to control their own fertility, are cornerstones of population and development-related programmes”.

Choice in the spacing and number of children has enabled women to control their life choices. It has meant control over how their time is spent, released them from continuous child-bearing and child-rearing and enabled them to participate more freely in public life. But half a million women die every year from pregnancy-related causes, and millions more are disabled. The Cairo conference estimated that attaining comprehensive coverage of family planning over the next decade would require an additional investment of \$5–6 billion a year. A similar amount would be required for reproductive health services. The policy challenge is not only providing services, but ensuring that these policies and services enable women to make free choices on their own.

Access to productive resources is critical to enhancing women’s economic choices. For low-income women—the vast majority of women in the world—lack of access to bank credit is a persistent barrier to attain-

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ing economic independence and widening choices. Experience in many countries demonstrates that poor women invest money wisely and make sound decisions to maximize returns. The policy challenge is to support effective grass-roots credit schemes and intermediaries and to ensure that low-income women have assured credit from the formal financial system.

5. National and international efforts should target programmes that enable people, particularly women, to gain greater access to economic and political opportunities. Some elements in such a package:

BASIC SOCIAL SERVICES FOR ALL. As endorsed by the Social Summit in Copenhagen, interested developing countries should move progressively towards earmarking at least 20% of their budgets—and interested donor nations 20% of their aid budgets—to human priority concerns, including basic education, primary health care, safe drinking water, family planning services and nutrition programmes for the most deprived people.

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE. Although primary health care and essential family planning services are already included in the 20:20 compact, they need to be supplemented by another \$5–10 billion to ensure reproductive health care services. These additional sums should be priority items in the enlarged effort.

CREDIT FOR POOR PEOPLE. As argued above, access to credit is one of the key elements in empowering people and in enabling them to participate in market opportunities. Since formal credit institutions rarely lend to the poor, special institutional arrangements may become necessary to extend credit to those who have no collateral to offer but their enterprise.

SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD FOR ALL. Remunerative employment opportunities are the key to the attack on poverty. But not all of them need to be in the formal, organized sectors of the economy. What is essential is

to encourage self-employment schemes, microenterprises and opportunities for the poor to enter the market.

TARGETED PROGRAMMES FOR POVERTY REDUCTION. Poverty reduction requires an overall national strategy on many fronts. But it also demands some targeted programmes and affirmative action for the poorest groups—among them landless peasants, urban slum dwellers, deprived ethnic minorities, economically disenfranchised women.

CAPACITY BUILDING AND EMPOWERMENT. Considerable decentralized capacity will have to be built in each country—in the public sector, in the private sector and among grass-roots organizations—so that disenfranchised groups can participate in designing and implementing the new projects and programmes.

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What vision should inspire gender relations in the 21st century? A new world order that would embrace full equality of opportunity between women and men as a basic concept. It would also eliminate the prevailing disparities between men and women and create an enabling environment for the full flowering of the productive and creative potential of both the sexes.

This new world order would promote more sharing of work and experience between women and men in the workplace as well as in the household. It would respect women as essential agents of change and development and open many more doors to women to participate more equally in economic and political opportunities. And it would value the work and contribution of women in all fields on par with those of men, solely on merit, without making any distinction.

The new world order would thus put people—both women and men—clearly at the centre of all development processes. Only then can human development become fully engendered.