

GOAL  
3

## THE 'GENDER EQUALITY GOAL'

### Goal 3 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

*Indicators*    *Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education*  
*Ratio of literate women to men ages 15-24*  
*Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector*  
*Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament*

### Gender equality and women's empowerment have multiple dimensions

The Task Force on Education and Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women set up by the UN Millennium Development Project defines gender equality in terms of transformations in three domains of women's lives.

- **The capabilities domain refers to basic human abilities** as measured by education, health, and nutrition. These capabilities are fundamental to individual well-being and are the means through which women can access other forms of well-being.
- **The opportunities domain refers primarily to equality in the opportunity to use or apply basic capabilities** through access to economic resources (such as land, property, infrastructure, income and employment) and the opportunity to participate in and influence political processes (through representation in parliaments and other political bodies). Without access to economic and political resources and opportunities, women will be unable to put their capabilities to use in enhancing well-being for themselves, their families, communities and society.
- **The security domain, which refers to reduced vulnerability to violence and conflict.** These can result in physical and psychological harm and can undermine the ability of individuals, households and communities to fulfil their potential. Violence is a constitutive element of patriarchy and is used against women and girls to threaten and terrorise them into accepting their subordination.

These three domains are inter-related, but the linkages are mediated by many factors in the social context – change in one is essential to but does not guarantee change in the others. Thus, simultaneous action for change in all three domains is necessary for the achievement of gender equality.

Empowerment is the outcome of change in all the three domains. To be empowered, women must gain equal capabilities and equal opportunities, as well as the agency to use their rights, capabilities and opportunities to control their own lives and destinies. Freedom from the fear of violence and coercion is essential for the exercise of women's agency.

## Indicators for Goal 3 have limitations

The four indicators suggested by the UN Expert Group for measuring progress on Goal 3 have all been critiqued on technical grounds.

- **Ratio of girls to boys enrolled in primary, secondary, and tertiary education.** This indicator is deceptive because it can show progress even when absolute levels of enrolment are low. It does not provide information on the relative proportions of girls and boys in the school-going age group who are actually going to school and does not reflect drop out rates. It also does not take into account the fact that even if girls go to school, their levels of achievement may be very different from those of boys.
- **Ratio of literate females to males among 15- to 24-year-olds.** Different countries have widely varying definitions of literacy, so that literacy figures may not always accurately reflect capabilities. Moreover, the way in which literacy data is collected may be technically flawed.

### Proposed indicators for Goal 3

#### *Education*

- *The ratio of female to male gross enrolment rates in primary, secondary, and tertiary education.*
- *The ratio of female to male completion rates in primary, secondary, and tertiary education.*

#### *Sexual and reproductive health and rights*

- *Proportion of contraceptive demand satisfied.*
- *Adolescent fertility rate.*

#### *Infrastructure*

- *Hours per day (or year) women and men spend fetching water and collecting fuel.*

#### *Property rights*

- *Land ownership by male, female, or jointly held.*
- *Housing title, disaggregated by male, female, or jointly held.*

#### *Employment*

- *Share of women in employment, both wage and self-employment, by type.*
- *Gender gaps in earnings in wage and self-employment.*

#### *Participation in national parliaments and local government bodies*

- *Percentage of seats held by women in national parliament.*
- *Percentage of seats held by women in local government bodies.*

#### *Violence against women*

- *Prevalence of domestic violence.*

*From Taking Action: Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering Women  
Task Force on Education and Gender Equality. UN Millennium Project 2005*

- **Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector.** This indicator measures only the proportion of women in this sector relative to men, but not the differences in their conditions

of work. In addition, it is not reflective of differential access of women and men to the labour market and paid employment. It ignores the agriculture sector where most poor women are concentrated.

- **Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments.** This indicator reflects numbers rather than access to decision-making in governance and ignores women's political participation at the grassroots. Also, it does not reflect the quality of participation.

The Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality has suggested a set of 12 additional indicators to track and measure progress on Goal 3. However, even these alternative indicators are restricted only to capturing parity between women and men rather than the quality of outcomes of parity. The Task Force has emphasised the need to develop qualitative indicators to measure the process of change and its outcomes.

