

## GENDER EQUALITY

DECEMBER 08

**Millennium Development Goal 3:** To promote gender equality and empower women

**Target 4:** Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and in all levels of education no later than 2015.

**Progress:** The gender gap in school enrolment is closing slowly despite remaining disparities.

### Are we on track to meet the target?

		Africa		Asia				Latin America & Caribbean	Commonwealth of Independent States	
		Northern	Sub-Saharan	Eastern	South-Eastern	Southern	Western		Europe	Asia
<b>Progress toward achieving equal girls' enrolment in primary school</b>		close to parity	almost close to parity	parity	parity	parity	close to parity	parity	parity	parity
<b>Girls' primary school enrolment ratio in relation to boys (%)</b>										
	1991	82	83	94	97	77	83	97	100	99
	2006	93	89	99	97	95	91	97	100	98

**Line 1 (progress)** - The words describe current levels. The colours show the trend towards meeting the 2015 target.

**Key:** **Dark Green** = target met. **Light Green** = almost met, or on target. **Orange** = some/negligible progress, but insufficient to meet target. **Red** = no change or negative progress.

**Line 2 (level) – Girls' primary enrolment ratios in relation to boys (percentage)** – **Key:** Please refer to map key below.

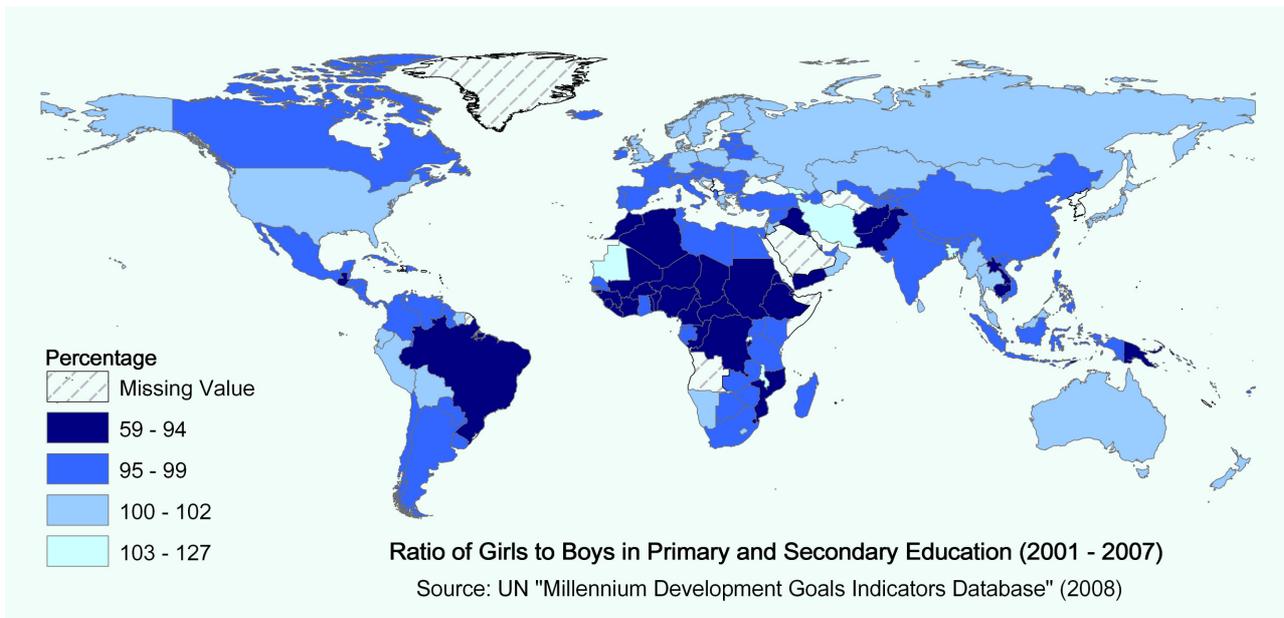
**Source:** United Nations Statistics Division - UN Millennium Development Goals Report 2008

### Progress

- **Education** The gender gap is closing (albeit slowly) in school enrolment in the developing world, with 95 girls of primary school age in school for every 100 boys in 2006 compared with 92 in 1999<sup>1</sup>.
- But significant gender disparities remain. The largest gaps are in West Asia, Oceania and Sub-Saharan Africa where respectively 91, 89 and 89 girls are enrolled in primary school for every 100 boys<sup>2</sup>. Gender gaps also increase with higher levels of education.