### How strategic is reporting on Goal 3?

Nearly two-thirds (51 out of 78) reports reviewed have reported against more than the standard recommended set of indicators. **Countries have been creative and strategic in using available data to illuminate key elements of gender inequality.** The number and range of additional indicators presented represent a significant advance over the pilot study, where only 5 per cent of the reviewed reports used additional indicators.

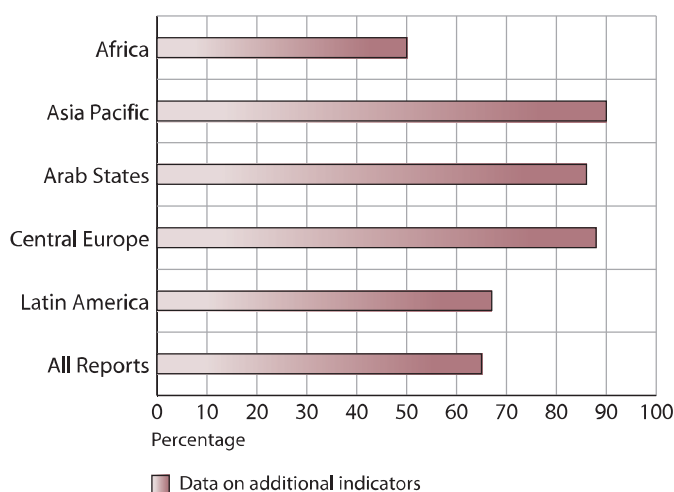
Interestingly, some countries have used indicators broadly along the lines suggested by the Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality. **This**

**suggests that expanding the range of indicators for Goal 3 would not be a major barrier for reporting.** However, concerns remain about the accuracy and comparability across countries of these additional indicators.

The comparison of data and information provided under Goal 3 with that presented under Goal 2 throws up some interesting insights. While less than a third of the reviewed reports made any mention under Goal 2 of the factors underlying the gender gap in education, almost as many have in fact included detailed analyses of the barriers to girls' education under Goal 3.

Overall, as many as 45 of the 78 reports contain data and information on the causes of the gender gap in primary education. **However, the placing of this information under Goal 3 rather than under Goal 2 represents a missed opportunity for mainstreaming.** If this gender focus was brought to bear on the policy discourse on education rather than on gender, it would provide a stronger rationale for increased funding to programmes for girls' education through the education budget.

Figure 6 Additional data under Goal 3



### A positive trend - additional data under Goal 3

#### Poverty

- Percentage of women-headed households (Botswana, Cap Verde, Tajikistan)
- Percentage women below poverty line (Kazakhstan)

#### Work/employment

- Income/earnings/wages (Ethiopia, Thailand, China, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Slovakia, Georgia, Lithuania, Tajikistan, Brazil, El Salvador)
- Earnings by level of education/sector of employment/age (Hungary, Brazil)
- Labour force participation/Economic activity rate (Czech Republic, Mauritania, Cameroon, Brazil, Argentina)
- Employment/unemployment rates by sex/ sector/ age/education/marital status (Cap Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Bahrain, Bulgaria, Lebanon, Mauritania, Kyrgyzstan, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Turkmenistan, Paraguay)
- Growth rate of share in wage employment (Kuwait)
- Share of women among entrepreneurs/owners of businesses (Bulgaria, Kosovo, Lithuania, Turkmenistan)
- Share of women in public sector (Benin)
- Time spent at work (Czech Republic)
- Access to social services/pensions (Bulgaria, Slovakia)
- Access to credit (Senegal, Vietnam)

#### Education

- Enrolment rates by income level/ethnic group/region (El Salvador, Paraguay, Guatemala)
- Access to education by proportion in population (Bolivia)
- Drop out/repetition/achievement rates at primary level (Bhutan, Philippines, Bahrain)
- Attendance/completion rates (Bosnia & Herzegovina, Chad)
- Literacy/illiteracy by age/income level (Lebanon, Czech Republic, Indonesia)
- Percentage of graduates by sex (Cap Verde)

#### Decision-making

- Percentage of women in local government (Botswana, Senegal, Thailand, Lebanon, Palestine, Hungary, Kosovo, Slovenia, Lithuania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Guatemala, Vietnam)
- Percentage of graduates among men and women parliamentarians (Indonesia)
- Share of women in cabinet (Botswana, Mongolia)
- Percentage of women voters (Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Guatemala)
- Percentage of women professors/police officers/health professionals/bankers/judges (Senegal, Afghanistan, Syria, Kosovo, Tajikistan, Hungary)
- Percentage of women in civil services/management positions (Rwanda, Botswana, Congo, Mauritania, Senegal, Palestine, Lebanon, Mongolia, Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Slovakia, Slovenia, Thailand, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Honduras, Argentina)
- Percentage of women's NGOs (Kazakhstan)
- Percentage of women voters (Guatemala)

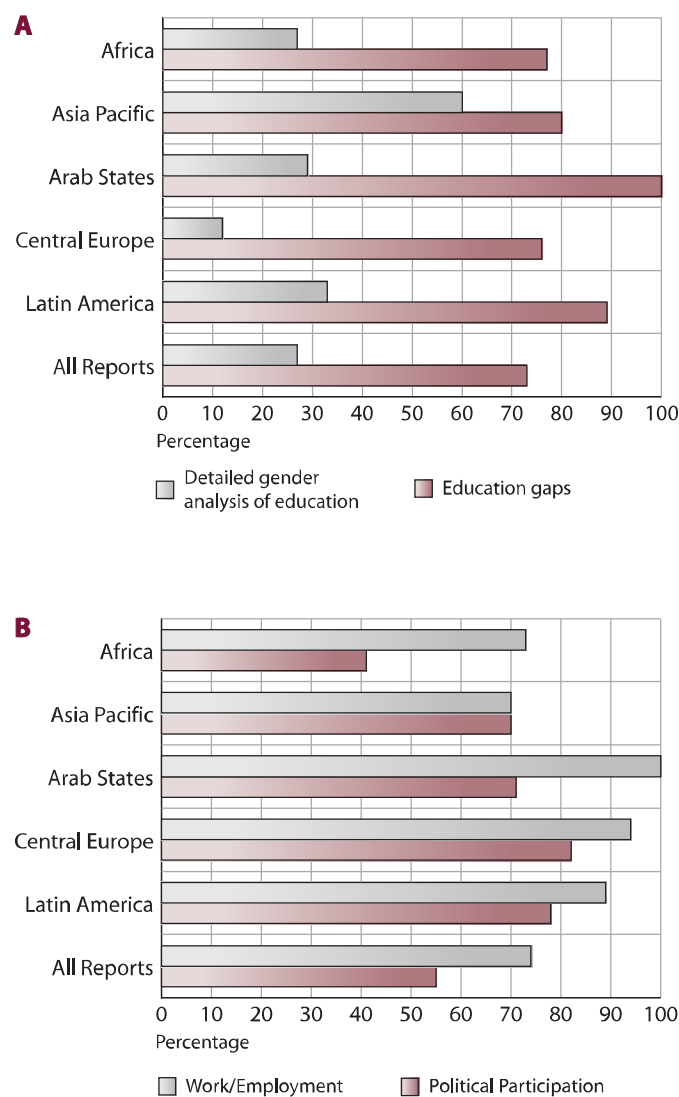
#### Security/violence

- Trafficking cases (Kyrgyzstan)
- Suicide rates (China)

#### Health/survival

- Health status (Bulgaria, Turkmenistan, Senegal)
- Life expectancy at birth (Bulgaria, Croatia, Slovakia)
- Sex ratio (Sao Tome)

Figure 7 Issues covered under Goal 3



The overlap of targets for Goal 2 and Goal 3 has created a situation where reporting under Goal 3 focuses overwhelmingly on education in about a quarter of the reports. **Shifting the primary education target to Goal 2 is therefore strategic in terms of encouraging countries to focus on other issues under Goal 3.**

Trends in reporting under Goal 3 bear out the observation that countries tend to report ‘by the book’, confining discussions to issues connected with parity in education, literacy, non-agricultural employment and political participation. While the majority of countries have addressed these issues under Goal 3, discussion on other issues is somewhat patchy even if data on other indicators is available.

**Those of the reviewed reports that have ‘gone outside the box’ have covered a wide range of issues.** Apart from gender gaps in education, non-agricultural employment and political participation, the issues most frequently mentioned are traditional roles, stereotypes and discriminatory practices (31 reports), wage gaps and income differentials between women and men (25 reports), violence against women (22 reports), legal barriers to equality (18 reports), domestic work and unpaid work (15 reports), negative impacts of economic policies (11 reports), access to land and assets (12 reports) and gaps in the policy framework (10 reports).