### MDG3 INDICATORS

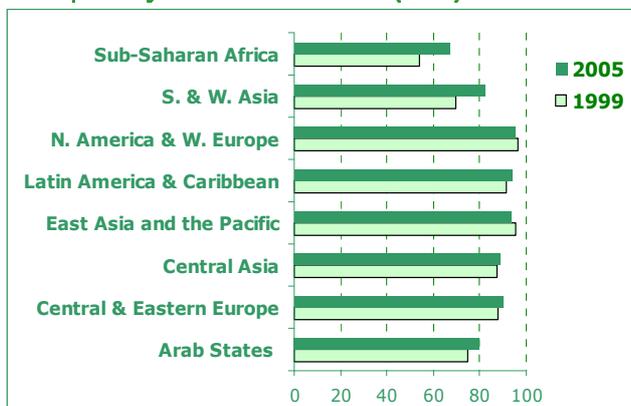
- **Female Literacy** Women make up around 64% of the estimated 774 million illiterate adults in the world. Globally 77% of adult women are literate, compared to 87% of men<sup>3</sup>.
- **Non-agricultural employment** Worldwide, income-earning opportunities for women have increased. But in developing countries, the majority of women work in the informal sector or as unpaid family workers, and so lack security of income. In Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, this type of work accounts for more than 80% of all jobs for women<sup>4</sup>.
- **Political representation** Progress in increasing the number of seats held by women in national parliaments is slow. Worldwide, as of September 2008, women occupied just over 18% of the seats in single and lower houses of national parliaments, a negligible increase over the past year<sup>5</sup>.



## Key messages

- We cannot end poverty and reach the MDGs until we have eliminated discrimination against women and girls. Women have a vital contribution to make: to the economy, to better governance, to peace processes, to their communities and their households. **Continuing discrimination reduces their contribution, making us all worse off.**
- Gender equality is also an issue of **human rights**. International human rights treaties prohibit discrimination against women.
- The MDG3 Target recognises that education for girls is **one of the most effective ways of reducing poverty**.
- But **education alone is not enough**. Achieving MDG3 also requires progress in other key areas including: political participation; access to productive assets and employment opportunities; access to health and other services, and protection from violence.
- **Gender equality underpins progress on all the MDGs**. Development makes little sense if half the population is prevented from fully benefiting from, and contributing to it.

### Girls primary net enrolment rate (in %)<sup>1</sup>



### Women in Parliament 31 Oct 2008 (in %)<sup>15</sup>



## Facts and figures

- Educated girls have better opportunities to earn higher wages, and participate in community life and decision-making. They tend to marry later, have fewer, healthier children who are more likely to attend school themselves.
- In Africa, children of mothers who have received 5 years of primary education are 40% more likely to live beyond the age of 5.<sup>6</sup>
- Girls' net enrolment ratio (NER) in primary school (as a proportion of boys' NER) has improved from a global average of 88% in 1991 to 97% in 2006.<sup>7</sup>
- However, completion rates are lower. In Sub-Saharan Africa, this was as low as 55% for girls and 65% for boys in 2006.
- Girls still account for 55% of the out-of-school population<sup>8</sup>. Girls in rural areas and from the poorest households are less likely to enrol and stay in school.
- Worldwide, a woman dies every minute from complications in pregnancy or childbirth. Of these deaths, 99% are in developing countries.<sup>9</sup>
- Gender inequality is bad for economic growth. For example Tanzania could increase growth by an estimated one percentage point by removing barriers to women entrepreneurs<sup>10</sup>.
- In Kenya, women own nearly half of all micro-, small and medium enterprises, but they receive less than 10% of the available credit.<sup>11</sup>
- Violence affects at least one in three women worldwide; one in five women will suffer rape or attempted rape in the course of their lifetime.<sup>12</sup>
- Indian girls are 61% more likely than boys to die between the ages of 1 and 5, due to neglect.<sup>13</sup>

## Challenges and Solutions

In many countries, gender inequalities permeate every level of society. Changing attitudes, perceptions and behaviours are vital to achieving greater levels of equality between women and men.

### **Need for more evidence of the impact and cost of discrimination**

Solid evidence of the causes, impacts and costs of gender inequality is essential. Gender specific research and improved sex disaggregated data are key to understanding challenges and developing solutions.

### **Need for greater involvement of women in decision-making**

Gender equality can only be achieved when women have the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes which affect

## Women in Parliament: a mixed picture

Following elections in September 2008, Rwanda now has 56% of the seats in its national parliament filled by women, putting the country no 1 in the ranking worldwide. But in one third of developing countries, women account for less than 10% of Parliamentarians.<sup>15</sup>

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*“Ensuring gender equality and empowering women in all respects – desirable objectives in themselves – are required to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to ensure sustainable development. The limited progress in empowering women and achieving gender equality is a pervasive shortcoming that extends beyond the goal itself –*

Sha Zukang, UN Under-Secretary for Economic & Social Affairs 2008.

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## DFID support to research

DFID is funding two 5-year research projects on women's empowerment which will inform future policy – one based at the Institute of Development Studies, Sussex [link], the other at City University, Hong Kong [link]. DFID has also supported Gender & Growth assessments in a number of countries aimed at estimating the impact of gender inequality on economic growth.

themselves, their families, communities and, ultimately, their countries. All too often, women are excluded from decision-making, both within the home and in public.

### Reducing conflict

Gender-specific violence, such as rape, prostitution, trafficking and other sexual abuse is increasingly used as a weapon during armed conflicts. The international response to such crises needs to take account of the unique threats posed to women, as well as the important role which women can, and do, play in peacekeeping and reconstruction.