A few of the reports mention additional challenges such as the limited national capacity for gender mainstreaming (seven reports), women’s differential access to social services (seven reports), male attitudes (six reports), lack of resources for gender mainstreaming (six reports), violations of the rights of women workers (five reports) and the need for institutional change and transformation (five reports).

**Some reports are notable for raising extremely sensitive issues under the discussion on Goal 3. This is an indication of the depth and rigour of the process adopted in report preparation. Breaking the silence around difficult issues increases the social change potential of the report.**

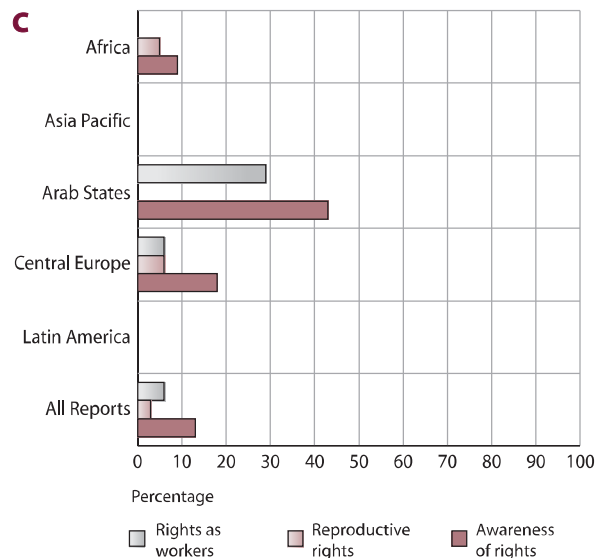
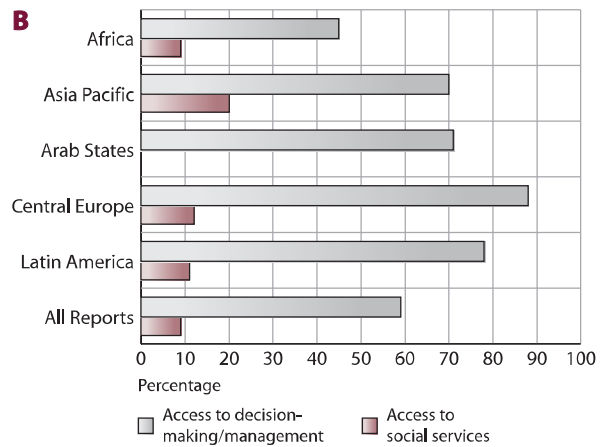
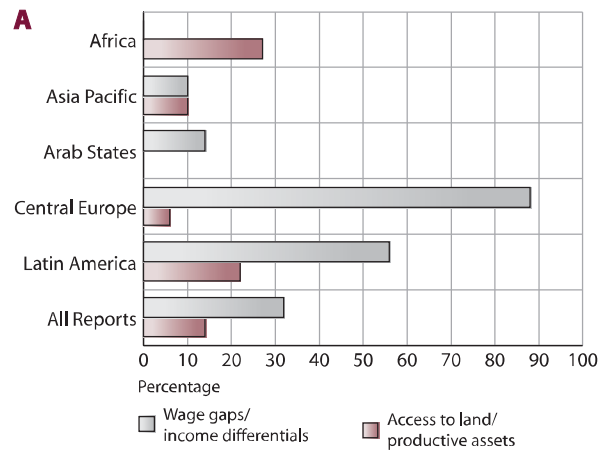
### **A positive trend - some difficult issues brought into the light**

- Patriarchy and women's subordination (Brazil, Georgia)
- Increase in violent crimes against women (Botswana, Thailand, Jordan)
- Domestic violence as a cause of suicide (China)
- Insensitivity of policy makers to violence against women (Mongolia)
- Possible link between violence and women's role in market economy (Vietnam)
- Barriers to justice for women facing domestic violence (Czech Republic)
- Child sexual abuse (Congo)
- Sexual and reproductive rights (Kosovo, Rwanda)
- Women's involvement in drug trade (Kyrgyzstan)
- Male political culture as a barrier to women's political participation (Kuwait, Brazil)
- Patriarchy and women's subordination (Brazil, Georgia)
- Sexual and reproductive rights (Kosovo, Rwanda)
- Domestic violence as a cause of suicide (China)
- Insensitivity of policy makers to violence against women (Mongolia)
- Discrimination in citizenship rights (Lebanon)
- Recent revival of anti-women traditions (Yemen)
- Barriers to justice for women facing domestic violence (Czech Republic)
- Women's involvement in drug trade (Kyrgyzstan)
- Marginalisation of women in process of democratisation (Bosnia & Herzegovina)
- Child sexual abuse (Congo)
- Son preference (China)
- Gender biases in customary law (Togo)
- Recent revival of anti-women traditions (Yemen)
- Gender biases in customary law (Togo)
- Possible link between violence and women's role in market economy (Vietnam)

It is a matter of concern that only two of the reports mention the role of the media in creating or countering popular misconceptions and negative stereotypes of women. Negative portrayals of women in the popular media and media insensitivity to women's rights have been identified as major impediments to gender equality in many countries by governments and civil society groups alike. In such a situation the silence on the role of the media in the overwhelming majority of reports reviewed is an unfortunate omission.

**HIV/AIDS barely finds mention under Goal 3 in the reviewed reports – only four countries (5 per cent) have any discussions on the implications of the epidemic for women.** Once again, the reason for this omission seems to be the fact that this issue has been covered under Goal 6. In the process, the opportunity has been missed of making direct linkages between HIV/AIDS and gender inequality under Goal 3 and reinforcing the argument for a gendered approach to the epidemic.

Figure 8 Coverage of strategic issues



**Making the connections**

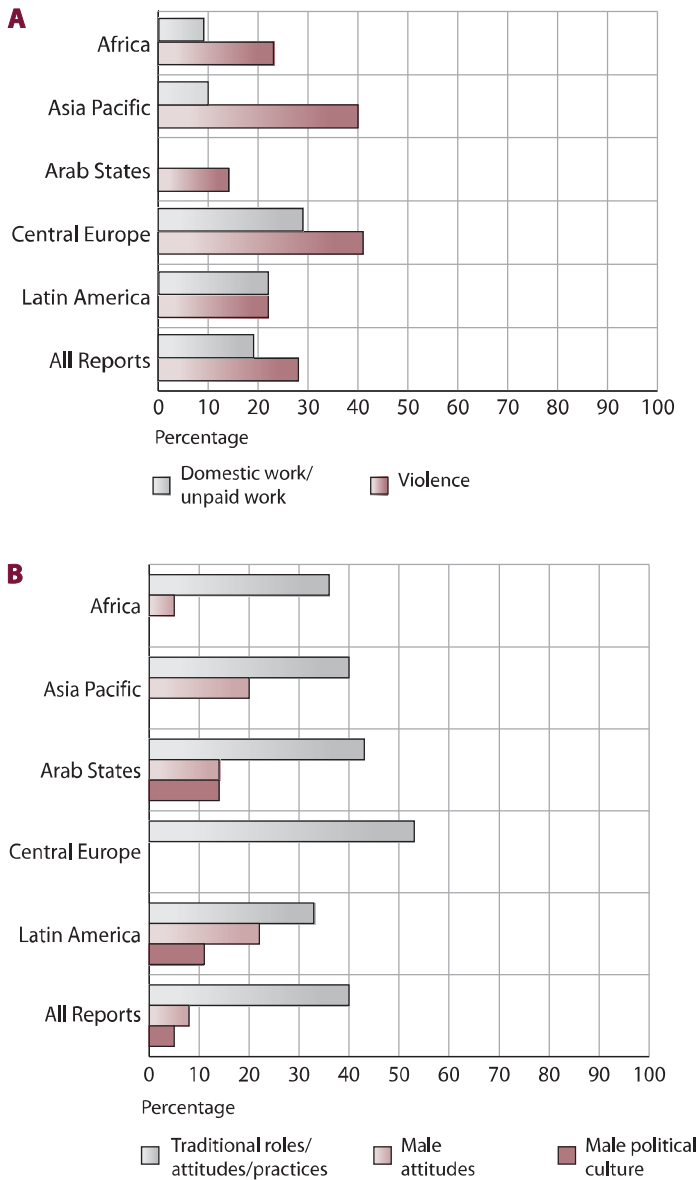
- Introduction of a gender perspective into the medical curriculum identified as essential to address women’s health issues (Afghanistan)
- Cross-cutting gender issues specially highlighted - land ownership, violence, data and political participation (Vietnam)
- Connection between HIV/AIDS and gender inequality (China, Guatemala, Namibia, Rwanda)
- Role of the media (Albania, Gambia)