### Need to engage men and boys

Men and women both stand to gain from gender equality. The important role which men and boys play in promoting gender equality is frequently overlooked.

## What the UK government is doing to help

### Our overall commitment

DFID has made a commitment to give “*greater priority to work in support of gender equality and women’s rights*”.<sup>14</sup> The Gender Equality [Action Plan](#) (2007) set out how we will use our development assistance programmes more effectively for women and girls. The accompanying publication “Gender Equality at the [Heart of Development](#)” highlighted examples of existing work. The [first Progress Report](#) on implementation of the Action Plan was published in July 2008.

The objective of the Action Plan is to ensure that DFID integrates gender equality into all areas of work. DFID’s overarching priorities such as trade, economic growth, conflict, and climate change are not separate from addressing gender equality. Work in these areas aims to improve opportunities for poor men and women. It therefore needs to address gender inequalities to achieve its objectives.

### Key areas of work

**Education** – Girls education is one of DFID’s priorities. See also factsheet for **MDG2**.

**Maternal Health** – Recent new commitments include £8.5m per year core funding for International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) announced in July 2008. See also factsheet for **MDG5**.

**Conflict and security** - DFID is one of three government departments

## Post-conflict situations

DFID is providing up to £3.4m to a UNIFEM programme supporting women’s engagement in peace-building and preventing sexual violence in 6 countries (Afghanistan, Haiti, Liberia, Rwanda, Timor Leste, and Uganda).

*“Our experience in the UK tells us that when women gain equal rights with men, society is transformed and everybody benefits”* – Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, International Women’s Day, March 2008

## The Danish MDG3 Torch campaign

This campaign was launched in March 2008 and each torch bearer commits him/herself to “doing something extra” in support of gender equality and women’s economic empowerment. DFID is a signatory to this campaign. In accepting the MDG3 Torch, DFID announced new commitments in Ghana and Yemen.

In **Yemen**, a further £43.3m to the Social Fund for Development will support programmes on education, health, water and microfinance which will target women.

In **Ghana**, a further £3m for the Social Grants Programme will provide grants for poor households, many of which are headed by women.

*{Further details of the Torch campaign can be found on [www.mdg3action.um.dk](http://www.mdg3action.um.dk).}*

responsible for the UK's National Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

**HIV and AIDS** - DFID's updated AIDS strategy (June 2008) highlights the need to tackle the increased risks for women. See also factsheet for **MDG6**

**Women's economic empowerment** – Work aims to help improve access by women to financial services and economic opportunities.

**Climate change** – DFID work includes research into gender dimensions of climate change, and support to mainstream gender issues into national and international climate change strategies.

**Good Governance** - Work includes support to women's participation in elections both as voters and candidates, and their access to justice (see box on right).

### Working with international partners

DFID cannot bring about the significant improvements needed to achieve MDG3 alone. A core part of our work is collaboration with other donors to ensure a more effective international system for achieving gender equality. We are contributing to discussions aimed at the creation of a new stronger UN agency for women.

## Impacts and Results

**Nepal** – DFID's support to the health sector (£200m) has helped reduce maternal mortality by almost half in the past 10 years.

**Nigeria** – DFID support to a girls' education programme has helped increase girls' enrolment in six northern states by 10-15% in one year. In July 2008, we increased our support to £38m.

**Afghanistan** – DFID support to the Government of Afghanistan has helped increase the provision of antenatal care to women in rural Afghanistan from 5% in 2003 to 30% in 2006.

**Sierra Leone** – DFID supported communications, sensitisation and training activities to encourage women both to vote and to stand as candidates in local council elections in July 2008. The number of women councillors nearly doubled from 11% to almost 19%. One council now has 50% percent women councillors.

## CEDAW: 30 years old

The UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) will celebrate its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2009. Although the Convention has been ratified by almost all UN member states, it is still a long way from being fully implemented in many countries.

## Improving access to justice

DFID's £25m contribution to the Justice Sector Reform programme in Sierra Leone has supported the introduction of travelling magistrates, which has improved access to justice for women in remote areas. The programme also includes support to improving police facilities for victims of domestic violence.

## Sources

- 1 UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) UIS (will appear in the Education For All Global Monitoring Report 2009)
- 2 UN MDG Progress Report 2008
- 3 UNESCO Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2008
- 4 UN MDG Progress Report 2008
- 5 Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) [www.ipu.org](http://www.ipu.org)
- 6 UNGEI [www.ungei.org](http://www.ungei.org)
- 7 UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) UIS (will appear in the Education For All Global Monitoring Report 2009)
- 8 UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) [UIS](http://www.unesco.org) (will appear in the Education For All Global Monitoring Report 2008)
- 9 UN MDG Progress Report 2005
- 10 Tanzania Gender & Growth assessment, IFC et al 2007
- 11 World Bank Doing Business in 2006.
- 12 UNIFEM [www.unifem.org](http://www.unifem.org)
- 13 State of the World's Mothers report, Save the Children, 2008.
- 14 DFID White Paper "Making Governance Work for the Poor" (2006)
- 15 Inter-Parliamentary Union <http://www.ipu.org/english/home.htm>