**Women still hold fewer jobs**

*Women’s access to paid employment is lower than men’s in most of the developing world. Some progress has been made in all regions, but women in Southern Asia, Western Asia and Northern Africa still hold only about 20 per cent of paying jobs in sectors outside of agriculture. After steady improvement in Latin America and the Caribbean, women there now hold well over 40 per cent of these paying jobs. In CIS, near equality in wage employment is offset by a deteriorating job situation for both women and men. Many have lost their jobs and pay and benefits have been eroded.*

*From The Millennium Development Goals Report  
United Nations, 2005*

Figure 9 Coverage of strategic issues



**Localised goals and targets in Vietnam MDGR**

**Goal 2. Universalise education and improve education quality**

- Target 2. Eliminate the gender gap in primary and secondary education by 2005, and the gap between ethnic minorities and others by 2010.
- Increase literacy to 95% of under-40-year-old women by 2005 and 100% by 2010.
- By 2010 have improved the quality of education and increase full-day schooling at primary level.

**Goal 3. Promote gender equality and empower women**

- Target 3. Ensure that the names of both husband and wife appear on land use certificates by 2005.
- Reduce the vulnerability of women to domestic violence.

**Localised indicators in Ethiopia MDGR**

**Goal 1**

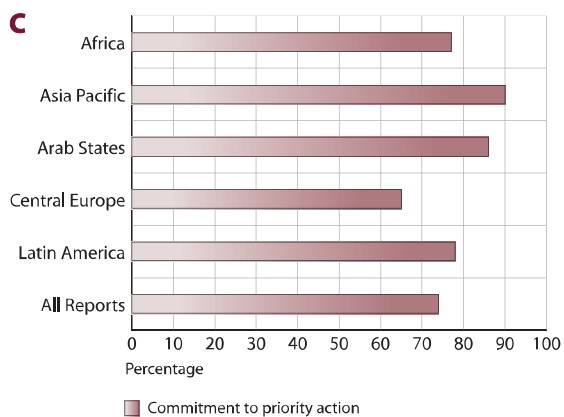
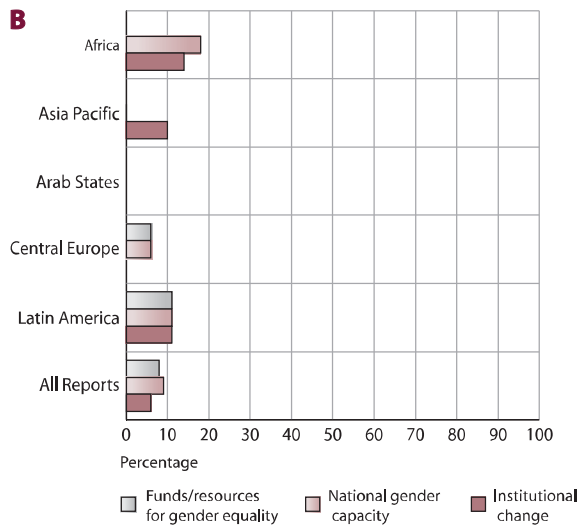
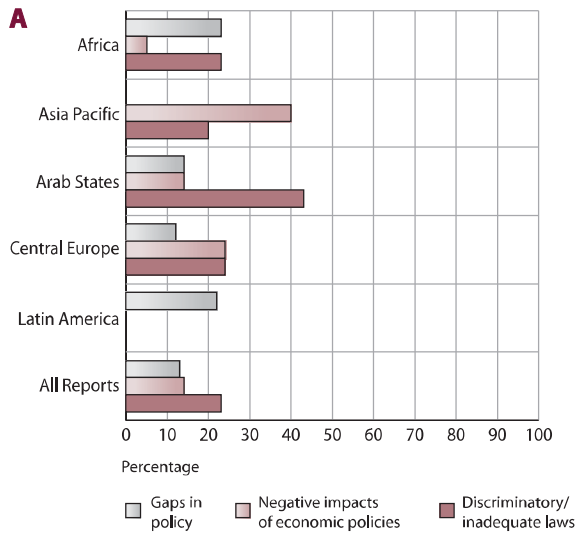
Women's ownership of land and livestock

**Goal 3**

Proportion of women in police, law-making and policy-making bodies



**Figure 10 Structural issues and commitment to action**



*Gender provides the base for a distinct development strategy in Afghanistan. Most of the MDGs relate to the needs of women. Committing to the MDGs thus involves the construction of policies to address the social, political and economic need of women... In this sense, the MDGs can become an instrument as well as a goal.*

*From Afghanistan MDGR*

*'... an interesting finding is that reducing social inequity such as gender disparity contributes positively to the growth of the Ethiopian economy. Based on inferences from cross-country studies, it is possible for Ethiopia to register an increase to the tune of 0.4 percentage points in the growth of per capita GDP if gender disparity in primary enrolment was reduced by more than 0.5 percentage points every year.'*

*From Ethiopia MDGR*

**Commitments to action**

- **Bosnia & Herzegovina:** Support to women's movement and use of gender-neutral language in official documents.
- **Brazil:** Recording of land titles of women farmers.
- **East Timor:** Legislation on domestic violence.
- **Rwanda:** Enactment of a law on succession and matrimonial rights.
- **Vietnam:** Land use certificates to be issued in joint names of husband and wife.

## How can reporting on Goal 3 be strengthened?

- **Localising and contextualising targets and indicators** to ensure that they reflect the situations, needs and priorities of women in the country.
- Scanning national databases and **identifying key data sets** that can be included in the report to highlight specific aspects of women's reality and the implications for gender equality.
- Presenting **qualitative data** wherever available, including from micro studies at the community level to illustrate key issues.
- **Disaggregating data by region, class, ethnicity and age** to reveal the special vulnerabilities of different groups of women.
- Wherever possible, presenting data separately on **adolescent girls** in order to highlight the special needs and priorities of this group.
- Reporting on the results of **costing exercises**, focusing particularly on strategic national priorities to highlight the need for adequate resources and demonstrate the economic benefits of gender equality.
- Making the **'money trail'** visible by reporting on budgetary allocations for gender equality, including support to national women's machinery and programmes for empowerment of women.

### Gender equality - the price tag

*Translating Goal 3 into operational targets for national planning and programming requires an **assessment of the resources** that would be required.*

*The Millennium Project Task Force on Gender Equality recommends a twin-track approach:*

1. **Sectoral assessments** to calculate the costs of gender-specific interventions in education, health, agriculture, water and sanitation, environment, rural and urban development, science and technology, and trade.
2. Costing of **specific interventions** needed to meet strategic priorities for gender equality and targets under Goal 3. These could include
  - Sexual and reproductive health education
  - Comprehensive sexuality educations in schools/communities
  - Vocational training and school-to-work transition programmes for girls
  - Care services for children, the elderly, people with disabilities and others who need care
  - Training for women contesting elections and for elected women
  - Interventions to stop violence against women including helplines, public education, campaigns and support groups
  - Services for women facing violence including counselling, shelters, medical services and legal support
  - Building capacities within governments
  - Strengthening national women's machineries
  - Sensitising service providers such a police, health personnel, judges and bureaucrats
  - Strengthening data collection and monitoring systems

*A pilot exercise in **Tajikistan**, carried out in collaboration with the national Working Group on Gender and with the support of the UN Millennium Project, focused on increasing awareness of sexual and reproductive health issues, facilitating the transition of girls from education to work, encouraging political participation, ending violence against women and resolving systemic issues.*

*The assessment came up with a figure of US\$112 million, or US\$10.6 per year, for the period 2005-2015.*

*This amounts to 0.0003 per cent of the GDP over this period. In contrast, debt servicing payments in Tajikistan in 2001 amounted 2001 amounted to 4 per cent of the GDP.*

*From **Taking Action: Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering Women** Task Force on Education and Gender Equality. UN Millennium Project 2005*